method is the infection of the abscess cavity by the rectal contents. In these two cases nothing of the kind took place, and it is a well-known fact that abscesses break into the rectum without any subsequent trouble. We must bear in mind, however, that at times long-continued suppuration, general wasting, and death result from the breaking of an appendicular abscess or from the rupture of a pus-tube. Such cases, which are most disastrous and distressing, have led us, when possible, always to open large collections of pus in the pelvis by laparotomy, notably in cases of appendicitis and salpingitis. In the latter condition, with which I have had considerable experience, I have yet to see any ill results following vaginal puncture and drainage. It is obvious that while we have in rectal puncture the most dependent drainage, this method should be selected only in very exceptional cases. In vaginal drainage I think we have a less dangerous method, although in my experience it is very difficult to make the utero-vaginal canal aseptic. I believe in avoiding both as far as possible, but that occasionally we must resort to this procedure.

In a case very similar to the second, which I saw with Dr. Goss two years ago, and which I sent to the Massachusetts General Hospital, Dr. Warren drained by the supra-public method. The rectum was compressed by a large abscess situated directly behind the bladder. This case made a good recovery, although in the light of my recent experience I am quite convinced he would have done just as well by rectal drainage.

While there is no definite rule to be laid down in these cases, it seems to me that a certain number of them may be more safely drained in the manner described.

WOUND FROM WHIP-LASH SIMULATING BULLET-WOUND.

BY FRANÇOIS C. MARTIN, M.D., ROXBURY, MASS.

I HAVE had a case recently, which is certainly an amusing curiosity. A wagon-driver presented himself, with an enormously swollen under lip, and the following history: Late in the evening, he was driving through Dover Street, past a dense crowd of people. He struck his horse with the whip, and, at the same instant, there was a sharp report, and he felt a stinging pain in the chin. He found a wound in the lower part of the chin, and another smaller one inside the mouth at the base of the lower lip. The next morning the whole lip was very much swollen.

On passing a probe inwardly, from the outside of the face, I found a passage through into the mouth at the smaller wound. The probe rubbed against some hard substance *in transitu*. All the appearances indicated a severe bullet-wound. On making a free incision from the inside wound, I cut down on the foreign body, and with bullet forceps removed a black mass, about as large round as a lead pencil, and over half an inch long. I at once exclaimed, "You were shot from the crowd!" On dropping the object, however, from the forceps, into a basin of water, it went rather slowly to the bottom, without any "thud." I then examined it carefully, and found it was a piece of the whip itself.

I have often seen the power of the long snake-whips of the freighters in Montana, in taking out the skin in

minute pieces from any part of a mule, with unerring accuracy, but never heard of any such catastrophe as the one I have described.

Medical Progress.

RECENT PROGRESS IN DERMATOLOGY.

BY JOHN T. BOWEN, M.D., BOSTON.

AN EPIDEMIC DERMATITIS AT PADDINGTON INFIRMARY AND NEIGHBORING INSTITUTIONS.¹

IN view of the probability so often expressed, that many forms of cutaneous inflammation heretofore classed as eczema or dermatitis simply, are due to the action of a parasite or its products, the following epidemic of dermatitis is interesting and suggestive.

At the meeting of the Medical Society of London, held on November 30, 1891, Dr. Thomas Savill read a paper on "A Recent Epidemic at Paddington Infirmary." Between July 1st and October 23d, 163 of the 846 inmates of the infirmary were attacked by the disease, or twenty per cent. Only two cases occurred among the staff, the author himself and a housemaid. The disease is described as a universal dermatitis always resulting in a desquamation of the epidermis, attended by a certain amount of constitutional disturbance but no essential rise of temperature, running a course of about six weeks, and attacking males slightly more often than females. The disease sometimes began as a papular or papulo-erythematous eruption, sometimes as elevated macules, in rare instances in ring forms; in either case becoming confluent in a week's time, and presenting then the features of an acute, desquamating dermatitis. In a majority of the cases there were vesicles also, which caused much serious exudation when broken. The eruption started most frequently on the upper portion of the body, although the lower portions were affected first in a considerable number of instances. It seemed to spread by continuity to the adjacent parts from those first affected. Burning and itching were constant features throughout the attack. Convalescence was slow, and 38 of the patients had relapses. Anorexia and prostration were the chief constitutional symptoms. In about a quarter of the cases there was vomiting, diarrhoea, or both. Temperature normal excepting occasionally at the height of the inflammation. The conjunctivæ were inflamed in all of the severe cases, and the hair and nails were often lost in the later stages of the disease. Albumen was found in the urine in fifty per cent. of the cases, but no serious renal disease was recorded. Some cases ended fatally [proportion not stated, nor whether these were the old and enfeebled. — RER.] chiefly from "the extreme weakness produced by the eruption," in other instances from collapse following the vomiting and diarrhoea. Some died comatose as in uræmia. In several cases boils and carbuncles were seen scattered over the surface. The disease bore, on the whole, the most resemblance to an acute general eczema, differing from it, however, in the extent of the inflammation and thickening, in the profuseness of the exfoliation, and the definiteness of the course. Germicides externally and stimulants, afforded the most relief. With regard to the etiology, age was found to be a predisposing condition, the largest pro-

¹ Lancet, December 5, 1891.