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ARTHRITIS DEFORMANS.*

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IT will readily be granted that among the unsettled questions in medicine which are in an unsatisfactory state to-day, chronic arthritis occupies a prominent place. We have really advanced very little in the last hundred years, and a saying of Haygarth regarding the unsatisfactory condition of the knowledge of these disorders applies almost as well to-day as in 1805, when he said that the term "rheumatism is applied to many conditions in the joints which only agree in having pain." There are various reasons for this, and first perhaps should be put the use of one term, namely, rheumatism. It is evident that under this heading a number of conditions have been associated which have nothing more in common than that the joints are affected. Unfortunately this always has a certain amount of effect on our views, because give a thing a name and you have to some extent disposed of it; a positive diagnosis, however wrong, is likely to prevent further investigation. It would seem wise to restrict the use of the term rheumatism to the condition known as acute rheumatic fever. If it be employed to designate any form of arthritis, we keep up the confusion of the past and are using it both as a general term for arthritis and also for a special form of arthritis, acute rheumatic fever. The confusion resulting from this is very evident. If the term be limited to rheumatic fever, there seems no reason for the use of the name "chronic rheumatism." There is no evidence that there is any chronic joint condition, which results from an attack of rheumatic fever. The term might be applied to those instances seen in early life, in which a child has a succession of conditions which belong to the rheumatic cycle, such as rheumatic fever, chorea, endocarditis, pericarditis, erythema, etc., but these are rare.

Secondly, perhaps, comes the special difficulty in distinguishing the various forms of joint disease. The whole tendency in medicine has been to separate various diseases, as shown very well in the history of the recognition of various fevers. At one time typhoid, typhus, relapsing and malarial fevers were grouped together. Gradually one after another was separated from the mass. The same thing is true of our knowledge of joint diseases, but here the difficulties seem greater. Diseases are

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