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Society Proceedings.

MEDICO-CHIRURGICAL SOCIETY OF MONTREAL.

Stated Meeting, March 11th, 1887.

Dr. WILKINS, 1ST VICE-PRESIDENT, IN THE CHAIR.

Dr. GEO. H. FOX of New York, Dr. PHELPS of Chateauguay, and Dr. JACKSON of Brockville were present at the meeting.

Common Errors in the Treatment of Skin Diseases.—Dr. Fox read a paper on the common errors in the treatment of skin diseases. He said that the great error made by practitioners in treating skin diseases was failure to treat the patient; the disease is treated, not the patient. It is most important that the patient have fresh air, wholesome food—in short, everything that tends to improve the general health. Special treatment of the disease is of no avail without improving the condition of the patient. He regarded attention to the diet as most important, and said there should be a radical change both in the quantity and quality of the food; a strict course of diet should be given the patient; the majority of patients improve on starvation diet. He advised his patients to increase the quantity of fluids taken and decrease the solids; to eat less and exercise more. A change of diet almost invariably proves of value, the more radical the better; he gets the best therapeutical effects from a vegetable diet in the treatment of inflammatory skin affections. A meat diet congests the skin; a vegetable diet relieves the congestion. He is in the habit of restricting the meat in winter

and forbidding it in summer. In giving directions to a patient it is better to tell them what to eat than what to avoid. Water should be taken sparingly at meals, but in quantity between meals. In speaking of local applications, he said that very few are needed. If the disease be acute, soothing applications should be given; if chronic, stimulating ones. Infantile eczema is, as a rule, too much stimulated, and chronic eczema with infiltration too little stimulated. In treating psoriasis, chrysophanic acid is the best remedy, but even this remedy should not be used in every case, as it does positive injury where there are congestion and inflammation, but later, when the eruption becomes dry, it does good. In acne a tonic treatment is best. In speaking of local applications, the reader of the paper stated that when the substance is needed to be absorbed by the skin, then the animal fats should be used; when mere protection is wanted, then vegetable fats do very well. Vaseline has but little power of penetrating the skin. He then went on to speak of arsenic, which, he said, is used too much by the general practitioner in the treatment of skin diseases, and which, as regards skin diseases, would not be missed if abolished from the pharmacopœia; he now rarely uses it. It is at best a much over-rated remedy, and its indiscriminate use in skin diseases is fraught with evil.

Discussion.—Dr. SHEPHERD said he was not prepared to go the length Dr. Fox did in attributing such a vast influence to diet in the treatment of skin diseases. No doubt it is often of importance, but he thought that Dr. Fox, like many others, was riding his special hobby too hard.