

of uric acid diminished. It would thus appear that a very close relationship existed between the condition of the skin and the formation and excretion of uric acid. After about a year's treatment the patient became perfectly well, and is now a strong and healthy girl.

A class of cases in which we find eczema frequently is made up of those who eat and drink too much and who take too little exercise. They are plethoric and have a tendency to the formation of fat, and present frequently a more or less sallow appearance. If such persons are in the habit of drinking beer, the digestive function will be much impaired; foul tongue, occasional attacks of mild catarrh of the stomach, and more or less jaundice are very frequent symptoms. In such cases there exists constantly a great strain on the excretory organs to rid the system of excess of sub-oxidized substances; and if those organs become deranged, this excess in the blood is still greater. Neurasthenia is frequently the cause of attacks of eczema. Owing to a depressed state of the nervous system, the functions of digestion and assimilation are improperly performed, and we have as a result a poisoned state of the blood. In this class of cases, although the result, so far as the blood is concerned, may be similar to that of the plethoric conditions, the cause is very different, and the treatment must, therefore, be different also. It is very probable that the oxidation of food products in the blood is largely accomplished in the liver, and that, therefore, this organ is frequently deranged in case of eczema. I am quite conscious of the fact that in thus speaking of the internal causes of eczema a good many indefinite terms have been used, but we cannot help using them until we obtain more accurate knowledge of the physiological and pathological processes connected with digestion and assimilation. We must also remember that the careful observations of the clinicians have usually led the way to the discovery of great pathological facts. The view that eczema is ever hereditary is now somewhat questioned. I am positive that I have seen many cases of a hereditary character, notably in one family, where I know it to have existed in four generations. In gout and rheumatism eczema is often present as well as that condition which Dr. Murchison called lithæ-

mia, a condition which I have to some extent already described. Bulkley states that eczema and asthma often exist together. I have frequently seen asthma and ichthyosis in the same patient; and as the latter condition predisposes to eczema, this may account to some extent for the concurrence of the two diseases. Very often when an eczema has arisen from purely local causes the skin takes on a diseased habit, and the abnormal condition will continue long after the local cause has been removed. This will often account for the continuance of an eczema in a patient whose functions are quite healthy. Dentition, although rarely the cause of an eczema, frequently precedes an exacerbation of the disease and assists in prolonging it. A reflex irritation of the nerve centres is frequently the immediate cause of an eczema. This may come from the intestinal tract, uterus, or, as Crocker says, from the skin itself. Dr. Jamieson thinks that the abuse of tea is a fruitful cause of eczema. The ingestion of such indigestible food as cheese, salt meat, etc., acts as cause by reflex influence. Vaccination may be the cause of eczema.

The local or external causes of eczema may briefly be stated to consist of sudden changes of temperature, exposure to cold and dampness, chilling of the surface, chemical and mechanical irritants, including parasites. It has, of course, been long recognized that such parasites as pediculi, acari, etc., are frequent causes of eczema. More recently it has been shown that the vegetable growths are a frequent cause of the prolongation of an eczema, and sometimes of the origin also. That form described by Unna as seborrhœic eczema is always parasitic. The parasitic element in the local causation of eczema must always be taken into consideration in the treatment. An eczematous surface is, without doubt, a good soil for the growth of various forms of bacteria. Unna, however, in my opinion, goes too far when he makes the statement that eczema is always of parasitic origin. Various trades and occupations are often the cause of eczema, and, although we know this to be a fact, we sometimes omit to make enquiries upon the point. Articles of domestic use, such as soaps, are often a cause of this disease. I remember the case of a family of children who suffered from eczema,