

CHAPTER IV

APPLICATION OF THERAPEUTIC CURRENTS TO THE BODY

BEFORE considering the different forms of current in detail, it will be well to sketch in general outline the methods which may be adopted for applying them to the body. The following remarks apply particularly to the galvanic, sinnsoidal, polyphase, and faradic currents.

Electrodes.—The first essential is to provide adequate contacts between the patient and the wires carrying the current. These contacts are commonly made of some malleable conducting material, such as sheet lead, tin, aluminium, chain mail, or wire gauze. They should for most purposes be of as large a size as possible, to enable a big current to be passed without the pain and even burning which results from concentration of current over a small area of skin. If both electrode are of equal importance they are the same size, but when it is desired to concentrate the action on one electrode (called the "active electrode"), it is usually made considerably smaller. The other larger one is then called the "indifferent electrode." In stimulating individual muscles or nerves the active electrode is small and round in shape—about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch to $\frac{3}{4}$ inch in diameter.

The electrodes are covered with several layers of lint or a thick sponge, and well soaked in warm