

the disinfected skin is protected with an anti-septic dressing. A little glycerine is added to the lotion in which the gauze next to the skin is soaked. The glycerine keeps the dressing moist and helps the chemical to penetrate the skin. A scrap of the whole thickness of the skin was cut off and dropped into broth. The results were as follows:

The skin of the breast was tested once, before an amputation, and was aseptic. The skin of the abdomen was tested twice, once at the end of a gastro-enterostomy and once before laparotomy for tuberculous peritonitis; each time it was aseptic, and both cases ran an aseptic course. The skin of the neck was tested once and was septic. The skin of the back of the hand was tested once and was aseptic. In the lower limb the skin of the dorsum of the great toe was tested once and was aseptic. The skin of the calf of the leg was tested four times before operating upon varicose veins; it was aseptic three times and septic once. Twice the skin of the front of the knee was aseptic, and three times that of the popliteal space. Thus the skin of the lower limb was only septic once in ten experiments.

We had a great many opportunities of testing the skin of the groin, and that of the scrotum—the former in operations for the radical cure of hernia, and the latter in operations for the radical cure of hydrocele and of varicocele. In both these regions the proportion of septic skin is much higher. The skin of the groin was aseptic five times and septic six times. In one case the skin was tested both before the operation and at the end, and each time it was septic. The skin of the scrotum gave slightly better results. Out of fourteen tests eight were aseptic and six were septic.

Thus the skin of the patient has been tested forty-one times, with the result that it was aseptic twenty-six times and septic fourteen, one of the latter having been tested twice. The limbs gave the best results; then the breast and abdomen; and the groin and scrotum the worst. The frequency with which the skin of the limbs can be disinfected helps, I have no doubt, to explain the greater certainty of the results of operations upon them. It is obvious, too, that hairy regions, with numerous sebaceous glands, are particularly difficult to disinfect.

The micrococcus which has been called *staphylococcus epidermidis albus* was almost invariably grown from the septic skin; but as I have not had time to make plate cultures from the infected broth, but only to inoculate a gelatine and an agar tube from it, a definite diagnosis cannot be given. Any work of this kind which is not supported by plate cultures is of inferior value.

Medical Matters.

THE NEW PHOTOGRAPHY.



AS the experience of the properties of the X rays increases, various drawbacks are reported by various observers, which are of the utmost interest and importance. For example, one gentleman, who has for some months been daily using the system, reports that the nails of the hand which was exposed to the rays have dropped off. Another states that his hair has become prematurely grey in patches. And, in a recent issue of a German medical journal, a case is recorded of a youth of seventeen, who was for four weeks exposed to these rays once or twice a day. Each sitting lasting from five to ten minutes, and the light was placed about ten inches from the chest. The heat from the tube was very slight, and the patient always wore a shirt. But after a week there was found to be a patch as large as a plate between the shoulders, over which the skin was reddened as if burnt, so that the epidermis was completely separated. At the corresponding part of the front of the chest there was a similar burn of about the same size, but less severe. Both places rapidly healed, and, just above one ear, a patch of baldness developed after similar reddening of the skin. It is only common sense to expect that light which possesses the extraordinary powers of penetration exhibited by these X rays, should also have other important properties. And it is possible that the chemical changes which they appear to be able to produce in various tissues may render them of immense assistance, in the future, in the treatment of disease. In fact, the possibilities of the Röntgen rays are immense, and all we want now is more light on their exact constitution and powers.

FISH POISONING.

It is well known that some people are very liable to symptoms of poisoning after eating certain articles of diet—although these may be perfectly wholesome to others—and that many people who do not exhibit such idiosyncracies are undoubtedly made seriously ill by fish which is stale or tainted. For example, Urticaria is undoubtedly due to such poison-

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