
The Heart and Sudden Death

Fisher Theodore

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Author: Fisher Theodore

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THE HEART AND SUDDEN DEATH.

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THE HEART
AND
SUDDEN DEATH

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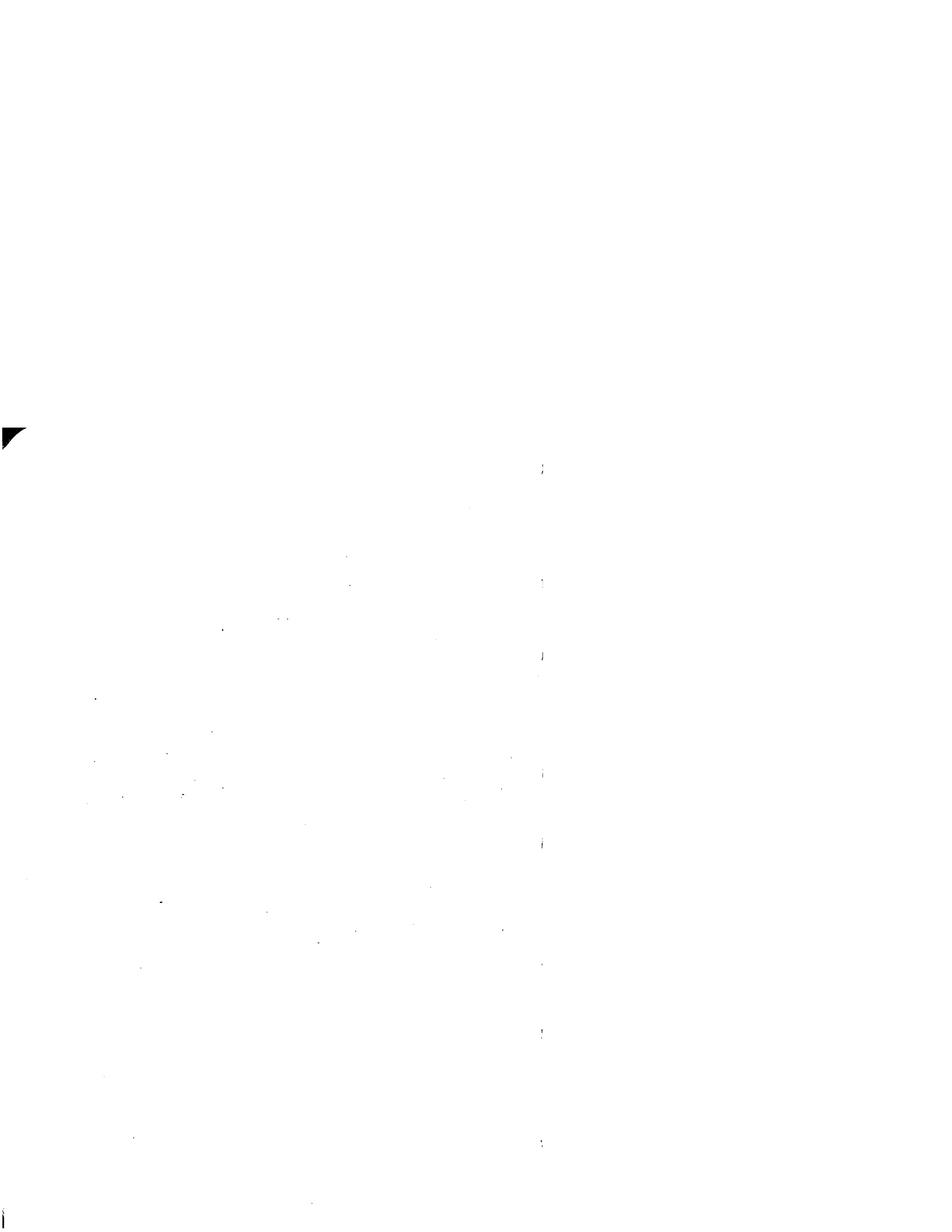
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P R E F A C E.

THIS little book comprises in the main some articles which appeared in *The Hospital*. They are based upon experience gained in performing nearly 2,500 autopsies. Although the morbid anatomy of the heart in its relation to sudden death is chiefly dealt with, it is hoped that some of the observations here contained may not only be of interest to medical men when considering disease of the heart in its broader aspects, but may be of aid to medical students in calling to mind facts not always clearly dealt with in text-books of medicine.

T. F.

May 1, 1908.



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THE HEART AND SUDDEN DEATH.

THE MITRAL VALVE.

WHEN we speak of sudden death, both medical men and those without medical training generally think at once of the heart. And it is needless to say that they are right to regard it as all-important to the maintenance of life. The presence or absence of the beat of the heart for more than a few moments of time is synonymous with the absence or presence of death. In passing, it may be remarked that formerly, in reports of inquests in the daily papers—and occasionally I think it is so still—apoplexy is mentioned as a cause of sudden death. Absolutely sudden death from such a cause, however, is extremely rare. It is necessary to remember that cardiac action is virtually independent of the brain. The emotions of the mind acting through the brain may disturb the heart's rhythm, and such impulses may temporarily, or in very rare instances even permanently, arrest cardiac action. Yet the brain itself is not responsible for the steady continuance of cardiac systole and diastole, as it is for the respiratory movement of the chest; and consequently if an