

Eczema is an inflammation ; it has all the characters and all the signs of an inflammatory disease : congestion, redness, tension, swelling and heat of skin. In eczema, the inflammation again is manifested by the sero-gummy secretion which is its principal symptom—secretion often so abundant as to constitute a true catarrh of the skin. The inflammatory character of eczema is also betrayed by subjective phenomena—that is to say, by troubles and by morbid accidents perceived and complained of by the patient : thus a sensation of tension, of heat, of smarting, of burning. It is to this very sensation of burning that eczema owes its name, since it is derived from the Greek verb *εκαΐω*, “ I burn.”

In psoriasis all is very different. When we leave eczema to pass on to psoriasis, it seems that we leave the hot lands of the tropics to enter the icy regions of the north. Eczema was the living moist, hot eruption. Psoriasis is the dry, dead eruption ; its physiognomy remains without change, ever the same, immutable and immovable in the *statu quo* of that which has no life. It is a skin petrified, parchmented, mummified, dried, deprived of its secretions, which the sweat no longer moistens, which the sebaceous glands no longer lubricate ; which has lost its suppleness, its flexibility, its elasticity, its vitality. Around the articulations, around the natural orifices, it responds no more to the natural movements and tears like an inextensible and inert membrane. It is now nothing but a shell, a kind of scaly, indolent cuirass, which one may scratch, use and destroy without causing the slightest pain.

Psoriasis and eczema also differ in their seat. Eczema being an inflammatory affection, with a moist abundant secretion, requires a warm ground, itself moist and well watered, provided with a rich and abundant vascular network. Such is the genital zone and such is the axilla. Psoriasis, on the contrary, which requires only plenty of epidermis, affects the regions in which this epidermis is thick and abundant. Do you wish to seize the difference of situation in a single glance ? Take the inferior extremity : you will find eczema in the popliteal space, psoriasis on the knee. In the upper limb you will see eczema in the bend of

the arm and psoriasis on the elbows. Always, these are only the situations of predilection of these two diseases ; just as plants which prefer moist soils may also grow in dry places, so eczema and psoriasis may be met with in all regions of the body. But then their characters are modified and altered, as those plants of which we have just spoken are themselves when they have wandered into ground unsuited to their nature.

Eczema and psoriasis differ again in the character of their complications. An inflammatory affection, eczema has complications of an inflammatory type. Let the inflammation which constitutes it be very considerable ; let it spring up in some way from the bed of the eczema, it will then go on extending itself to the entire thickness of the skin, to the cellular subcutaneous tissue and to the lymphatics, and it will produce an erysipelas, a phlegmon or a lymphangitis, with its arborizations and its pink and sinuous lines. These complications are sometimes profound and visceral. They will bear upon one of the great apparatus of the economy, on the nervous centres, on the digestive apparatus, or on the respiratory apparatus ; you will then have a meningitis, an acute encephalitis, bronchial or gastro-intestinal catarrhs. But these complications will always have an acuteness and an intensity in proportion to the acuteness and to the intensity of the eczema which gives rise to them.

Psoriasis, on the contrary, an affection of a type essentially chronic, gives rise only to complications having, like it, all the characters of chronicity. In the direction of the lungs there will be chronic catarrhs, often ending in pulmonary tuberculosis ; in the digestive organs there will be dyspepsias and cancers—cancer of the intestine, and more often still, cancer of the stomach.

By its evolution and its march, again, eczema is distinguished from psoriasis. Eczema may be acute or chronic, but most often it is under the acute form that it presents itself. Psoriasis is always chronic ; it is a torpid type of slow progress, or rather it does not progress, it remains what it is—*Est id quod est*. It is to-day what it was yesterday, and it will be to-morrow what it is to-day.