

# CANADA

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RECENT DISCOVERIES

IN THE

PHYSIOLOGY OF THE RETINA.

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The commonly accepted belief that the healthy retina of vertebrate animals is, during life, a perfectly colourless and transparent membrane, has been completely upset by the recent researches of Boll.\* From these it appears that the external portions of the rods and cones of most vertebrates, and the corresponding structures of the invertebrata, are, during life, of a vivid red colour, which colour rapidly fades and disappears after death if the retina is exposed to ordinary white light. Examined microscopically, the great majority of the rods present individually the characteristic reddish hue; interspersed among these, however, are a few of a pale green colour.

The red colour was at first observed to be of a somewhat purple tinge, and for this reason was designated *seh-purple*, (vision-purple), but further investigation has shown that the purple hue does not exist in eyes which have been kept in absolute darkness; the colour of such retinae is a pure red, and the term *seh-roth* (vision-red) is the more appropriate of the two.

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\* Berichte der Berliner Akademie, November, 1876.