

fected limb to the ground, and in cases of flexion with sub-luxation to correct them. The first was accomplished by the use of a Thomas splint, which the speaker described. The second was accomplished, if the case had not gone far enough for operation, by employing continuous traction from the bottom of the splint. When convalescence had taken place pretty well, the Doctor showed how to modify the splint so that part of the body weight might be transmitted through the affected limb to the ground. The cases, whose histories were given fully in the paper, were very instructive.

Progress of Medical Science.

THE RELATIVE POSITION OF THE ASEPTIC AND ANTISEPTIC METHODS IN MIDWIFERY.

Upon this subject, Dr. T. Arthur Helme, of Edinburgh, has read a paper before the North of England Obstetrical and Gynecological Society, from a report of which in the *Medical Chronicle* we make the following extracts :

"The object of our obstetric art is the preservation of our race, and with this in view we eagerly seize upon and apply in practice each and every scientific advance; but in so doing we sometimes overstep the mark.

"There is no more striking example of this than that afforded by the so-called antiseptic method in obstetrics; no sooner is it discovered that fever during the puerperium is often due to the growth of germs in the genital tract and the poisoning of the system by their products, and that these germs succumb to certain potent poisons, than the most deadly concoctions that can be devised are poured into all the unhappy individuals who chance thereafter to be confined, and who not infrequently in consequence suffer the

fate intended for their parasites—not, bear in mind, because there *is* poisoning, because lethal germs *are* there, but forsooth, in case there may be! And so it has come about that many of the leading teachers to-day would lay it down as an inviolable rule, as a law of the Medes and Persians which changeth not, that *every lying-in woman, as routine practice*, shall be douched or squirted with noxious drugs; and as for him that doeth it not, let his name be proclaimed from the house-top, that it may stink in the nostrils of the people.

"For, with many a man, the idea that he is using antiseptic materials which, he thinks, no germ can withstand, bolsters him up with a feeling of over-confidence, with a false feeling of security, the result being that those very details are neglected which are essential to the success of any method. The argument, unconscious, but evidenced by his actions, runs something in this fashion: 'The vagina contains germs which must be checked in their gay career or killed outright; this deadly douche will settle all invisible foes, therefore, what matter if an odd one or two more are introduced unseen on hands or instruments—more the merrier?' This feeling of strength and security is the very source of the weakness and insecurity of the system, but equally dangerous is the false assumption that all vaginas contain germs, the latent cause of puerperal septicæmia. This doctrine I resist most strenuously; it has been abundantly proved in our every-day clinical experience (and that of the laboratory confirms it) that such a state of affairs is not the fact. The genital canal of a healthy normal woman may contain some harmless germs, but does not contain those of the pathogenic variety either before labour or in the puerperium."

After devoting considerable attention to bacteriological and clinical observations,