

necessary every forty-eight hours. As soon as the granulating process has sufficiently advanced, as marked by the diminution in the quantity, and the alteration in the quality of the pus, the dressings may be discontinued.

Employed in this way, compression exerts its good effects by supporting the walls of the abscess, through which they are not only kept at rest, but the tonicity of their capillaries is maintained, whereby the pyogenic process is diminished, and the danger of hemorrhage averted. By approximating its sides, moreover, less of a cavity remains to be closed by granulations, and the healing process is much expedited.

With the view to allay nervous and vascular excitement, and thereby more effectually ensure rest to the parts and system at large, opium should be given in full doses for the first five or six days after the evacuation of the abscess. The value of anodynes in moderating the constitutional irritation has long been insisted upon by Professor Gross, and, if I mistake not, we are indebted to him for having pointed out the importance of this class of remedies in his *System of Surgery*, which first appeared in 1859.

With regard to other measures, it need scarcely be said that they should be of a tonic and sustaining nature, and that the inflamed and disintegrated vertebræ should be relieved of the pressure and friction exerted upon them by the superimposed parts, by means calculated to extend and to prevent motion of the spinal column.

In the case of the child, there can be no reasonable doubt that if the treatment, which I have outlined, had not been instituted, a fatal issue would have been rapid from the sudden and profuse drain to which her already exhausted system would have been subjected. So hopeful, indeed, was I of a favourable result, that I intentionally omitted the internal exhibition of quinia, and relied solely upon support of the sac and sustained doses of opium to prevent untoward symptoms. Under their agency the improvement in her general condition was most marked; and the application of the plaster jacket was only delayed because her sensitiveness and want of strength would not

admit of her being swung in the suspending apparatus. Under opposite circumstances, this invaluable means of fixing and relieving the disintegrated vertebræ from pressure should be resorted to at once, and an opening be made in the dressing to receive the compression sponge, which should be confined by a roller.

For an ingenious mode of applying the dressing, I cannot do better than refer you to p. 331 of Professor Sayre's work on *Orthopedic Surgery*, where you will find the details of a case of lumbar abscess which confirm the correctness of my views as to the benefit derived from supporting the sac, although the distinguished author advances no theory as to the cause of the dangers of evacuating spinal abscesses.

In further illustration of this subject, I will read you the notes of the first case in which I instituted the practice that was afterwards followed in that of the little girl. As it occurred before the invention of the plaster jacket, I had to content myself with enforcing strict recumbency, and fixing the spine, so far as it was possible to do so, with the brace that the man was wearing when I first saw him. As he also made a good recovery, I am led to conclude that, however valuable complete control over the movements of the spine may be in furthering and perfecting a cure, it is not essential with the view of averting hectic or other ill consequences.

John L., a weaver, aged 30, consulted me on the 24th of September, 1868, on account of scolio-cyphosis, the upper dorsal vertebræ being curved to the left, and the sixth and seventh dorsal spines projecting at least an inch and a half beyond the surrounding level. The left lumbar region was the seat of a hemispherical fluctuating swelling, which was devoid of heat, tenderness, and discolouration, and extended from the spine to the posterior border of the external oblique muscle measuring four by four inches and three-quarters in its vertical and transverse diameters. He was weak and emaciated, having lost nearly twenty pounds of flesh, and had been forced to abandon his occupation.

The previous history, for which and for assistance in carrying out the treatment I am indebted to my friend, Dr. James Graham, was