

of obstetrics can trace it. A perusal of these articles will give, perhaps, the best answer, viz. :—that we have not yet reached a true pathological conception of the factors which enter into its causation, nor are we yet fully agreed as to the correct methods to pursue so as to bring our patient through to a favorable termination, as comparative mortality lists show only too plainly. Much research work has been done along etiological lines which has already revolutionized opinions, and has had the effect, too, of giving rational explanations to other, hitherto, inexplicable complications.

It will not be found uninteresting to take a review of a few of the various causes, from time to time laid down and accepted as correct for the varied manifestation which lead up to and produce eclampsia. Rayer, in Paris, in 1840, and Lever, in London, in 1843, pointed out the frequency of albumenuria in eclampsia, and the impression gradually gained ground that disturbed renal function, associated with imperfect elimination of poisonous material, caused the disease, and that urea was the noxious element.

In 1851, Frierich pointed out the resemblance between the phenomena of eclampsia and those of the uremic convulsions of Bright's disease, and held that the conditions were identical. The cause of the poisoning he believed to be a decomposition product of urea, viz. :—carbonate of ammonia. This opinion has now been widely abandoned, since it has been shown that eclamptic phenomena may occur without albumenuria; that in a great majority of cases there has been no previous renal disease; that the renal changes which may be found are not constant and definite, but very variable, and often very slight and that the albumen sometimes appears only after the convulsions have begun.

Traube advanced the view that cerebral anemia and oedema were produced as the result of increased blood pressure and hydremia of the blood, the former being aggravated by labor pains, and the latter by the loss of albumen in the urine.

In 1878, A. McDonald put forth the view that anemia of the brain substance was the essential cause of convulsions, and that the anemia was due to the presence of excrementitious matter in the blood, the result of altered renal function.