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NOTES ON ECLAMPSIA.*

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Mr. President and Gentlemen:

No obstetrical subject has given rise to more discussion than this one, and yet a review of the literature on this question leads one to think of the words H. W. Longfellow places in the mouth of one of his characters.

“There are many speculations in literature, philosophy and religion (and we might add in medicine) which, though pleasant to walk in, and lying under the shadow of great names, yet lead to no important result. They resemble rather those roads in the western forests of my native land, which, though broad and pleasant at first, and lying beneath the shadow of great branches, finally dwindle to a squirrel track and run up a tree.”

Gentlemen, I am afraid that many of the speculations about eclampsia still lead us “up a tree.” And yet much good has been accomplished. Many text books still quote the maternal mortality as 30 per cent., while in a recent number of *Obstetrics*, Stroganow gives a series of 58 consecutive cases without any maternal deaths.

Many facts have been ascertained which must stand, no matter what becomes of the theories to which they have given rise, and many methods of treatment have been devised, each of which seems to have application to a certain number of cases. We do not yet know the pathology of eclampsia, but we know

*Read before the Toronto Medical Society.