

tion of gonococci. As a consequence, when there are no gonococci present, wounds of the vagina and the cervix are aseptic.

3. Sterile tract, the uterine cavity.

Let us consider what occurs in a normal labor left entirely to Nature. After uterine contractions have continued for some hours the parts are dilated. The membranes are ruptured, and a certain amount of sterile fluid is poured into and through the vagina, and some organisms are washed out. The head and body soon pass through the vagina, and delivery results. During their passage the mucous membrane of the vagina is stretched and made smooth, and more organisms are pushed out. Then follow more liquor amnii and blood, shortly after the placenta, then come blood and lochia for some days. We shall suppose there was a tear of the cervix, a tear of the vagina, and a tear of the perineum, the tear in each case being a slight one. The woman makes a good recovery, although, or perhaps because, no doctor or midwife has touched her. What became of the wounds? The edges of the cervical wound came together. The cervical mucous membrane on one side and the vaginal mucous membrane on the other side were covered with a certain amount of sterile fluid. No finger, no instrument, no stream of water separated the edges of the wound, or introduced septic germs. The wound healed rapidly, probably by first intention. The vaginal wound healed in a similar way. The flow of the fluids, which are sterile for sometime, continually in an outward direction, had kept these wounds aseptic. We can probably agree thus far, although we may disagree as to whether the vaginal canal has been made absolutely sterile in the meantime. Without discussing that point, which is not important at this juncture, we have to consider the perineal wound, which has not fared so well as the others. The edges came together, but did not remain in good apposition. Some pathogenic germs soon entered from the septic skin, and an interesting conflict occurred. The sterile fluids at first washed the organisms away. After a time these fluids diminished and some of the septic organisms remained, but these were attacked by cells of the living healthy tissues, and held in check. In the meantime lymph has been thrown out, granulations were formed, and by the fourth day had filled the wound, and danger of absorption had passed. Young fibrous tissue was developed, considerable contraction took place, epithelium spread over the surface, and the wound was soon healed. Nature in this instance did magnificent work in her own inimitable way. He is a wise man and a good