

with a degree of certainty that would place its origin beyond the question of a reasonable doubt, but it is needless to say that these efforts have been in every instance unavailing; for as soon as one authority advanced a theory apparently accounting for its development, he would be answered by an equally eminent authority, who would direct his efforts to controverting and denying *in toto* the conclusions reached, and who would adduce powerful arguments in support of his denial, and then, having accomplished his purpose, would proceed to form a theory of his own to give to the world, which would, in its turn, be obliged to pass through the scathing fire of criticism, and, unable to stand the ordeal, emerge henceforth to be regarded as a fallacy.

The most eminent authorities on both human and veterinary diseases have disagreed and been divided in their opinions on this subject: what a hopeless task, then, would it be for me, with my limited experience, to attempt to lift the veil of obscurity under which the origin of this disease is hidden, when the ablest investigators the world has ever seen, both in the past and present, have failed to do so. We know that influenza, like every other disease, must have an origin, or it would not exist, but beyond this point all is conjecture. I will now proceed to direct your attention to a few of the theories held regarding the primary cause or origin of influenza. It has been attributed to exhalations from the earth, but that this cannot be the cause is evident from the fact that it has frequently manifested itself in the midst of the ocean, where such exhalations would not be likely to reach.

Currents of electricity in the air have by some been supposed to exert some peculiar and occult influence by means of which influenza could be originated. But as no such condition has ever been shown to exist in the air in connection with the disorder, this idea is, to say the least, a