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THE CLINICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE BLOOD-FILM.

ABSTRACT OF A LECTURE TO THE FELLOWSHIP OF
MEDICINE (M.R.C.P. COURSE).

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THE object of this lecture is to summarise the conditions in which the examination of a blood-film is of value in diagnosis and as an indication for treatment. In some cases it is desirable also to perform a total count of the cells and estimation of the hæmoglobin content, but the count itself is of no value

without accurate study of the histology of the corpuscles in a well-stained film.

The value of this investigation depends on two facts. Firstly, the different blood-cells are not separate entities, but descendants of a common ancestor; and secondly, the various noxæ and stimuli which affect the hæmopoietic organs in disease are combated by these organs in different ways. It is, therefore, possible, by observing the variations from the normal in regard to the proportion of the different cells present, to form some idea of the nature of the attack, and then, by noting the extent to which a shift towards primitive forms is found, to estimate the strength of the resistance thereto. The blood-film is, therefore, valuable both in diagnosis and prognosis, and its significance goes further than mere detection of the so-called diseases of the blood. Strictly speaking, it is as incorrect to talk