

## ON CHRONIC EXCORIATIONS OF THE TONGUE OF CHILDREN.

*By Frederick Betz.*

Professor Moller, of Königsberg describes a chronic desquamative process of the tongue, which he had observed in six cases.\* The patients were middle-aged females. The excoriations appeared in the form of deep irregular spots, for the most part sharply circumscribed, either altogether stripped of epithelium or very thin over them, while the hyperemic and swollen papillæ projected somewhat beyond the level of the surrounding parts. No morbid secretion could be observed on these spots, nor did any deep ulceration take place. They existed chiefly on the borders and tip of the tongue, more frequently on the under surface, and on the inside of the lips, never on the posterior parts of the mouth. They occasioned a troublesome sensation of burning, gave the patients a disgust for food, deprived them of the sense of taste, and interfered with the free motions of the tongue.

Dr. Betz observed a very similar disease in five cases in children, which he does not wholly identify with that described by Professor Moller, but the points in difference do not appear to be great. Perhaps Professor Moller may bring forward further communications on the subject, when he shall have had opportunities of observing his form of disease in children. A red spot of roundish or oval form appears on the edge of the point of the tongue, but never on its middle line, nor on the base, and is surrounded by a well-defined, often slightly elevated redder margin. This red, sharply defined spot increases from the edge inwards, extending in a curve, and when it arises behind advancing towards the tip. Dr. Betz has only seen it on the back of the tongue; but he has observed the spots in three situations at the same time—on the left half of the tip and on both margins of the body of the organ, the remainder of the tongue being covered with a whitish fur. The tongue is not swollen or harder in these spots, nor does any secretion or ulceration arise. The little patients made no complaint, nor did the disease appear to be an object for treatment. The morbid process consists in an exfoliation of the horny epithelium of the papillæ filiformes,† splitting at its points into many thread-like processes—a desquamation of the filamentary papillæ of the tongue. They consequently appear much lower on the red fleshy spot; even lower than the papillæ fringiformes. The spot so denuded is not painful to the touch. Each half of the tongue desquamates by itself: that is, the desquamation does not attack both halves at the same time, nor does it advance simultaneously on both. When the tongue has exfoliated, the process recommences after three, or six, or eight days. I have watched these chronic excoriations during three years in a boy in whom they existed since an attack of the jaundice, which occurred about four weeks after birth. The other patients were girls, the eldest of whom was eight years of age.—In these children eczematous and impetiginous eruptions appeared from time to time on the face and on the hand. As the disease occurs before dentition, a bad tooth cannot be regarded as its cause. Dr. Betz could not perceive any influence on the motion of the tongue, or on the sense of taste. Since the desquamation of the epithelium is connected with hyperœmia of the filiform papillæ of the tongue, but without the occurrence of ulceration, the author would be inclined to substitute the designation “Pityriasis linguæ” for that of chronic excoriation.—*Journal für Kinderkrankheiten. N. Y. Journal of Medicine.*

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† See Kolliker's Gewebelehre, 1852, p. 351.