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THE LOCAL TREATMENT OF ECZEMA.<sup>1</sup>

BY

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The subject to which I desire to call your attention to-night is the local treatment of only the more common forms of eczema, and it will not be out of place to offer first a few general directions regarding the cleansing of eczematous surfaces and to detail some approved methods for the removal of secondary products—such as crusts and scales.

*For cleansing purposes.*—Avoid, if possible, the use of plain water or soap and water. If the former has to be employed it should be as hot as can be borne, and the surface over which it has been used should be dried quickly and thoroughly and the selected dressing immediately applied. All detergent fluids should be warmed before use. Olive or cottonseed oil will cleanse almost as well as soap and water, and, if the part is carefully wiped, but little greasiness remains. Again, water boiled with a small quantity of oatmeal, bran or barley, and then strained can be used with comparative impunity. Or thin strained rice-milk cleanses well and is soothing to tender and acutely inflamed surfaces. Thin hot starch, to which has been added boric acid in the proportion of a teaspoonful of the latter to a pint of the former, is a very excellent and soothing detergent.

*To remove crusts, scales, etc.*—Before any line of local treatment can be begun all secondary products—crusts, scales, etc.—must be removed. This can be accomplished by saturating them with oil. For instance, in a case of eczema of a child's or infant's head, where numerous crusts are present, the part should be well sopped in oil and then covered with pieces of lint or cotton-flannel which also have

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<sup>1</sup> Read before the Montreal Clinical Society, January 28th, 1898.