Most of his life was spent in Zurich, where he contributed to the understanding of thrombosis. In 1880, he discovered the rod-shaped bacteria in 12 out of 23 fatal cases of typhoid fever, in spleen, lymph nodes and peyer’s patches and described them fully in Virchow’s Archives (1881). He then returned to Prussia and held the chair of histology and Pathological Anatomy, at the university of Halle. Georg Gaffky actually isolated and obtained the culture, of Eberth’s bacillus (1884). Bacterial cause of disease was confirmed in rats and called “Eberthalia” (Salmonella).

Georges Ferdinand Isidore Widal (1862 -1929) was born in Algeria and studied medicine in Paris, where study of bedside medicine was firmly established and complemented by recent surge in basic sciences. He took his doctorate at the age of 26, presenting thesis on several clinical manifestations of streptococcal infections (puerperal phlebitis, endocarditis and erysipelas). Widal was appointed Professor of internal pathology and 7 years later, succeeded to the chair of Clinical Medicine.

Widal did a concentrated investigation on the pathogenesis of the typhoid fever, caused by Eberth’s bacillus in cooperation with Andre Chantemesse (Professor of Medical Academy & Head of Ministry of Hygiene) and discovered the renowned agglutination test for typhoid fever. The description of this test was presented to the Medical Society of the Hospitals in Paris, in June 1896. An English communication by Widal appeared in Lancet, after the preliminary report in Paris. He called it “Sero-diagnosis by which typhoid fever could almost be instantly recognised, by simply observing microscopically, how the serum of the patient acted on the culture of Eberth’s bacillus”.

Widal, a critical bedside student and teacher relied on investigations in the clinical laboratory as an adjunct to diagnosis and treatment of a number of maladies. He separated types of chronic nephritis, earlier known as Bright’s disease. In the investigations of anaphylaxis, described by Richet, Widal studied haemolytic anaemias (Hayem-Widal type) and compared paroxysmal haemoglobinuria induced by cold to the development of anaphylaxis from exposure to foreign proteins. A great teacher, he combined a zeal for investigation, with clinical wisdom and experimental precision. Widal contributed more than his share towards making medicine an exact science.