

limited to the limbs. I have met with cases where children, who have suffered from eczema in infancy, have continued to be liable up to puberty to scaly and ecthymatous eruptions of the legs, and especially of the inner surface of the thighs.

Regarding this to be the natural history of constitutional infantile eczema, we have in its dependence upon development a ready and satisfactory explanation of its varying phenomena, and the recognition of this relationship is of importance as regards both prognosis and treatment. In the estimation of the results of our remedies it must be kept prominently in view. While acknowledging the spontaneous tendency to improvement as age advances, a counter fact has been impressed on my mind, especially in dispensary practice, and that is that nothing tends more to aggravate the affection and prolong its existence than leaving the disease to itself without proper local treatment. This fact of itself will explain many cases where the character of the eruption has outlived, so to speak, the natural course I have sketched above.

It has generally been observed by writers that children subject to general eczema are very liable to other derangements, and specially of the respiratory and alimentary tracts. Rilliet and Barthez remark: "It is in cases of very extensive eczema that we see, alternating with the diminution or aggravation of the eruptions, tracheo-bronchial or gastro intestinal catarrhal affections."

There is, however, a complication which, from its close connexion with the skin affection and its marked features, deserves special notice, and may be termed eczematous asthma.

Caillaut* mentions a case, but does not otherwise refer to the disease. "In one of the wards of the Hospital for Sick Children," he says, "there is at present under the care of Dr. Séé, a little boy six years of age, suffering from a dartsous affection of the face: every time the eruption disappears the patient is seized with a violent attack of asthma."

Dr. West, in the last edition of his work on the Diseases of Children (1874, p. 341), says: "In other instances the asthma has succeeded to extensive eczema, and so marked is the connexion between the two conditions that I have never known eczema to be very extensive and very long continued without a marked liability to asthma being associated with it. It cannot, however, be said that the two conditions always alternate, the asthma being worse when the cutaneous affection is better; but the radical cure of the eczema is usually followed, though often not till the lapse of three or four years, by the cessation of the liability to asthma."

In the *Edinburgh Medical Journal* for April, 1874, Dr. K. N. Macdonald records "a case of extensive chronic eczema of the face and extremities of seven years' standing in a child, complicated with spasmodic asthma, cured by pitch, soft soap, zinc and iodide of potassium."

While mentioning this case in connexion with the

asthma, I would refer to a few of the details recorded as illustrating some of the points already noted regarding eczema. The affection began when the child was six weeks old. The face and head got well when about three years, but the rest of the body continued to be affected to a severe degree. The attacks of asthma began after hooping-cough, when about three. The condition of the child when Dr. Macdonald first saw him must have been pitiful indeed. The case is an excellent illustration of the effect of leaving the disease to itself in aggravating and prolonging its existence, and also of the success which accompanies proper treatment when employed at an age when the disease naturally shows a tendency towards recovery.

I have myself met with two well-marked instances of the affection. The first I saw only in consultation at a period when, it may be said, both the eczema and the chest affection had passed off. The boy at the time was six years of age, tall and well nourished. The eruption first appeared when three months old. From the description received it had been a well-marked case of general eczema. The skin, when I saw him, was dry and rough, but otherwise healthy. The character of the tracheo-bronchial affection is indicated by the mother's report of the opinions of various medical men who have seen him. "Some said it was bronchitis, others false croup, while others did not seem to know what to make of it." So sensitive at one time was the respiratory tract, that passing from one room to another without a respirator was sufficient to induce an attack. There was no relation between the improvement or aggravation of the skin affection and the chest. The improvement in the latter had gradually followed the natural disappearance of the former.

The second case is also a boy, now five and a half years old. The eczema appeared first on the cheek, at two months, spread over the head, and afterwards extended to the whole body. The face and scalp recovered by the end of the third year, and since that time a gradual improvement has been going on in the body. The eruption of each tooth was not accompanied by an aggravation of the disease. The skin of the body at present is healthy, but liable to become dry. The legs, however, are never free from a mixed character of scaly, papular, and at times ecthymatous eruption. There is always, however, a marked improvement when he has been kept in bed a few days by an attack of the chest affection.

The first bronchio-asthmatic attack occurred at two years and five months. It came on suddenly, and was so severe that the medical attendant waited upon him the whole night. They hardly expected him to survive, yet the next day he was sitting up in bed playing with a pet chicken. Since that time till within the last year the attacks have been very frequent, and of varying duration, seldom a fortnight passing without some degree of the affection. I saw him in one severe attack. It presented all the characters of bronchitic asthma, the lungs being filled with mucus râles and loud rhonchus, with severe spasmodic dyspnea.

* "Diseases of the Skin in Children." Translated by R. H. Blake, London, 1863.