

objected to this treatment ; for it was a curable condition. Eclampsia was a symptom of the disease, not the disease itself, so that the term was by no means a correct one. It was the most striking symptom of a toxæmia which produced a very profound effect on certain organs of the system. We had been told that the causation was renal incompetency. During late years there have been some reasons to doubt whether this was the primal cause. Investigations had shown that the liver was perhaps the most important factor in producing this toxæmia, which was the cause and not the result of the kidney degeneration and the other serious conditions. It was well known that the liver renders inert many poisonous substances brought to it from the intestines through the portal vein. Hepatic incompetency allowed entrance into the blood of substances highly toxic. To these had been applied the name leucomaines, and were the result of defective oxidation of nitrogenous substances. These poisons seemed to act specially on the kidney and the nerve centres.

Often no kidney lesion was found up to the time of the nerve explosion. If the kidney was the cause of the trouble, the question arose, why did it not show some signs? The reason was, possibly, that the poison had not been circulating long enough, the kidneys not being attacked till later on. While it was important to observe the kidneys, which, no doubt, were always more or less affected, every symptom should be recognized. What should be done with a pregnant woman when we discover symptoms of toxæmia with or without albuminuria? If albuminuria was present it was a very serious danger-signal, and called for close attention and most judicious treatment. While it was difficult, particularly in country districts, to make the examination of the urine at regular intervals in cases of pregnancy, yet in every possible case it should be done. The essayist called attention to a case of his own where the only symptom of the toxic condition was a slight headache. Up to this time he had been looking for albuminuria ; he had overlooked the importance of this slight nervous phenomena which had existed for three or four days before confinement, supposing it to be caused by indigestion. The woman had convulsions during the first stage of labor. Fortunately she recovered, but the essayist said he felt humiliated that he had not appreciated the importance of the symptom. Headache was a symptom of the disease which should put the physician on guard immediately. The essayist then called attention to the methods of treatment. Shapontier voiced the opinion of a great majority of physicians when he recommended, as soon as the slightest trace of albumen was found in the urine, that the patient should be placed on