

**NO. 10 IN THE PHYSICIANS' AND STUDENTS'
READY REFERENCE SERIES. FEVER: ITS
PATHOLOGY AND TREATMENT
BY ANTIPYRETICS. BEING AN ESSAY WHICH
WAS AWARDED THE BOYLSTON PRIZE OF
HARVARD UNIVERSITY, JULY 1890**

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HOBART AMORY HARE

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UNIVERSITY, JULY, 1899
LANE LIBRARY

BY

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THIS ESSAY IS DEDICATED

BY THE AUTHOR TO

DR. EDWARD MARTIN,

LECTURER ON CLINICAL AND OPERATIVE SURGERY AND EMERGENCY
SURGERY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA;
SURGEON TO THE HOWARD HOSPITAL,

AS AN EVIDENCE OF

VERY WARM REGARD.

PREFACE.

It would be difficult to find any theme about which so much has been written in the past ten years as the subject with which this essay deals, and a concise summary of the conclusions of many of the best observers cannot fail to be of value to the busy practitioner, particularly when combined with sufficient experimental and clinical experience to make the work something more than a mere compilation of other people's ideas. Not the least important portion of the book is the record of untoward effects produced by the various drugs considered, and it is interesting to note how severe the symptoms often seemed to be, and yet how few of the patients so affected died.

The following is extracted from the minutes of the Boylston Prize Committee :—

By an order adopted in 1826, the Secretary was directed to publish annually the following votes :—

1. That the Board do not consider themselves as approving the doctrines contained in any of the dissertations to which premiums may be adjudged.

2. That in case of the publication of a successful dissertation the author be considered as bound to print the above vote in connection therewith.

The title of this essay, when presented to the Boylston Prize Committee, early in 1890, was, "The Uses and Values of Antipyretics."



FEVER:

ITS PATHOLOGY AND TREATMENT.

INTRODUCTION.

THE interest and importance which is very properly attached to the use of certain drugs in the treatment of pyrexia in man has already led to the production of a large number of researches on this subject, some of which have been exceedingly valuable from more than one point of view, and, curiously enough, that country which is at once the youngest and most pushing for money, and not science, has been the source from which many of our reliable and accurate studies have come. The readers of this essay are too well grounded in the study of the condition known as fever to make it necessary for me to detail the studies so far made. Suffice it to state that the medical profession are almost universally of the opinion that fever is a disorder of calorification depending upon nervous action, said nervous action being the result of various causes, such as the presence of poisonous materials in the blood, or of perverted functional activity. The first of these may be represented by the fever of any infectious disease, the second by the so-called hysterical hyperpyrexia.

Turning from the general question of fever to those drugs which combat it, we are met at once by an array of synthetically prepared substances which are almost without number, and which are derived chiefly from the tar found always in close proximity to deposits

of coal. Though the title of this essay is a sweeping one, it is hardly to be supposed that all these drugs must be included; only the more important members of the antipyretic group are therefore studied, such as antipyrin, antifebrin, phenacetin, thallin, and salicylic acid.

The value of a drug which can decrease high temperature by influencing heat production alone cannot be overestimated, and, while several of the drugs named seem to influence this part of the heat apparatus more than that portion connected with the dissipation of heat, we have no substance which is distinctly and solely capable of exercising an inhibitory power over the development of heat in the body.

Frequently, one of the substances put forward by its discoverer as a useful antipyretic has been found to so depress the heart or the respiration that it cannot be used, while another produces secondary lesions in the tissues of the body by a more slowly acting influence.

For both experimental and practical purposes we may, therefore, divide antipyretics into three great classes, as follows:—

First.—The substances which allay or prevent fever by inhibiting its production.

Second.—The drugs which possess the power of decreasing the production and increasing the dissipation of heat.

Third.—The compounds which allay fever, not by stopping the manufacture of heat-units, but by so increasing the radiation of heat that the loss is greater than the manufacture.

The first and third classes are directly opposed to each other. The second class is half-way between, and it is to this class that most of our antipyretic drugs