

On raising a patch of seborrhœa, we find the underlying skin red indeed, and somewhat chining but with no appearance of moisture, as with eczema.

A careful examination of the patient before us will justify the assertion that we have here a well-marked case of the last of these three disease,—seborrhœa capitis,—seborrhœa of the head.

There are two varieties of seborrhœa: seborrhœa oleosa and seborrhœa sicca. The former is characterized, as its name would indicate, by increased fluidity of the sebaceous secretion, which is also poured out in such quantity that the affected skin frequently looks as if it had been freshly anointed with oil. This variety is most usually found on the face, although it sometimes occurs on the scalp and elsewhere. When persons who are exposed to dust or dirt become subjects of this variety of the disease, the visage presents a peculiar and constant grimy appearance, which nothing but frequent cleansing can prevent.

In seborrhœa sicca, on the contrary, the more solid constituents of the sebum predominate and the secretion assumes an inspissated condition; hence the name, dry seborrhœa. It is the latter variety of seborrhœa which we have in the case before us.

This affection is not invariably confined to the scalp; on the contrary, we frequently see it on the face, and, in fact, it may occur in any part of the body where there are sebaceous glands. It is decidedly more common, however, in the scalp, since in this locality the sebaceous glands are more numerous and active than elsewhere.

When seborrhœa sicca occurs in non-hairy portions of the body, its appearance is decidedly modified; fewer scales are detached, and the diseased surface usually presents simply a circumscribed patch of congested skin, with slightly roughened cuticle.

The pathology of the affection is as follows; When from any cause the sebaceous glands take on abnormal action, not only is their secretion altered, in one way or another, and poured out in increased quantity, but their epithelial investment itself becomes to a certain degree affected, and the lining cells are reproduced and thrown off with unhealthy rapidity. It is the cells constituting this lining membrane, as well as the inspissated sebum which mats them together, which go to form the pearly-gray scales observed on the surface of the skin.

The name of the disease—seborrhœa—is derived from the Greek, and signifies a flow of sebum to an abnormal amount, this being the characteristics feature of the affection.

The rapidity with which the scales are thrown off is astonishing. Our patient has just told us that in a short time the scalp may become entirely covered with them. This rapid proliferation of the lining epithelium with abnormal and excessive secretion from the sebaceous follicles may go on for years if unchecked, and finally the disease may involve the hairs—sheaths themselves, and cause the death of the hair. Seborrhœa becomes, in this way one of the most frequent causes of premature baldness.

The origin of the affection is usually to be found in some defect of nutrition, such as chlorosis or

anæmia in both males and females. In the latter, irregularity in the performance of the menstrual function is a frequent cause. In fine, all those conditions of want of health which are indicated by cold hands and feet, as well as various forms of indigestion, may be indicated as among the known causes of seborrhœa.

Our patient is evidently anæmic, and badly nourished, and our treatment of his skin-trouble will be based upon the removal of this condition. So far as he is able to follow our advice, he will take fresh air and exercise. His food shall be nutritious, with strict avoidance of pastry, fat meats, or any form of diet which may be found to cause indigestion.

As regards medicinal treatment, he will be ordered ol. morrhœæ; a tablespoonful of the oil to be taken about an hour after ordinary meals. If this does not derange the stomach or digestive apparatus, he will be directed to continue its use for several months, intermitting it for a short period perhaps at intervals. The cod-liver oil is often of decided benefit in these cases, and may be relied upon as a valuable auxiliary. But the medicine, which is of paramount importance and of unquestionable service in the majority of cases of seborrhœa, is iron; it is indicated and will be of service in the case of the patient before us. He will be ordered four grains of the tartrate of iron and potassium in sweetened water, to be taken thrice daily, directly after eating. The use of this preparation will be persevered in for some time; several months at least.

We shall scarcely look for much improvement before a month's time. Seborrhœa is slow to get well; it is a disease which has to be treated with care and discretion, requiring time to undergo change. Until a certain alteration has been produced in the constitution of the patient, it is useless to expect a cessation of the process; for the disease, in the case under consideration, is no mere local trouble, but a state emphatically associated with his general poor health and improper condition. Relying upon the oil and iron for the internal treatment, together with hygienic measures, it will be necessary at the same time to employ local treatment as auxiliary means of relief. It is important to keep the scalp thoroughly clean and free from the products of the disease. To get rid of the scales we shall order him some alkaline liquid preparation. A very suitable wash for these cases is the tinct. sap. viridis,—a solution of sapo viridis in alcohol in the proportion of two ounces of soap to one of alcohol. This is a valuable and efficacious alkaline wash for various conditions of the scalp, and is of particular service in seborrhœa capitis. It is to be rubbed upon the head by means of a piece of flannel, adding a sufficient quantity of water to the scalp from time to time, to make an abundant lather. This is thoroughly rubbed into the affected parts, and after ten or fifteen minutes completely washed out of the hair by means of an abundant supply of warm water, care being taken to rid the scalp entirely of suds. The scales will, by this means, be completely removed. The hair and scalp should now be dried with a soft towel until all moisture has disappeared. Some oily or fatty pre-