

## THE ROLE OF WOUND INFECTION AS A FACTOR IN THE CAUSATION OF INSANITY.\*

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The introduction of the microscope in the minute analysis of pathological tissues and in the discovery and differentiation of atomic germs is rapidly revolutionizing the etiology of disease. The patho-bacteriologist, by his researches, has shown how prominent a factor the micro-organisms are in causing the many physical ills that affect and decimate the human race. Furthermore, we are beginning to estimate the potency of these organisms and their products in the frequent production, directly or indirectly, of many cases of mental alienation.

### THE GERMS OF WOUND INFECTION.

The bacteria usually found in wound infection are: (1) The streptococcus pyogenes, (2) the staphylococcus pyogenes, (3) the micrococcus gonorrhea, (4) the streptococcus of Fehleisen, (5) the saprophytes.

There are other bacteria found in wounds, but the above mentioned are the germs mostly concerned in wound infection.

Not only do the bacteria themselves act as a virus, but their chemical products—toxine and ptomaine—possess a specific virulent action when absorbed into the body.

### WOUNDS USUALLY INFECTED.

1. Small abrasions, or incised wounds, or contusions on the face or on the scalp, usually subject to neglect.

2. Lesions of the genital tract entailed by maternity, such as perineal tears, bruising and contusions of the vagina, laceration of the cervix uteri, and the raw placental site in the puerperal uterus.

These wounds are the favorite portals through which the germs or their virulent products find entrance into the lymphatic or circulatory channels and thence distribute themselves throughout the system.

### EFFECT OF INFECTION UPON THE CONSTITUTION.

Action of infection upon the central nervous system is brought about directly through its circulation. The contaminated blood filtering through the capillaries is absorbed into the cellular and ganglionic structures, bringing about abnormal changes in their protoplasmic elements, varying from cloudy

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