

significance if these casts are such as to show obviously a renal origin by containing renal elements. Hyaline casts are probably always present in albuminuria and should not be looked upon as evidence pointing to the existence of organic disease of the kidney. It would seem that at least two organic diseases of the kidney may reveal themselves, first of all as functional albuminuria, although the actual mechanism of the production of the condition is obscure. These are calculus, and movable kidney. I have known of one instance of the former where the patient sought advice on account of functional albuminuria for which no cause could be found and where subsequently renal colic with distinct evidence of the presence of a calculus occurred. It would be well, before assuming that an albuminuria was entirely of functional origin, to examine the patient carefully, not only from the point of view of organic renal disease such as nephritis, granular kidney, but also to bear in mind the possibility of calculus and of nephroptosis.

The albuminuria of serious renal disease leads on the whole to fewer errors inasmuch as other facts pointing to the existence of the underlying malady are usually present, but still, if attention is concentrated too much on the degree of albuminuria present, very serious errors of diagnosis and of prognosis are liable to be made.

In the first place it is essential to bear in mind that even in gross organic disease the albuminuria may have some of the postural characteristics and hence it is advisable only to examine samples of the mixed twenty-four hours' urine as very erroneous deduction of the progress of the case are liable to be drawn from the observations on the urine not being carried out with similar specimens on consecutive days. But probably the error most frequently made in chronic renal disease is not to pay sufficient attention to the fluctuations in the quantity of urine secreted. It is obvious if dropsy for example be increasing that the quantity of urine will undergo a diminution and the albumin an apparent increase, the percentage amount of albumin will of course increase, but the total quantity lost in the twenty-four hours may not undergo any change. In cases where dropsy is increasing this error