

Mrs. W. came under my care some months ago, at which time she had, according to her own statement, been suffering for two years. Being a woman of more than ordinary intelligence, she was able to inform me that she had taken all the usual remedies, jaborandi, iron, arsenic, strychnia, etc., etc., without any permanent benefit. About that time I read the paper of Dr. W. A. Hammond on "Certain effects of certain organic extracts, their physiological and therapeutical effects." Feeling that I had a case of true myxoedema, I sent to Parke Davis & Co. for, and received from them, a supply of desiccated thyroids which I immediately began to administer in doses of seven grains three times a day. After the first few days a visible improvement took place which has been going on ever since, the change in the patient's appearance being most marked, the swollen and mask-like look has almost disappeared, and the patient, to use her own words, says, "I can go out now, I used to be ashamed to do so on account of my face."

This patient is apparently cured of her myxoedema, and I hope these few imperfect remarks hurriedly penned may induce others to give the remedy used in this case a fair trial. Myxoedema was, under the usual treatment, a disease in which the prognosis was *very bad*.

## Progress of Medical Science.

### MOLLUSCUM CONTAGIOSUM.\*

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In cancer there is an increased vegetative activity of epithelial cells, which act as parasites, destroying all before them. It is not surprising that they are able to do so, for they are perfect individual entities, receiving and digesting the food brought to them by the blood, and discharging, together with their fellows, such duties as fall to their lot in the human make-up. Although from what is known of the physiology of epithelial cells, it is perfectly comprehensible that any slight irritation acting through a long period of time may bring about this malignant change; yet many men have supposed there must exist, and some have really asserted the existence of, some special parasite, which probably lives in the cell, and exerts a spermatogenic and stimulating action on it. If such a parasite exist, and its possibility must be admitted on theoretical grounds, its discovery would in

all probability lead to most valuable results, as we might then be able to diagnose this terrible disease much earlier and much more certainly than at present; and, also, if proven a disease due to a micro-organism, better means would likely be evolved from our knowledge of the life-history of the parasite, for the prevention of cancer.

If in any disease a parasite could be discovered having its habitat within the epithelial cell, causing an increase of its activity, giving it aggressive properties, and leading it to a quick degeneration, the right lines would seem to be laid down along which investigators might patiently tramp to the final solution of the question.

At one time the disease under consideration, *Molluscum contagiosum*, seemed to furnish this starting point. *Molluscum contagiosum* consists of little pearl-like tumours, having a central depression on the summit, and appearing usually on the face. It is a perfectly innocent affection, causing trouble only by its disagreeable appearance. The disease, however, is highly interesting histologically, for it is a variety of epithelial tumour in which the epithelial cells proliferate rapidly, degenerate quickly, and grow downward against the subjacent

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