

CANADA

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Lectures on the Pathology and Treatment of Joint Diseases. By LOUIS BAUER, M. D., M. R. C. S., Eng., &c.

IV.

PROGNOSIS OF JOINT DISEASES.

From the preceding remarks of the discourse we may sum up the following prognostic axioms.

From the collective character of joint affections, we must come to the conclusion that they constitute formidable diseases.

In their respective courses, they are slow and protracted, often of years duration.

In their commencement and development they are insidious, and may have proceeded to considerable disintegration of normal tissue before the patient becomes aware of the impending difficulty.

The restitutive powers of some of the articular structures are of an indifferent character, owing to the imperfections of their nutrition.

In as far as the osseous structure is concerned, recovery depends on the gradual destruction of the affected parts which of course is necessarily tedious.

In most joint diseases the affected structures undergo changes more or less disqualifying them for the performance of their respective physiological offices, thus either impeding or annihilating the usefulness of the articulation.

The suppuration of articular cavities leads to their perforation, to extensive subfascial burrowing of pus, and not only involves the extremity, but the constitution at large.

Reflex pains and spasms accompanying joint diseases are of the most violent and torturing character, upsetting rest and appetite, placing the very existence of the patient in jeopardy.