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ORIGINAL COMMUNICATIONS.

ART. XXIV.—*Therapeutical Contributions.* By WILLIAM WRIGHT, M.D., L.R.C.S.E., Professor of Materia Medica, McGill College. Physician to the Montreal General Hospital, &c.

ANTI-SPANÆMICS.

The medicines pertaining to the present class have the power of improving the quality of the blood, when this fluid is impoverished. They are more numerous than is usually admitted, and are not confined to any special group of substances, nor are they restricted, as is currently esteemed, to the preparations of iron, but, on the contrary, include with these, other and dissimilar agents, as manganese and its compounds, sulphuric acid, &c. It cannot, therefore, be considered that the narrow term "chalybeates" denotes them, as Mr. Headland declares in his "Action of Medicines"; nor can it be overlooked that his instructor, Dr. Pereira, also fell into a practical error concerning them when he believed they acted by supplying iron to the blood which was previously deficient, and in accordance with this opinion named them hæmatinics, merely because this metal is found in the colouring matter of the blood. Evidently this action cannot be of the simply restorative kind thus implied, since other agents containing no iron, as I have said, produce a similar effect; and again, an hæmatinic—if an agent capable of replacing hæmatosine—must supply equally the other ingredients, as well as the iron of which this proximate principle is composed. Pure metallic iron, as *pulvis ferri*, can only supply itself; it contains neither carbon nor hydrogen, nor oxygen, nor nitrogen, of which relatively more of the bulk of hæmatosine consists than of iron; it cannot, therefore, supply these.