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ORIGINAL COMMUNICATIONS

ART. XXVI.—*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.

ADIPOSE FOOD.\*

Adipose food comprehends both fats and oils of the order called saponifiable or those which are convertible into soaps. The non-saponifiable, such as cholesterine, are excluded because they are not used dietetically. As the observations to be made apply equally to fats and oils, to save words I shall only employ the first name, so that when used it is meant to denote both substances.

COMPOSITION.—Fats are *bona fide* salts, having for their basis a peculiar substance called the oxid of lipyl. By boiling with the caustic alkalies, alkaline earths, or metallic oxida, fats are resolved into certain proximate principles, as stearin, margarin and olein, and these are composed of individual acids, stearic, oleic, and margarin, in combination with a sweet substance styled glycerin. From this latter circumstance glycerin was at one time called the basis of fats, but this opinion is proved to be wrong as by association with fatty acids, i. e., by synthesis, no fat can be made from it. Glycerin is probably a compound substance, and may be regarded as a sesquihydrate of the oxid of lipyl, that is consisting of three equivalents of water, and a double atom of oxid of lipyl. Lipyl is an hypothetical radical, and has the same composition that was formerly ascribed to glycerin. It forms compounds like the ethyle series.

\*From notes of lectures delivered to the Materia Medica Class, McGill College, during the session 1856-57.