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NOTES ON THE DIAGNOSTIC VALUE OF BLOOD  
EXAMINATIONS.\*

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Never since blood examinations have constituted a routine practice in the diagnosis of disease has so much detailed work been done in the subject as during the past few years, and yet never has so much doubt been cast upon its value and significance. The subject has interested physicians and surgeons alike in the matter of diagnosis, prognosis and treatment ; to both it has often been of the greatest value, while, at times, too, it has proved most disappointing and unreliable. The journals which have of late been so replete with discussions on laboratory methods have considered more especially the value of blood examination with a desire to answer satisfactorily the following questions :—

1st. Is a blood examination at all of use for diagnosis in medical or surgical conditions ?

2nd. If such be the case, is not the mere estimation of the numbers of red and white cells and the amount of hæmoglobin quite sufficient for all practical purposes ? In other words do we really require stained and other preparations of blood to assist us in the diagnosis ? And,

3rd. Can the surgeon rely on blood examination for diagnosis and prognosis, for indications when to operate or when to refrain.

Concerning the first of these questions, as to whether or not any diagnostic value can be attached to blood examination, the scepticism is of course absurd and not even well founded. The basis of the claim however, rests on the fact that apart from a few parasitic diseases very

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\* Read before the Montreal Medico-Chirurgical Society, February 21, 1902.