

tioner is to hold on to his case as long as he can, for if he retires from it the consultant will either keep the family's practice himself, or else he will hand it over to one of his proteges. When the attending physician finds that he must go, he had better part in an amiable and friendly manner, and, in nine cases out of ten, he will be reinstated before very long.

THE TREATMENT OF SKIN DISEASES.

On consulting any standard work on skin diseases, in search of advice, which will help us to cure our patient suffering perhaps from some long standing disease of this kind, we will find no end of prescriptions recommended under the particular heading to which we turn. We may try the first of these, and each of the following prescriptions in rotation, and yet we fail to cure the case. And why? Because we have failed to remove the cause, which all the time is silently but surely working as hard in the direction of disease as we are working in the direction of cure. We think that the study of diseases of the skin is rendered a great deal more obscure and puzzling than there is any need for, by the almost endless nomenclature with which the slightest variations of one and the same disease are burthened. We venture to offer the following remarks on the treatment of diseases of the skin, in the hope that we may clear certain principles to guide the practitioner in the management of cases which have too often baffled all his skill. The simplest and most practical classification, it seems to us, is that based on their origin. All, or nearly all, skin diseases are due to:

- 1st. Parasites, animal or vegetable.
- 2nd. Specific or constitutional disease, either inherited or acquired.
- 3rd. To disorders of the digestive functions.

In the first class alone have local applications any real curative power. In tinea

tonsurans, tinea circinata and tinea versicolor, &c., the disease being due to a micro-organism, situate generally in the hair follicles, it suffices to introduce a germicide to the bottom of the latter to put an end to the disease. The most convenient remedy for this purpose is the dilute nitrate of mercury ointment, about one in eight, thoroughly rubbed in, which is used with so much success by Dr. Stephen Mackenzie, at the Skin Department of the London Hospital. If the parasite be an animal, as scabies, sulphur ointment works like a charm, if properly applied, as at the Hospital St. Louis, at Paris, where some hundred cases of scabies are not only treated but cured every morning; the patient being given a hot bath, with soft soap, and then thoroughly rubbed with sulphur ointment, during which time his clothing is being roasted in a specially constructed oven, whence it is returned to him thoroughly disinfected by the time he has gone through his treatment.

When the disease is due to syphilis, it is only wasting time to treat the case as a local affection of the skin: you may spend years trying lotions and ointments, and not do, what can be surely done by means of mercury, in as many weeks. By far the largest number of skin diseases in our experience are due to disorders of digestion and assimilation. For instance, if food is not digested it will decompose: and the products of decomposition will as surely be absorbed. Acting as foreign matters in the blood, they are gotten rid of by the excreting organs, one of the principal of which is the skin. The products of the sweat and sebaceous glands are thus rendered acrid and irritating, with the result of blocking up their channels and causing retention of their secretions and excretions. In some cases the sweat and sebaceous matter directly irritate the sensitive papillæ of the skin, causing itching; in other cases, where there is not sufficient of the products of putrefaction to cause disease of the