Skin Sores?

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For Skin Sores, Pimples and Itch.

Advice On Health (No. 61)

KING'S EVIL

(Written for "The Listener" by DR. H. B. TURBOTT, Director of the Division of School Hygiene, Health Department)

UBERCULOSIS of the glands was woman had married a husband of her formerly a very widespread disease. It used to be called scrofula, and was in the Middle Ages the particular prerogative of English Kings. The royal touch was used, to obtain cures. It was a medieval form of faith healing.

According to tradition the practice of the king's touch originated with Edward love by rubbing the woman's neck with the Confessor, in England. "A young his fingers dipped in water. Joyous the Confessor, in England.

own age, but having no issue by the union, the tumours collected abundantly about her neck, she contracted a sore disorder, and the glands swelling in a dreadful manner. Admonished in a dream to have the part affected washed by the king, she entered the palace, and the king himself fulfilled this labour of

health followed his healing hand; the lurid skin opened, so that worms flowed out with the purulent matter, and the tumour subsided. But as the orifice of the ulcer was large and unsightly, he commanded her to be supported at royal expense until she should be perfectly cured. However, before a week had expired, a fair new skin returned, and hid the scars so completely that nothing of the original wound could be discovered; and within a year, becoming the mother of twins, she increased the admiration of Edward's holiness."

"Better Health and More Sense"

By Queen Elizabeth's time the ritual ceremoniously established. The royal physician assembled the patients and excluded those regarded as unsuitable. The remainder had to produce a certificate that they had not been treated previously - apparently faith healing in the Middle Ages had just as short-lived an effect as nowadays, and precautions had to be taken against return visits. Royalty blessed the sufferers, touched the sores, and a gold piece was hung around each neck. Elizabeth, being careful economically, made the coins smaller. James I. continued the practice for political purposes, but disbelieved in it. William III. laid on his hands with these words "May God give you better health and more sense." Queen Anne practised the royal touch, but she was the last, and Dr. Samuel Johnston happened to be one of the final patients touched, then being four vears old.

Scrofula is little seen nowadays except among backward peoples. You will in New Zealand rarely see a patient among Europeans, but the disease is not uncommon among Maoris. A Maori child with freely discharging enlarged neck glands is no rarity in Maori areas. Modern hygiene, with its good housing, has diminished the risk of tuberculosis infection in Europeans. Bad housing and sleeping conditions and poor sanitation give increased contact with discharges and wastes of tuberculous sufferers, and markedly increases the risk of spread from patient to other persons in the household. So some of our Maori child-ren still suffer from the "King's Evil." They will gain the same freedom from the disease as Europeans when their environment and their health knowledge approaches ours.

Cure the Sore

European mothers in New Zealand are often alarmed because of enlarged glands in children. They often occur because of septic drainage from a sore, in the groin from feet, in the arm-pit from hands and arms. Cure the sore and the gland heals too. They often happen in the neck, or from infected scratchings in lice-ridden heads. More commonly the neck glands are upset from decayed teeth or septic tonsils. These should be looked to, and the glands will settle. Some infectious diseases upset neck glands-measles for example. Sometimes no apparent cause can be found. Then the treatment is to sunbathe the enlarged glands as often as possible, give cod-liver or halibut oil daily, and see that the child is on a properly balanced diet -full of vitamins and minerals. Ultra Violet light treatment will help in winter time when sunshine is scarce. (Next week: "Thoughts of Spring," by Dr. Muriel Bell.)

NEW ZEALAND LISTENER, JULY 10



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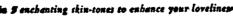
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