

ON THE FALL OF TEMPERATURE ACCOMPANYING
GREAT WOUNDS BY FIRE-ARMS

By Paul Redard abridged from a Translation by Arthur E. F. Barker, L.R.C.S.I., "Dublin Jour. of Med. Science," Sept., 1872

Placed during the latter part of the French war, the struggle between the regular army and the Federals,—in the ambulances "*de la Presse*," (in the service of his master, M. Demarquay), M. Redard had ample opportunities of noticing the effect of injuries by fire-arms in lowering the temperature. Every time a patient suffering from a grave wound from a fire-arm was observed by him, a lowering of the temperature of the body was found. In most of the cases the injuries had been inflicted by the bursting of shells, but in some they had been caused by cannon-balls shattering limbs, and in the instances of the Federals the wounds had usually been received while they were in a state of intoxication. In such M. Redard found a wound produced a much greater fall of temperature than did one of equal extent in men of temperate habits, and in them amputations were most unsuccessful. He, therefore, quite endorses the dictum of M. Verneuil, that the prognosis of traumatic lesions, all other things being equal, presents an exceptional gravity among subjects addicted to drinking chronically. The author narrates his observations in fifty cases, and concludes his memoir with the following deductions:

"1. In great injuries by fire-arms, fall of temperature is a constantly observed fact.

"2. Several elements come into play in producing this fall. Among the principal we will mention,—nervous shock, the excitement of the combat, with consecutive stupor, hemorrhage, and, lastly, alcoholism.

"3. Every wounded man brought into an ambulance with a grave wound which seems to necessitate an operation, and who shows a temperature below 35.5° (95.9° Fahr.) will die, and ought not, consequently, to be operated on.

"4. Every wounded man in whom a salutary reaction is not produced within four hours, and in whom the reaction is not a direct sequence of the fall of temperature, must be considered as gravely injured.