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A STUDY OF THE SITTING POSTURE

AND A

PROPOSED APPARATUS FOR PATIENTS

SHORTENED BY POTT'S DISEASE.

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A STUDY OF THE SITTING POSTURE AND A PROPOSED APPARATUS FOR PATIENTS SHORTENED BY POTT'S DISEASE.

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I would like to raise the question whether the condition which too often follows Pott's disease cannot be improved by the use of an apparatus for giving the patient greater height when in the sitting position. Devising and improving such an apparatus, as is the case generally with mechanical invention of any kind, would require some experimentation and what may seem to be the waste of considerable time before a useful result is reached. But I believe that a successful application of this kind would be desirable.

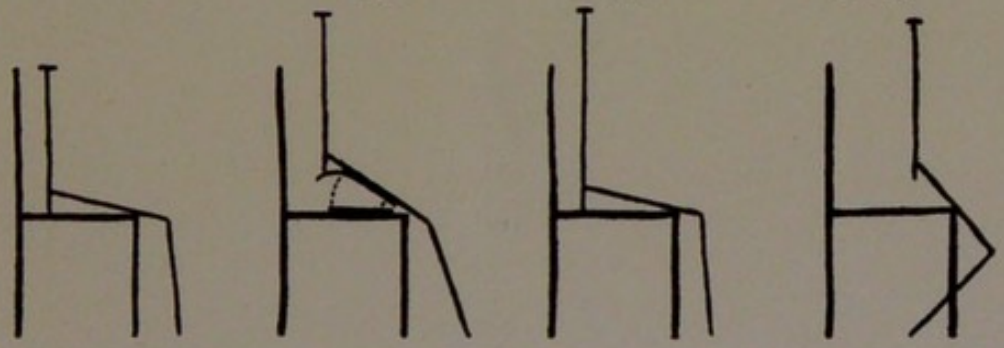
Some of these patients have long limbs, and they would be tall men and women were it not for the shortening of the vertebral column. A surprising effect is sometimes produced when such a patient takes a seat, in a car, for instance. The head and shoulders continue to descend until they are considerably below the common level (Fig. 1). In standing the shortening may not be especially noticeable, as it belongs to the whole figure; but in sitting it belongs entirely to the trunk, and the result is one which may well be avoided if it can be done conveniently.

The apparatus which I have in mind should be worn out of sight under the clothes. It should have a frame sufficiently strong and rigid to support the weight of the body. The frame should be so made as to collapse or to be shut up when the wearer rises, and when he sits it should come into action automatically, to keep the body at a reasonable distance from the seat of the chair (Fig. 2).

It would seem that such an apparatus should have its bearings not only at the ischiatic tuberosity, but also along the posterior surface of the femoral shaft, as it will be recalled that in sitting we

often make use of the thigh-bones as well as the ossa innominata (Fig. 3). When we are tired or in a lounging mood we may sit on the sacrum or, if the feet are on the mantel-piece, on the lumbar region of the spine. An inquisitive European discovered that the Americans were accustomed to sit on the small of the back, and had thus ingeniously demonstrated the use of the part of the anatomy which had been supposed to have no particular function. At other times and in other moods we may sit comfortably on the ischiatic tuberosities alone, and if we would appear erect and dignified we may sit with the tuberosities raised from the seat and with the weight of the body borne by the femoral shafts resting on the edge of the chair. In this last position the natural height is at its

FIG. 1. FIG. 2. FIG. 3. FIG. 4.



best, and patients shortened by Pott's disease may be observed to sit in this manner (Fig. 4) until fatigue prompts a more easy attitude with a descent of the head and shoulders (Fig. 1), which in some cases may, in all probability, be prevented by the use of the apparatus suggested (Fig. 2).

I have nothing further to present on this subject, and close by expressing the hope that some one will carry the idea further.