

ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTIONS

CHRONIC INFECTIONS AS A CAUSE OF CHRONIC AND SUB-ACUTE RHEUMATISM. (*Arthritis*).

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I N a previous paper on this subject of rheumatism, (1) reference was made to its infectious origin, and the question was discussed chiefly with regard to intestinal conditions as a causative factor.

Further observation confirms me in the belief that all these chronic arthritic conditions are the result of infections, and that treatment must be based on this hypothesis.

This I believe is fairly well recognized, as for instance, the gonorrhoeal arthritis, is universally accepted as an infection, but still some types are excluded, as having other origins, chief of which are those supposed to be due to changes in the nerve mechanism, controlling a joint, as in Charcot joint and those of traumatic origin, the trauma usually being in the nature of a shock or injury to the nervous system.

The first, that of a Charcot joint, I believe might reasonably be included, since the condition is one recognized as a result of syphilis, which in turn is known to be an infection, and whether the joint disease results from direct infection, via the lymphatic and circulatory systems or indirectly through the injury produced in the nervous system, does not blind one to its true origin.

Of the other class so called traumatic, I might relate the case of a woman around fifty years of age, who was in reasonably good health until shortly after the sudden accidental death of her son. I need not describe the mental shock and anguish, with its worry, loss of sleep, appetite, etc., under such circumstances. The progressive arthritis which followed shortly on this injury, and which in a short time produced invalidism, was by more than one physician stated to be due to the nervous shock, and no doubt that had a bearing, but only a secondary part.

The real cause probably was due to a condition of mouth infection, which will be described later, and which even before any injury contained the potentiality of disease, but which was resisted until the immunity was lowered by deficient nourishment, through worry, loss of sleep, appetite, etc.

Immunity.—The question of immunity here becomes a consideration, in that it is generally recognized, that infections are ever present