ORGANIC IRON MEDICATION IN SECONDARY ANEMIAS.

A CLINICAL AND HEMATOLOGICAL STUDY.

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A great deal has been written in recent years on the value of the various new organic iron compounds in the treatment of anemia, and our only excuse for the presentation of this report is that every new series of clinical observations, made with due conservatism and accurately recorded, is of value in confirming or disproving some fact or theory in medicine.

The problem of treating secondary anemias is an interesting one. In each case there is, in the first place, the primary factor, be it loss of blood through hemorrhage, spontaneous or traumatic; or be it the lowering of the functional activity of the blood-forming organs wrought by disease somewhere in the body, or by the action of toxins; or the direct destruction of the red cells and their hemoglobin in the circulating blood by some more violent toxic agency.

The first question, therefore, is how to remove the primary factor, or, at least, how to arrest its influence on the state of the blood. The second is how to improve the state of the blood, so as to give it a new lease of life by increasing the amount of hemoglobin—that prime agent of oxygen exchange—and the number of red cells, the carriers of this agent.

In each individual case of secondary anemia there are different obstacles to be overcome as regards the primary factor, and therefore the treatment of the primary disease varies; but the therapy of the secondary condition is alike in all cases. Iron and its assistant, manganese, are the specifics to which we must have recourse—of that there has long since been no doubt—but the form of iron that should be used for this purpose is another question.

The problem as to the exact site and mode of absorption of iron which is administered therapeutically has occupied pharmacologists for a number of years, and a great deal has been written on the subject, and yet there is still no agreement even as regards some of the essential parts of this question. Is iron absorbed at all in the inorganic state? If so, in what form and in what quantities? What form of iron is most readily absorbed? How does iron act if it is not absorbed, or if only infinitesimal amounts, totally inadequate for the needs of the