

ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTIONS

TREATMENT OF THE FEVER HEART.*

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THE treatment of the fever heart is a problem, if one may use a paradox, at once so simple and so complex, that I have had difficulty in delimiting the ground to be covered in discussing it.

Fever as a clinical condition is symptomatic of the toxæmia associated with many different forms of local or generalized microbic infection. The effect of these upon the heart varies with the nature of the infection, its intensity, duration, individual resistance and many other associated conditions. It is well known that the infective bacteria of many diseases—as pneumonia, typhoid, influenza, gonorrhœa, septicæmia, etc., may invade the heart, though in other diseases—as diphtheria—the injury to the myocardium is due to the toxæmia alone.

The treatment of the fever heart is *simple*, because often it is satisfactorily included in the proper routine management of the case, without any medication directed specially toward the heart. Thus rest, mental as well as physical, fresh air, proper regulation of the quality and quantity of food and drink, baths, relief of pain, efficient elimination, specific medication, such as antitoxin in diphtheria or quinine in malaria, the drainage of septic cavities or the removal of foci of infection—all measures directed against the underlying infection, are important, directly or indirectly, in safeguarding the heart. Frequently nothing more is required.

It is important here to bear in mind the modern conception of fever as a conservative reaction designed to increase the resistance of the individual to the infection. Ordinarily it is only when fever assumes the type of a hyper-pyrexia that in itself it becomes the object of treatment. Then the use of baths, the application of the ice bag to the precordium and like measures are our safest and most efficient remedies.

It is unnecessary at this time to caution against the use of the various coal tar preparations, as acetanilid, antipyrin, phenacetin and other depressant febrifuges, which formerly were so commonly used, with disastrous effects upon the heart and circulation.

The too common use by the laity of antikamnia, bromo-quinine and various headache powders containing coal-tar products, to relieve the

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