

The danger of this, however, is now reduced almost to a minimum by a strict observance, on the part of the surgeon, of proper antiseptic precautions, cleanliness, and well-directed drainage.

To the obstetrician, it is, perhaps, a still graver complication when it occurs; but, I believe, in this country it is a rare sequel to parturition, mainly, I daresay, owing to the few maternity hospitals and few centres of dense population, and thus overcrowding is avoided and the chances of contagion much reduced, but partly, let us hope, our immunity to be due to the precautions and cleanliness observed by Canadian surgeons.

Though some periods of life are less obnoxious to this disease than others, and though it may be more frequent at certain seasons of the year, yet it will occur at all times of life and in every month in the year. It will, at times, attack the new-born as well as the octogenarian, the rich and well-to-do as well as the pauper. The gouty system due to the effects of high living and sedentary occupation will be as prone to it as the system broken down by intemperance and bad hygienic surroundings; and, lastly, the sexes serve to divide the palm about equally.

These considerations, then, should teach us to watch closely for its premonitions, to observe carefully its clinical varieties and peculiarities, to take reasonable precautions against its occurrence when we are aware of its close presence, and, more than all, to be careful, in our own dealings with the disease, not to convey it by any means from patient to patient. Though erysipelas has been recognized since the earliest times as a specific disease, and has received the attention of the most able in our profession, there seems yet to be some difficulty in accurately defining it so that we may place it in its proper class. The earlier writers believed it to be due to a poison generated in the body itself, and finding a local expression in the skin whereby it was thus excreted from the body. Later on, it was supposed to occur in consequence of a stoppage to the escape of acrid materials from the blood through the pores of the skin. The theory that it was, in fact, a lymphangitis first emanated from Germany, and this was followed by another, which classed it as a simple dermatitis.