

A NEW METHOD IN THE LOCAL TREATMENT OF ACNE.

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IN several of the forms of acne the local treatment most speedily effective is that first suggested by my friend Dr. George Henry Fox, of New York city. He employs a ring curette, of the kind chiefly used by the gynæcologists, and with this instrument the comedones and pustules of the face displaying the lesions of acne are raked away in a *débris* of pus, blood, sebaceous secretion, and epithelium, with a resulting benefit in many cases which seems well-nigh proportioned to the severity of the pre-existing symptoms.

I have employed this instrument for several years with marked advantage in selected cases; but there are distinct objections to its use. These are, first, the painful character of the operation, often a matter of some moment in the case of a young woman with a specially sensitive face; second, a too frequent and unnecessary superficial wounding of the epidermis by the relatively sharp edge of the curette; third, the inapplicability of the treatment to certain forms of acne in which the inflammatory products are subepidermic, or where the disease occurs less in pustular type than with the development of indurated papules.

It has occurred to me on several occasions, when making use of the curette, that its value lay fully as much in the degree of massage it produced in the skin of the face as in its action as a knife or as a scraper.

Acting upon this suggestion, I lately devised a massering ball for use in the local treatment of acne which has in my hands produced satisfactory results.

The instrument, figured in the appended cut, consists of a stout and short handle, constructed of hard rubber, and connected by means of a slender steel neck with a ball set in a steel socket, the small sphere rotating within the cup of the latter, as in the ordinary ball-and-socket joint. The free play of the ball in this case is aided by its



bearing upon a smaller ball set in the neck of the cup attached to the handle. This handle is fixed upon the socket at an angle sufficiently convenient for the operator, whose eye can thus better follow the play of the ball.

The latter is constructed of hard rubber, and the area of its impact upon the skin at any moment is about that of the human thumb of average size similarly placed. When actually in use the ball travels with ease as well along the angles of the nares with the cheeks, the bridge and root of the nose, and the regions below the symphysis



Dr. Hyde's massering ball

menti, as over the brow, the temples, the chin, and the cheeks. When necessary to cleanse it, the ball is detached by unscrewing; but the entire instrument may be boiled without damage to its usefulness.

When ready for treatment, the skin is first operated upon with disinfected needle and comedo-extractor (or "comedo-presser," as our English brethren call it) until all pustules and subepidermic foci are emptied and conspicuous comedones removed. After this the surface is rendered aseptic, either with one of the bichloride lotions commonly employed, or, as I much prefer, with a solution of formalin (forty per cent of formic aldehyde) in the strength of from one half of one per cent. to two per cent., according to the sensitiveness of the patient's face. The massering ball is then rotated freely over the surface, and deep pressure is made upon the affected region, with the result of bringing into view groups of previously inconspicuous comedones which are in turn removed by the extractor or "presser." Lastly, a massage of the surface is practiced with the ball by the aid of a salicylated cocoanut oil or one of the commonly employed sulphur unguents.

All this naturally requires a little time and a modicum of skill, but it is not contended that the process here outlined is a routine method of treating acne in all stages, or even of treating all cases of acne at one stage in its career. The method is suggested as an aid to the management especially of indolent and intractable cases; though

I am led to believe that when properly employed it may have a value in others; and possibly also in other diseases of the skin of the face than acne.

The Messrs. Tiemann & Co., who have been interested in carrying out my suggestions in detail, purpose, they inform me, constructing an instrument with several balls attached to a single handle, for the purpose of producing effective massage over the general surface of the body, thus attacking a larger area with greater steadiness and to a greater depth. It is, however, for the local management of cases of acne that the instrument has been specially devised.

