

**EXPERIMENTAL
RESEARCHES ON
SPECIFIC THERAPEUTICS**

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Experimental Researches on Specific Therapeutics by Paul Ehrlich

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PAUL EHRLICH

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P. E. King



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ON
SPECIFIC THERAPEUTICS

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The Harben Lectures for 1907
OF
THE ROYAL INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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1908



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PREFACE.

It was with very sincere pleasure that I accepted the invitation of the Council of the Royal Institute of Public Health with which they honored me, to deliver the Harben Lectures in 1907, for many relationships both of a scientific and social character have always contributed to render a visit to England one of stimulus and recuperation.

The subjects which I chose for my lectures are closely related with those questions, with the study of which I have been connected during the past ten years, viz., the theories of Immunity and Atrepsy, which latter is connected with my researches on Cancer, and the theory of Chemico-therapeutics which I have enunciated in connection with my work on the Trypanosomes.

I am publishing these lectures with a feeling of sincere gratitude for the kind and hospitable reception which I received in London from my friends and colleagues, and especially am I anxious to express my indebtedness to Professor William R. Smith for all his kindness, which rendered my visit so enjoyable. I would also desire to thank Dr. Carl Prausnitz for his very valuable help, and Professor R. Tanner Hewlett for kindly revising the English translation of the Lectures.

P. EHRLICH.

FRANKFORT,
April 22, 1908.



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LECTURE I.

ON IMMUNITY WITH ESPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE RELATIONS EXISTING BETWEEN THE DISTRIBUTION AND THE ACTION OF ANTIGENS.

THERE can be no doubt that the three great fields of knowledge, Pharmacology, Toxicology and Therapeutics, in their theoretical and practical aspects form the most important branches of medicine. It is matter, therefore, for no surprise that in the study of the various substances with which these sciences are concerned, the mode of action and the reasons for such call for much consideration, and theory and speculation necessarily form a great part of our study.

Besides, pharmacology has but just emerged from the stage of pure observation and description. One was content formerly with describing the physiological effects and the secondary action of substances which act pharmaco-dynamically, as well as the morphological changes which they bring about in the organs and tissues of the body. Observations made on an empirical basis such as this, formed a mass of most needful knowledge, and even to-day we have no hesitation in admitting that the study of the symptomatology of drugs is still a work of absolute necessity and must yield very fruitful results. Indeed, by such means we learn not only how to make use of known drugs in a purposeful manner, but also how to avoid their undesired secondary actions. But merely to increase the contents of our pharmacopœia is not to add to our resources in this desirable direction: for such an increase may depend on accidents, which, in their turn, may be the outcome of empiricism. It is to the great influence which chemistry exerts on medical science that we owe the change in this state of affairs; for it is especially necessary to have clear ideas of the relations between chemical constitution and pharmacological action.