

Sabouraud, who may be taken as representing the French school, although believing in the amicrobic origin of eczema, holds the opinion that several dermatites which are now generally described under the heading of eczema are caused by infectious agents. He has given the name streptococcic epidermatitis to certain of these eruptions. These may be secondary boils, abscesses or other pus infection. Frequently they begin as intertrigoes, which may become moist, fissured, and spread either by continuity or by the formation of new foci on various parts of the skin. The eruption which is so frequently seen behind the ears of children is frequently a form of the disease. In some cases, especially in the anemic and debilitated, the eruption spreads widely and may become universal. The character of the eruption is variable. It may be characterized by scaly patches, moist surfaces, or vesicles. As a rule itching is not a marked symptom which character aids one in distinguishing it from eczema. The distribution is somewhat similar to that of seborrheic eczema, but the latter disease is generally secondary to a similar affection of the scalp.

Perleche is another affection which is classed with the microbic dermatitis. It is characterized by whitish patches, usually fissured, situated at the commissures of the lips. In some cases the dermatitis extends on the skin of the cheek, but this is unusual. The whitish soddened patch resembles a syphilitic mucous patch.

The problem which one has to solve in these cases is the mode of extinction of the dermatitis. How, for instance, a discharging abscess produces a dermatitis in the adjacent skin as well as in distant parts. The observation of Bockhart, referred to above, that a filtered bacterial culture, rubbed on the skin produces an eczematoid dermatitis, affords an explanation of the extension by continuity, but does not fully explain the extension to foci in distant parts, because it is improbable that sufficient toxin can be carried to parts of the skin at a distance from the primary focus to produce the irritation. Here one must seek another explanation; and I think the modern theory of anaphylaxis is one at our command. I shall refer to this again in the consideration of anaphylaxis and sensitization of the skin.

THE AMICROBIC THEORY OF THE ORIGIN OF ECZEMA.

This view is generally accepted by the French and, I think, the majority of British and American dermatologists. It is not denied by these that bacteria take part in the evolution of the