

blood counts of from 156,000 to 4,000,000, in one-fifth of the cases there was no high color index, in fact that in twelve of them the index was either constantly low, or low at some time or other during the malady. Furthermore, nucleated red cells were often absent during the course of the disease and frequently even when present, they were found only after a prolonged search and in very small numbers. Again, it was ascertained from this series that the megaloblasts which are regarded by many as a very important feature of the blood diagnosis, came most often only in the advanced stage of the disease. In his long series of examinations which have been tabulated, we note this interesting fact, that in the early stages of the disease they are certainly remarkably scarce, and that where they were numerous the disease was already far advanced and had shortly afterwards become fatal. Now the diagnostic significance, to be of value, should demonstrate the fact at the early stages of the disease when we are yet doubtful as to the differential diagnosis between pernicious anemia and a possible latent gastric carcinoma. We are, therefore, confronted with a serious disadvantage, all the more so when we learn that some regard the presence of megaloblasts in carcinoma, if not as a frequent occurrence, at all events as not a very great rarity.

The limitations for diagnosis are quite as noteworthy in regard to the color index. We have already mentioned Dr. Billings' experience in this respect and the observations of Cabot on 110 cases bear this out. In thirty-one of his series there was no relative increase in the hemoglobin. So too, has been our own experience in the cases admitted to the Royal Victoria Hospital. In twenty-four cases which were undoubted, (the diagnosis having been verified either by the subsequent course of the malady or by autopsy), the color index was plus in only six, distinctly low in five, there was a normal ratio in five, and in the remaining eight the index was at some time during the course of the disease increased, at other times diminished.

Our cases have also shown, as did the series of Billings and Cabot, that the blood count may vary very much during the course of the disease, that while often the count was below two million red cells, frequently it would attain to nearly the normal, though in the majority of cases, the number was below two million. An average of all the cases, male and female, gave to the red cells a percentage of 34.4.

Realizing then the remissions with non-characteristic blood counts, the rarity of the classical, typical signs in the early stages, when the differential diagnosis is so important, as also that other diseases may have often a blood state resembling that of the early stages of pernicious anemia, we must acknowledge certain limitations in the significance of the blood findings though this need not detract from the value of the