ECZEMA TREATED BY X RAYS.

By C. THURSTAN HOLLAND, M.R.C.S.,

Honorary Medical Officer in Charge of the X-Ray Department, Royal
Southern Hospital, Liverpool.

On December 7th, 1898, P. T., a young woman aged 19, was sent to me, with the following history: About a year ago she was operated on for a swelling on the left hand, over the metacarpal bone, and pus was evacuated. The wound soon healed, but immediately afterwards an eruption broke out around the scar and gradually extended over the back of the hand and up the fingers. For five months she had been attending as an out-patient at the skin department of one of the hospitals, but stated that the affection was getting worse and worse. The hand presented the appearance shown in Fig. 1.

Fig. 1.—Chronic eczema of the hand. Before treatment by x rays (December 7th, 1898).

A chronic eczematous eruption covered the whole dorsum; the skin was thickened, very scaly, and cracked all over; and there were a large number of adherent, blackened scabs, the largest just between the bases of the middle and ring fingers.

All other treatment was stopped, and the hand was exposed seven times—on December 7th, 12th, 16th, 19th, 24th, and 29th, 1898, and January 3rd, 1899—to an active x-ray tube. The apparatus used consisted of a 10-inch coil, worked from a 6-cell accumulator through a resistance, and fitted with a

Fig. 2.—After treatment by x rays (February 18th, 1899).

mercury interruptor. A Zehnder tube was used on four occasions and one supplied to me by Mr. Isenthal on the other three. The lower edge of the glass of the tube was distant

from the hand from 4 to 7 inches; each exposure was fifteen minutes in duration. No inflammatory change was noticed at any time; on the date of the last exposure (January 3rd) the scabs were loose and were picked off, and most of the scales had also disappeared; a small ulcer was found under the large scab referred to above. No further treatment was adopted, and on February 18th the condition was as is shown in Fig. 2.

All eczema has quite disappeared and the hand is well. The mark at the base of the middle and ring fingers and the other mark in a line with it on the back of the wrist are due to scarring; the scars are quite free from disease—in short, the case is cured. The explanation is probably that the x rays had a stimulating effect on the tissues of the diseased area, stimulating them and thus enabling them to bring about a cure.

MEMORANDA:**MEDICAL, SURGICAL, OBSTETRICAL, THERAPEUTICAL, PATHOLOGICAL, Etc.****OBSTINATE HICCOUGH.**

MR. R. W. S. CHRISTMAS's interesting "memorandum" on the above subject appears to invite comment or confirmation as to the value of nitroglycerine in such cases. Some eight years ago I treated a lady between 30 and 40 years of age for a violent hiccough, which, sometimes once or twice repeated and occurring at varying intervals, made it almost impossible for her to mix in society. The digestion was treated by diet, regimen, and various internal remedies without result. Nerve sedatives were no more efficacious. At length I prescribed tabloids of $\frac{1}{100}$ grain of nitroglycerine to be taken two or three times a day, and in addition every time the condition threatened to recur. The effect was immediate and the malady was subdued in about a fortnight. Two years later there had been no recurrence.

Upper Brook Street, W.

W. BEZLY THORNE.

I SHOULD like to add my experience of an aggravated case of this troublesome affection to the two reported in the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL of March 11th and 18th, and to record the action of a remedy which proved absolutely instantaneous in its action. In the summer of 1894 a gentleman, aged about 30, came to my house in the middle of the night accompanied by a friend, and I could distinctly hear down my speaking tube a loud noise like the barking of a dog, the noise subsequently proving to be emanating from my patient, who was in a most exhausted and distressed condition from the violence of the seizure. He was quite unable to speak, and his companion informed me that he had had several previous severe attacks, and had been prescribed various drugs, including prolonged chloroform anæsthesia and hypodermic injections of morphine. I gave him a drachm of oil of turpentine in a little mucilage, and it acted like a charm; all symptoms disappeared immediately, and he was not troubled again during the few days he was under my notice. The man was a summer visitor, and I have not heard of him again, but he assured me he would never be without oil of turpentine in the house. The simplicity and effectiveness of the remedy appear to me to make the case worth recording.

Dovercourt.

HAROLD GURNEY.

A CASE of obstinate and violent hiccough in a young man came under my treatment a few years ago. There was no discoverable cause for the hiccough, which lasted for several days. It was treated by morphine and chloroform, but as very slight improvement occurred, a blister was applied on each side of the cervical spine over the origins of the third, fourth, and fifth cervical nerves, in the hope of influencing the phrenic nerves. This stopped the hiccough in a few hours.

Lincoln.

E. MANSEL SYMPSON, M.D., M.R.C.S., B.C.

DISLOCATION OF THE RADIO-CARPAL JOINT.

On looking over the latest volume of the New Sydenham Society's publications—Professor Helferich on *Fractures and*