

eclampsia and yet no trace of albumen been found in the urine. He believes that albuminuria predisposes to attacks but does not act as an exciting cause.

Physiologists of to-day are startling us by their accounts of the toxicity of the waste products of the body; the greater amount of activity in the cells of the body, the greater amounts of waste products to be excreted or neutralized.

Some of these agents are so poisonous that unless excreted at once or transformed by chemical action into innocuous substances, a very serious and dangerous effect results.

The process of excretion and transformation of the excreta into simple and harmless products becomes very important as suspension of, or interference with, either of these actions leaves the organism with the power of poisoning itself. This is what is known as "auto-intoxication."

The power then of the organism to poison itself, or be poisoned, through an accumulation of its own waste products, or through the excessive production of ptomaines or toxic agents within its own tissues, is an established fact. These, by getting into the circulation, are soon carried to the brain, where they act on the centres in the cortex and may in a very short time, unless speedy elimination takes place, give rise to convulsions and epileptiform seizures identical with eclampsia.

Dührssen's opinion, and that of all the more recent investigators, seems now to establish the fact that puerperal eclampsia is due to an auto-intoxication from the retained constituents of the urine.

Chamberlent, Bouchard, Riviere and others found the urine of parturient women to be less poisonous than non-pregnant, when injected into the veins of animals; and that urine of eclamptic patients is less toxic than either of the other, thus shewing that the waste products of the body that are usually eliminated by the kidneys are retained and thus render the blood toxic.

When Chamberlent, who was an assistant to the great French obstetrician Tarnier, reported this to his chief, the latter suggested a series of experiments by injecting the blood of these patients into the veins of animals to see if this was more toxic than normal serum. They found that it was, that the pregnant woman's blood was more toxic than the non-pregnant, and the serum of the eclamptic was more toxic still. They thus naturally concluded that, there being a relation between the non-toxicity of urine and the toxicity of serum, the theory of retention was the true one.