

OUR PRIZE COMPETITION.

MENTION SOME OF THE MORE COMMON SKIN AFFECTIONS, THEIR CAUSES, AND THE TREATMENT YOU HAVE SEEN APPLIED.

We have pleasure in awarding the prize this week to Miss Theodora Harris, Town Hall Chambers, Hastings.

PRIZE PAPER.

The more common skin affections met with in ordinary practice are as follows:—

1. *Scabies*, commonly known as the "itch," causing great irritation, consequent scratching, and frequently sores due to the latter. This disease is caused by a parasite which burrows under the skin; it is contagious from person to person, and by garments and bedding that have been in contact with the patient. Treatment: Hot bath, with soft soap, scrubbing with a rough loofah or nailbrush to remove the top layer of skin and expose the parasite, followed by application of sulphur ointment. This ointment will kill the parasite provided it be brought into direct contact with it, but it is useless without the hot bath and scrubbing. Clean garments must be put on, and all clothing and bedding disinfected. Unless the last is accomplished, the patient will become re-infected. This treatment should cure if satisfactorily performed, but in obstinate cases may be repeated twice, after which three days must elapse before another treatment, or dermatitis may result.

2. *Impetigo* is very common, especially in children of the poorer classes. It may be caused by direct contact with another child suffering from it, by cuts and scratches that have not been kept clean, or by the bites and irritation of head lice. Herpes, if not kept clean, may develop into impetigo. Treatment: Absolute cleanliness, careful bathing with clean material that can be burnt, to remove the crusts, and the application of a weak mercurial ointment, often combined with zinc. For patients who can be relied on to be careful and cleanly boracic powder dusted on will often prove efficacious, but for the average elementary school child the antiseptic ointment will answer the purpose best. An aperient should also be taken, and if the patient be a child, great care must be observed that he is not allowed to pick at it.

3. *Seborrhœa*, both of the head and body, is also very common, and, in a great many cases, is left unnoticed and untreated until well established, when the condition can be extremely obstinate. The cause is a dry condi-

tion of the skin, chiefly the scalp, and frequently results in falling hair and premature baldness and greyness. It may also be the cause of rosacea, dermatitis, so-called "eczema," and the basis of psoriasis. Treatment can be successfully carried out by the application of sulphur and salicylic ointment to the scalp, beginning with 1 per cent. and increasing to 3 per cent. The body seborrhœa will often disappear by itself when the scalp clears, and rosacea and "eczema" of the face have cleared like magic under this treatment; but it must be persevered in for months, possibly.

Where the body seborrhœa is very pronounced, sulphur and salicylic may be applied. This treatment will often produce excellent results with psoriasis, but in some cases of the latter, lead and tar lotion may be substituted.

4. *Ringworm* is extremely common in childhood, but dies out spontaneously at about 14. The two kinds usually met are the large-spored body ringworm, and the small-spored ringworm of the scalp. Both are due to a vegetable fungus, and both are contracted through direct contact, either with the patient or by towels, headgear, &c. The greatest care should be taken that a child suffering from ringworm should use only his own hat, towel, brush, &c. The body ringworm is easy of cure by tincture of iodine—three applications, at intervals of two days, are generally successful—but for ringworm of the head the only really efficacious thing is X-ray treatment. Treatment by local applications may go on twelve months and more, and then be unsuccessful.

For all skin troubles absolute cleanliness is essential, and in many cases an improvement in the patient's general health will predispose him to benefit by the local treatment.

HONOURABLE MENTION.

The following competitors receive honourable mention:—Miss B. James, Miss M. Hutton, Miss P. Thomson, Miss T. Robinson.

Eczema is a disease mentioned by Miss Thomson. It is usually associated with some constitutional condition, and may be hereditary. Miss T. Robinson mentions boils and carbuncles as a form of skin disease. If there are recurrent crops they may be associated with diabetes mellitus, and the urine should be examined for sugar. They are also associated with debility.

QUESTION FOR NEXT WEEK.

How would you feed a nervous patient whose diet is left to your discretion? Give a model dietary for a day.

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