

he defined as an infection produced by pathogenic bacteria that have lived in the condition of saprophytes before labour on the integuments of the external genitals, or in the genital canal of the woman, and which during labour, or immediately after it, invade the organism through puerperal wounds and set up disease. Heterogenetic infection, on the other hand, is an infection produced by pathogenic bacteria, carried by the air, by instruments, or by the hands of persons in attendance, to the puerperal wounds, and thence infect the organism.

Menge considers that puerperal fever due to infection by the gonococcus, having as its starting point a urethral, vaginal, or vesical gonorrhoea, should not, any more than the infection of puerperal wounds proceeding from the blood or infectious foci situated on the external and internal genital organs before confinement, be counted among autogenetic puerperal infections, because in these cases the infectious agent has not a saprophytic character. It is a case simply of the expansion of an infectious process pre-existent in the body.

As the streptococcus pyogenes puerpalis, staphylococcus pyogenes aureus, the bacterium coli, the gonococcus Neisser, the bacillus diphtheriæ, and the diplococcus pneumoniae, do not live in the condition of saprophytes in the vaginal secretions of pregnant women, an autogenetic infection by these bacteria cannot have as a starting point the vaginal secretion of such women. He considers that an autogenetic infection, produced by anaërobic bacteria of puerperal fever coming from the vaginal secretion, is improbable. Still it cannot be absolutely rejected, because we have not as yet succeeded in distinguishing the anaërobic bacteria of puerperal fever from the saprophytic anaërobic bacteria of the vaginal secretion of pregnant women, in regard to their biological properties.

Clinical facts seem to warrant a favourable prognosis, when the infection is autogenetic and arises from infection by pathogenic bacteria that have lived as saprophytes on the skin of the external genitals. While it cannot be denied that pathogenic bacteria, starting from the integuments of the external genitals, may after confinement find their way even into the uterine cavity, still an autogenetic infection produced by bacteria that have lived as saprophytes in the cervical canal, or in the uterine cavity, or in the tubes, can be absolutely rejected, for these organs never contain bacteria in the condition of saprophytes.

While autogenetic infection may be to a certain extent be disregarded, heterogenetic infection must be regarded as of the highest importance. The factors of importance in an infection are the virulence of the infective germs, the predisposition of the infected individual, and the number of the infective agents. The air, which is poor in germs, plays