

causes, or several operating together, may provoke through reflex action, congestions of a very decided character, e.g. eczema. Experience has taught us that this nerve irritability in a variable quantity is the  $x$  of the equation, equally digestive, assimilative and absorptive force, etc., affected by other influences as bad air, filth, etc., externally and internally, unwholesome or unsuitable food, teething, menstruation, etc.

Wilson refers to this fact when he says, "That eczema is powerfully under the influence of agents which soothe and tranquilize the nerves." In the clinical study and treatment of eczema in infants we are much inclined to the opinion that this fact has in the past been too frequently overlooked; but its importance cannot be overstated when we remember how impressionable the child's nervous system is, and how, especially with the relation of greater importance of the glandular system, the absorbents hold a dominating influence as relative to health. In arriving at the causation of eczema in a child it becomes of much importance, while obtaining a clinical history of the case, to extend the enquiry to any hereditary tendencies, which may be present. We further would naturally endeavour to eliminate what might be called accidental causes, as superficial or local irritants, e.g. heat and moisture, friction, lack of cleanliness, etc. Having determined the relative importance of these, by their removal, we very naturally revert to the probable existence of some nerve irritability, either teething, unwholesome food, non-assimilable food, or over-feeding. The following will probably be generally regarded as a typical case. A child within a few weeks of birth will have had an erythema, occasionally recurring, followed by, or associated with a certain amount of crusta lactea; while growing well, its excreta will have given the usual evidences of imperfect digestion, as acid secretions, greenish coloration, etc. Approaching the period of teething a hyperæmia appears on the cheeks, which, becoming somewhat itchy, is rubbed by the child and ends in a serous exudation. This becoming a true vesicular eczema, tends to increase with the development of the teeth until it may extend to the forehead, and indeed the whole face, flexor surfaces of elbow and knee-joints, etc. Should local applications be made causing a temporary cessation of exudation it will probably be exchanged for a congestion of the air passages, and

a wheeziness in breathing. A persistent tendency to constipation, alternating with occasional diarrhoea, has accompanied other conditions; yet the child continues to grow, and is indeed often a large feeder. With the approach of each new tooth, is usually seen an exacerbation of the itchininess and restlessness until relieved by a diarrhoea, or oftener by a free weeping of the eczematous surfaces. Until the latter occurs the child is dull, or rather he is not playful, until temporarily relieved by a purge, as castor oil, which soon leaves him more constipated than before. As the child reaches an age when starchy foods can be digested fairly well, the exudat usually becomes less in amount but contains more cellular elements, and later the surfaces are covered with branny scales, *E. squamosum*. Sudden and severe onsets may, during this disease result, through cold in an *E. pustulosum*, hardly distinguishable from variola. In the case whose history has been thus given it is evident from what has been said, that digestion would seem not to have been perfect, but the evidences of growth, good appetite, and even good tongue, seem to indicate that the gastric processes at any rate are not greatly at fault. After carefully reviewing the phenomena, we are much inclined to the conclusion that the defects lie largely in the glandular system, whether in the secreting glands or in the lymphatics, or both. The first proof of this seems to us to lie in the fact of intestinal digestion being imperfect. Assuming that the pancreatic secretion is not yet developed to any great extent, we depend upon the secretions of the liver to regulate this important function. Manifestly from the character of the evacuations and the constipation its functions are defective. We have the fact as commonly stated, that obstruction of the portal circulation, whether due to tricuspid insufficiency or other cause, tends to infiltration of tissues with blood plasma, and Wilson gives as a cause of eczema, obstruction of the nervous circulation from whatever cause. Some recent effects from the use of potassium iodide in *E. infantile*, have led us to enquire why it has happened that in a case, where almost every other remedy had failed to produce more than temporary results, which had passed through several severe attacks, as of bronchitis, whooping cough, and pustular eczema, and in which this drug had been administered with the hope of reducing glandular enlarge-