

## Chapped Hands and How to Prevent Them.

BY C. J. S. THOMPSON.

**T**HE cold damp and changeable nature of our climate, especially during the winter months, brings many discomforts in its train. Among the minor ones, trifling compared with some, perhaps, but none the less annoying, are the chapped hands and roughness of the skin from which so many Nurses and others suffer a considerable amount of inconvenience during cold weather.

The most exposed parts of the body, such as the back of the hands, wrists, and face, are the first to be affected, and those who have to immerse the hands frequently in cold liquids are especially liable to attack.

The primary cause of the trouble is doubtless largely due to the effect of the cold biting air, with a low temperature, upon a sensitive skin.

The chaps are formed by the scarf skin, or thin outer cuticle becoming hard and inelastic, which causes it to shrivel up, and expose the sensitive skin underneath, which soon becomes inflamed, cracks, and bleeds. If nothing is done to check this, the part becomes very sore and painful.

As with chilblains, some people would appear to have a predisposition to chapped skin, while others entirely escape the attack, even in the coldest weather.

It should be remembered that chapped hands are much easier prevented than cured, and with a little trouble and care before the winter sets in they may be avoided. If precautions be used before the cuticle begins to fray, the most sensitive skin may be kept soft and whole.

The first precaution necessary is to wash the hands in warm water only if possible, and *take care to thoroughly dry the skin*, especially the back of the hands and wrists after so doing. Before drying, rub them over with the emollient cream—made from the recipe given below—then thoroughly wipe them until quite dry. Wear long gloves (thin leather is preferable to wool) that will cover the wrists by a couple of inches, and always have the hands covered before going out into the air; avoid exposing the skin to the cold atmosphere for even a few minutes.

The last thing at night a small quantity of lanoline or lanoline cream should be well rubbed all

over the hands and wrists, the superfluous grease being wiped off with a cloth.

By following out these simple precautionary measures, much annoyance and pain may be saved.

A good emollient cream for the skin is: Take of white wax,  $\frac{1}{4}$ oz.; oil of sweet almonds,  $1\frac{1}{2}$ oz.; curd soap (in fine shavings),  $\frac{1}{4}$ oz.; glycerine, 3ozs.; borax in powder,  $\frac{1}{4}$ oz.; rose water, 3ozs.; perfume with a few drops of otto of roses or oil of Bergamot.

Proceed, by dissolving first, the finely shaved soap in the rose water, which should be done by placing them in a good sized bottle with a wide neck. Then allow the bottle to stand in a pan of water which should be put on a gas stove, and gentle heat applied. When all the soap has dissolved, add the glycerine and borax, and shake well together. Now put the white wax with the almond oil in a jar or bowl, placing it in a pan of water in the same manner as the soap, and apply gentle heat until the wax is dissolved. Pour the oil while warm into the soap solution, and shake well up. Continue the shaking now and again until it becomes cold, when the perfume may be added. The finished product should be white, and of a nice creamy consistence. Preserve it in a bottle, and shake well each time before using. With regard to the best treatment for skin that has become chapped, the remedies used are numerous. The application should be one that will cause the skin to become soft and elastic again, as well as of a healing nature. It must also protect the sensitive skin that is exposed, from the cold. If the cracks are very large and bleed much, they should be painted each time after washing with collodion. Perhaps the most popular of all remedies is glycerine, and a very excellent one it is when properly used.

Glycerine should not be applied undiluted, as it may cause inflammation, and also gives unnecessary pain. It is much more healing and effective when mixed with an equal quantity of good rose water, or better still with eau-de-cologne. The latter mixture, made either by mixing one part of glycerine to two of cologne, or in equal proportions, forms an excellent application for chapped skin on the face or hands. It should be applied twice or three times a day by lightly rubbing it over the affected parts after washing, while the skin is wet, and afterwards thoroughly drying with the towel. For those who prefer a more solid form of application, glycerine jelly may be recommended. It can be easily made by taking: Clear calf's foot jelly, two parts; pure glycerine, one part.

Put the jelly in a jar or bottle, and melt, by placing it in a pan of hot water. When liquified,

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