

On the treatment of congenital talipes equino-varus after the period of infancy / by Henry F. Baker.

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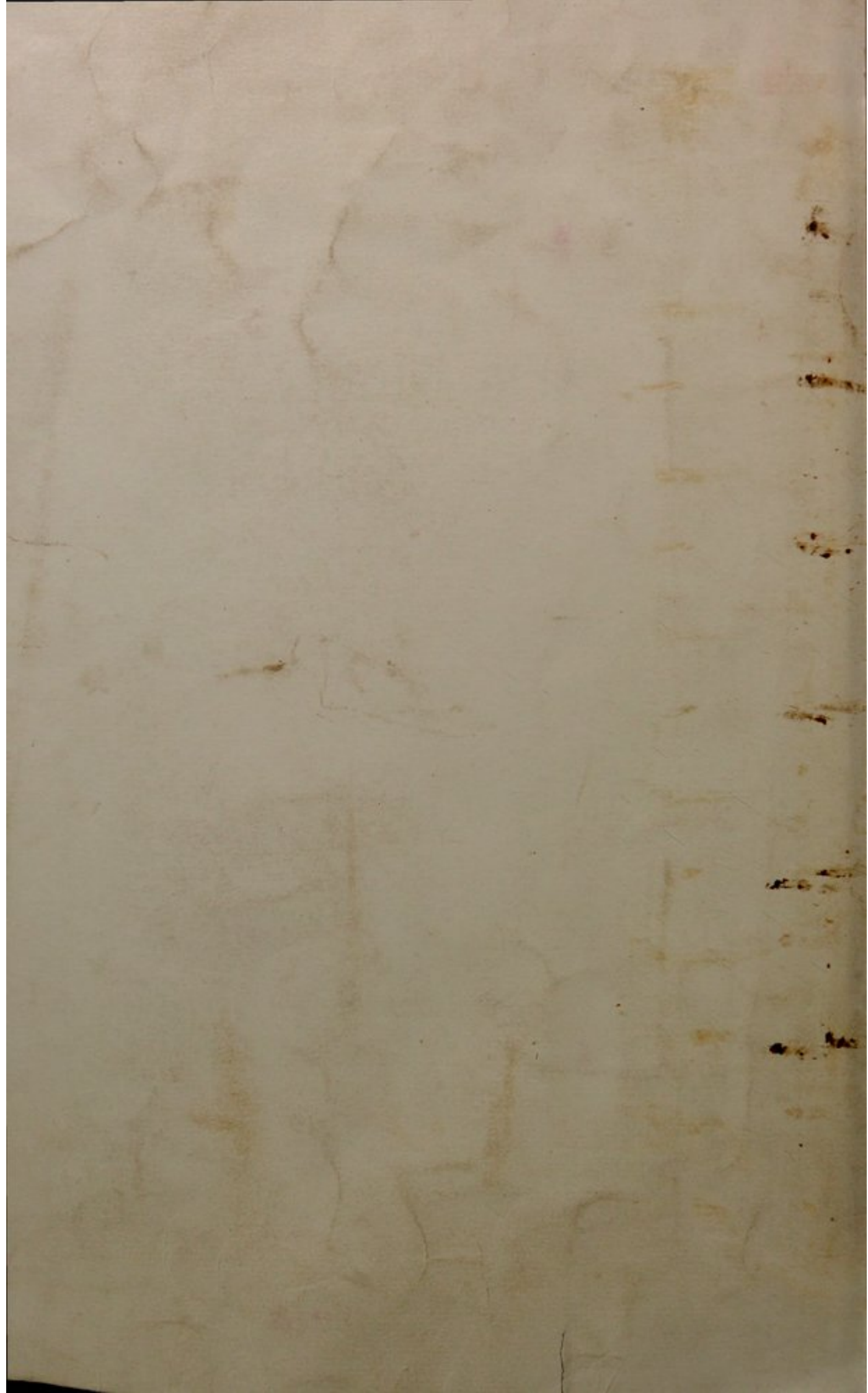
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ON THE TREATMENT
OF
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AFTER THE PERIOD OF INFANCY.

BY

HENRY F. BAKER, F.R.C.S. EDIN.,

HOUSE SURGEON TO THE ROYAL ORTHOPEDIC HOSPITAL; LATE HOUSE SURGEON
TO ST BARTHOLOMEW'S HOSPITAL.

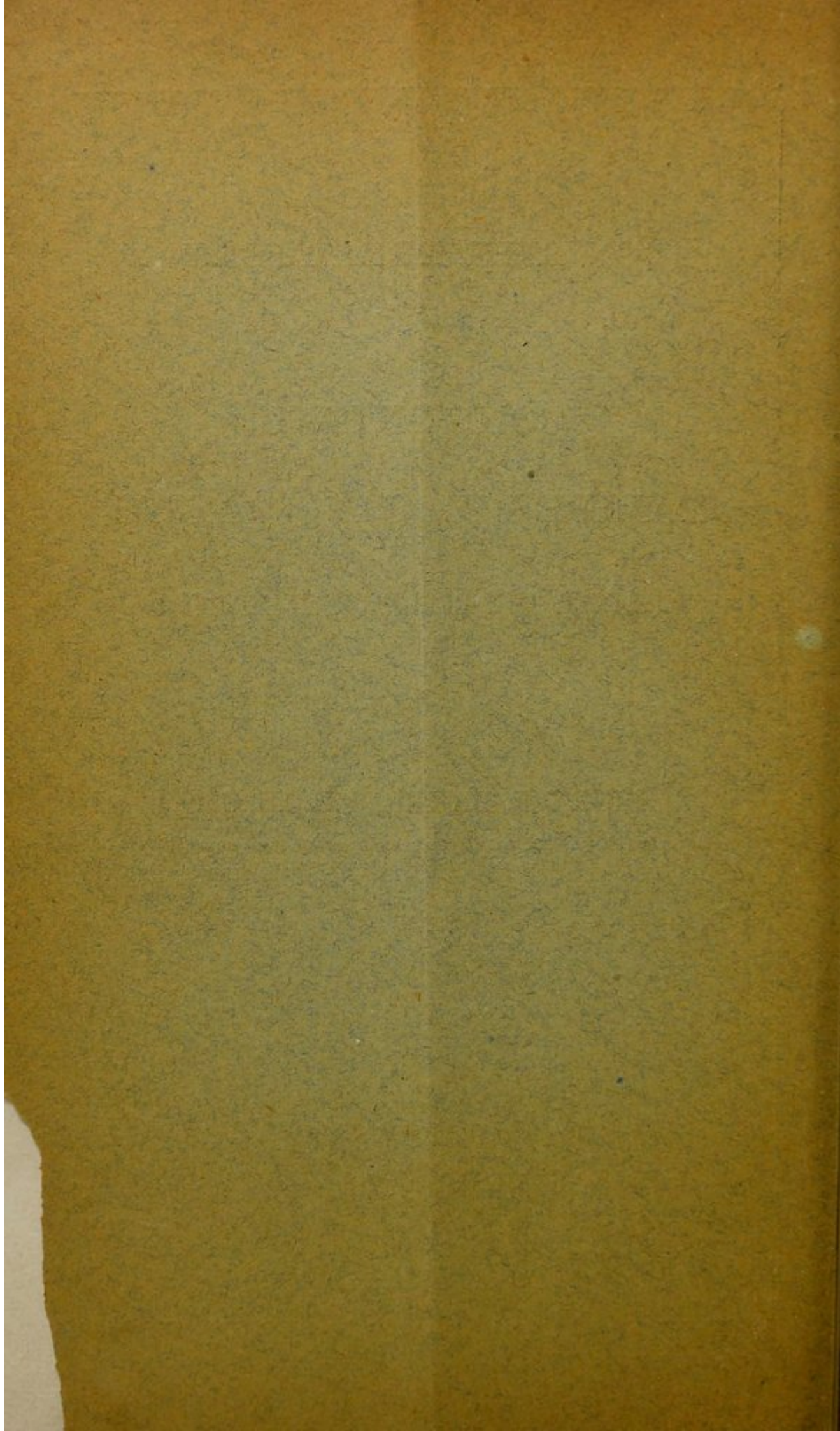
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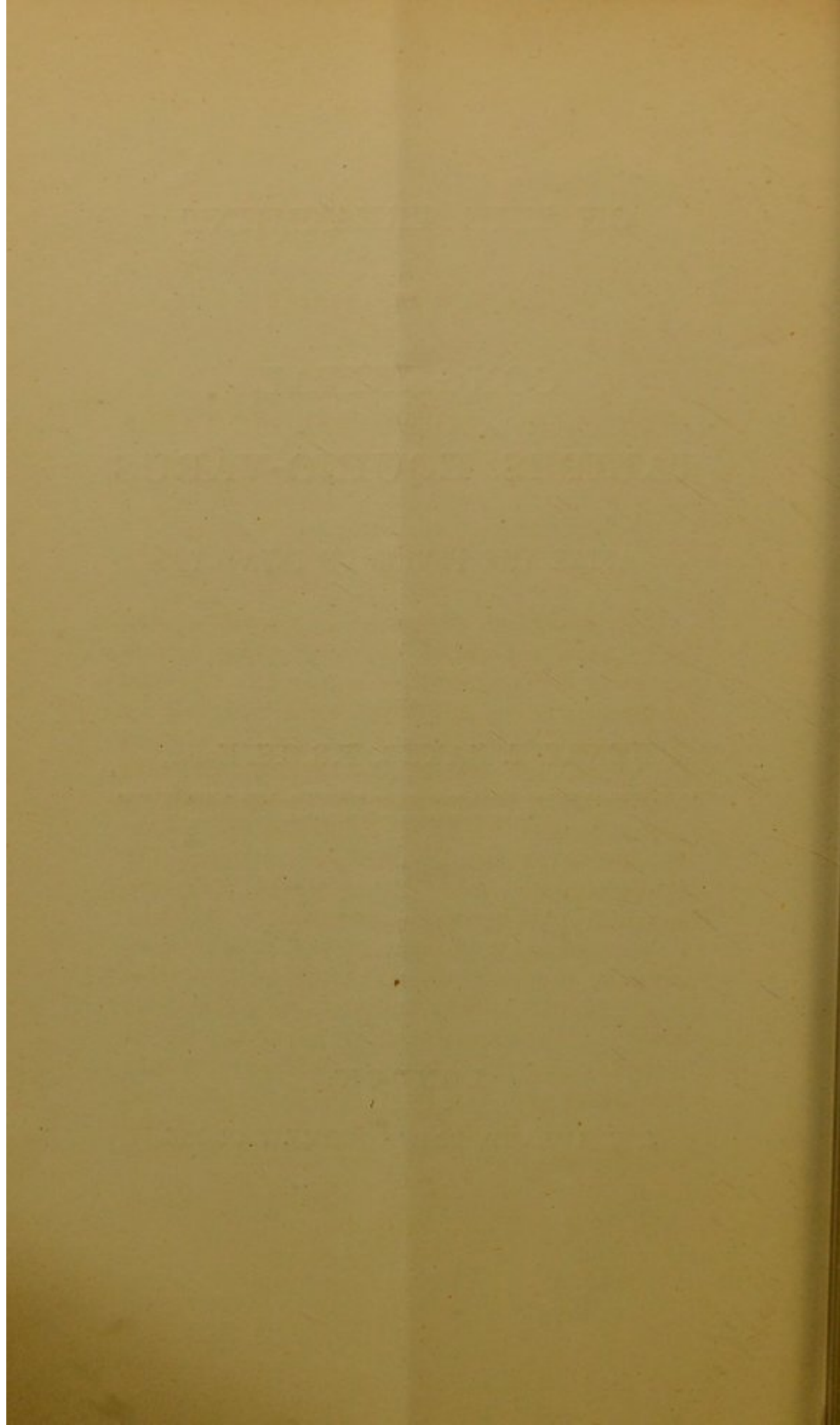


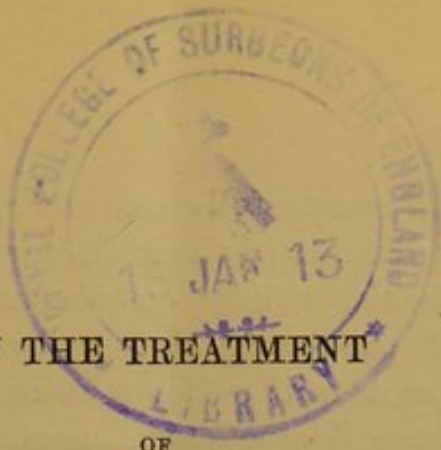
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ON THE TREATMENT

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CONGENITAL TALIPES EQUINO-VARUS AFTER THE PERIOD OF INFANCY.

THE treatment of congenital talipes equino-varus, after the period of infancy, may be conveniently divided into three parts—1st. The cure of the simple infantile varus occasioned only by the contraction of the tibialis posticus, flexor longus digitorum, and the tibialis anticus. 2nd. The cure of the remaining acquired varus, caused by the contraction of the abductor pollicis, plantar fascia, and the various ligaments connected with the misshapen bones of the tarsus. 3rd. The equinus caused by the contracted tendo Achillis.

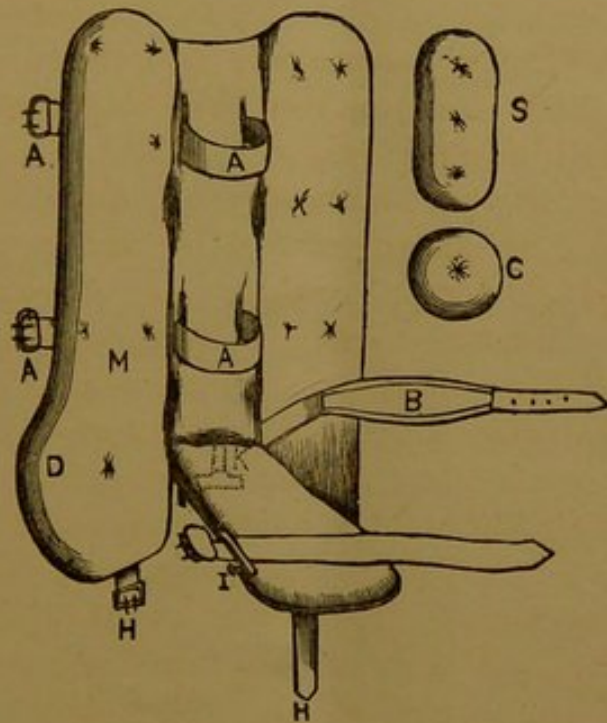
With regard to the treatment of the first part, after the successful division of the tendons mentioned above, the best instrument is, undoubtedly, a well-padded outside splint, to which the foot is gradually drawn by means of an ordinary bandage. When as great a part as possible of the varus has been removed by these simple means, the second part will still remain ; and this is, of all, the most

difficult to successfully overcome, even after the complete division of the abductor pollicis and the plantar fascia, chiefly on account of the great danger of producing sloughs by such an amount of pressure as will suffice to correct the deformity. The common Scarpa's shoe, useful as it is in some forms of talipes, is quite useless here. Scarpa, indeed, invented a special instrument for the purpose, but it is almost impossible to use it without causing sloughs. In more modern times, also, many very clever instruments have been devised with the same object in view, but in practice they have proved only partially successful.

For the efficient application of force in overcoming the resistance formed by the contracted tissues on the concave aspect of the deformed tarsus, the fulcrum must, I believe, be placed on some part of its convexity, and as near as possible to its most projecting point; the internal tubercle of the os calcis being made a fixed point, and the power being represented by the tension of a strap placed round the ball of the great toe. The problem, therefore, to be solved is—How can the fulcrum be applied in this position for the required length of time without causing sloughs?—and it appears to me that the only method is by rendering it a *movable* one. In other words, the pad which forms the fulcrum, instead of being a fixed part of the splint, should be unconnected with it and thus made capable of being shifted from point to point along the outer edge of the tarsus, as circumstances require. The instrument which I have devised for carrying this into execution is

figured below (Fig. 1). The figure represents the instrument open, and it will be seen to consist of a back-splint, connected with a foot-piece by means of a cog-wheel, *κ*, at the heel, and having hinged to it two wings which extend well below the foot-piece, and have a buckle and strap, *н*, attached to their lower ends. *А А* are two webbing

FIG. 1.

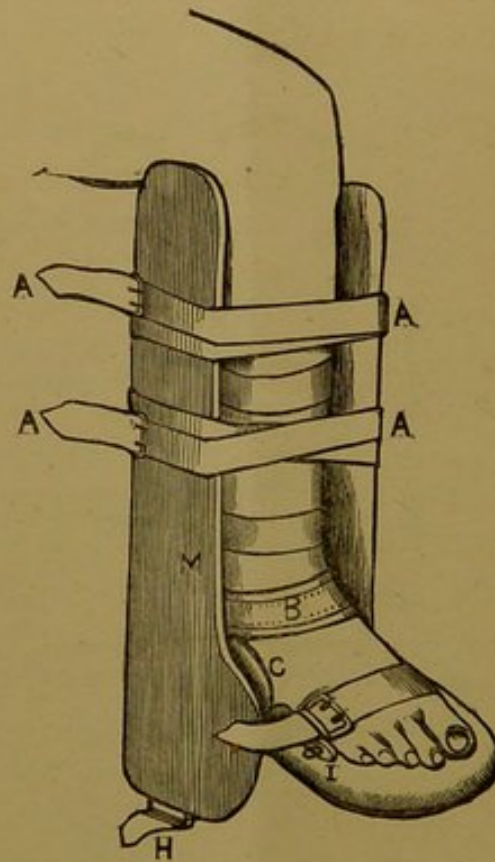


straps introduced through slots, to fix the leg firmly. *B* is a leather ankle-strap, wide and padded in the centre, to fix the heel immovably in its position ; it is attached to a buckle at the back. *D* is a plate attached to the external wing ; and *C* is the pad, or movable fulcrum, to be placed beneath it, and to press on the projection at the

outer side of the foot. *i* is a rigid bar for carrying the toe-strap.

Fig. 2 represents the instrument in action. The leg is firmly held to the back-splint by the straps *A A*. The heel is kept in place by strap *B*,

FIG. 2.



and the movable pad *c* is adjusted. The wings are brought together, and firmly fixed by the further action of the straps *A A*, and strap *H*; and the toe-strap is then tightened, and the cog-wheel, *κ*, screwed up. By simply loosening the toe-strap, the pressure is at once relieved if this should be

found necessary, as is frequently the case at night, when the foot becomes hot; and in a day or two, the wings being thrown back, *but the foot not being disturbed*, the pad, c, may be slightly shifted. In some cases it will be found convenient to introduce the rectangular pad, s (Fig. 1), within the external wing at m, and so place the fulcrum on the outside of the leg; but this materially diminishes the power of the instrument.

This splint is equally well adapted for carrying out the third state of the treatment—viz. correcting the equinus after the division of the tendo Achillis; and in some cases it can be used for this purpose before the second period of the cure of the varus is quite completed.

A varus splint, constructed in some respects like the one described, was devised by the late Mr. Tamplin, and has been in use at the Royal Orthopædic Hospital for many years in the treatment of *infantile* varus, for which it is well adapted. It fails, however, altogether in the treatment of those more difficult cases of acquired tarsal deformity which are the subject of the present communication. The special points in which the splint here suggested differs from Mr. Tamplin's are—(1) the addition of an inner wing; (2) the projection of both wings well below the foot-plate, with connecting strap; (3) the rigid toe-bar attached to the sole-plate; (4) leather padded ankle-strap; and (5)—the most important of all—the movable pad which forms the fulcrum.

If it should be thought advisable to combine the use of a spring or elastic pressure, this can be

at once done by placing a steel spring in the position of the rigid toe-bar, or an elastic toe-strap in the place of the one made of common webbing. Neither of these alterations, however, would be, in my opinion, an improvement.

I may mention that the instrument has been made for me by Mr. Gumpel, of Leicester Square; and I take this opportunity of acknowledging the very efficient manner in which my suggestions have been carried out.



