

SEPSIS AS A CONTRIBUTORY CAUSE OF PUERPERAL INSANITY.

BRUSH, *American Med. Quarterly*, limits his paper to the consideration of insanity of the puerperium. Numerous statistics show that of cases of insanity in asylums, some six or seven per cent. date from insanity of the puerperal period proper. However, many of these cases come from psychopathic stock, childbirth acting only as an exciting cause. If heredity is one fundamental attribute, Brush appears to believe that sepsis is the other ; that is, whenever hereditary can be excluded, we must look upon the case as having had a septic causation.

Obstetricians of by-gone generations, such as J. Y. Simpson and George T. Elliot, were believers in the toxic origin of puerperal mania, which is not very remote from the idea of sepsis. The most striking document in favor of the sepsis theory is brought forward by Chapin, the alienist, who states that since the introduction of antiseptics in midwifery, there has been an enormous falling off in the number of cases of puerperal mania. A similar falling off has been reported from several insane asylums, although no such decline was observed at the McLean Asylum, in Somerville, Mass. The writer finds that the type of delirium exhibited in most cases of puerperal mania agrees with that form which accompanies intoxications. This is especially true of the early weeks of the disease. A case is given in which the mental symptoms are shown to be rather of the nature of the delirium of acute infectious diseases with its lucid moments, its noisy incoherent ravings, auditory and visual hallucinations, together with the quick pulse, dry, brown tongue, sordes, etc. The condition, however, goes on indefinitely, while always preserving something of the stamp of simple delirium.—*Obstetrics*.

TRANSMISSION OF STREPTOCOCCUS FROM MOTHER TO THE FETUS.

Bonnaire reports two such cases. In the first the mother was suffering from erysipelas at the fifth month of pregnancy. The membranes had been ruptured three days and putrid liquor amnii was discharging. The fetus was expressed and died forty-eight hours later. Cultures of its blood showed the streptococcus only. In the second case the mother gave birth to a dead child just before she succumbed to cerebro-spinal meningitis. Autopsy showed pus over the cerebral and spinal meningitis, and exactly the same lesion in the fetus. Cultures from both showed streptococci cultures of the blood were negative.