

Miscellaneous.

COUGH IN PULMONARY PHTHISIS.

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As broods silence back of sound, so also stands designer back of design, and the logical mind of man has ever thus traced a presumptive relation between the thing observed and its supposed origin, and called them respectively cause and effect.

Thus in medicine we look from symptoms to a cause, and if post mortem we find a definite lesion we too often jump to the conclusion that it must be the very thing we are looking for, and are apt to forget that back of this change of structure lingers the first real cause in perverted physiologic function.

One of the best known and oldest symptoms, and one which occurs from diverse causes, is cough, and this, with another, almost as common and well known, dyspnea, go hand in hand among the various affections of the respiratory organs.

In pulmonary phthisis cough is usually the first symptom manifest and lasts throughout the disease, but the cause is not the same in each stage and consequently requires careful study and varying treatment in the different stages.

The earliest physiologic alteration is a hyperemia usually occurring at the apices. This congestion of the capillaries is the causal irritation that brings about the cough reflexly through the medium of the nervous system. Here a nerve depressant and vaso-motor dilator is indicated rather than an analgesic and expectorant.

In the next stage of consolidation the hepatized tissue acts as a foreign body and likewise reflexly brings about a useless cough in the vain effort to get rid of itself. In this stage resolution should be established by means of an alterative and the nerves quieted by a sedative.

In the third stage where the tissue has undergone cheesy degeneration and broken down, it really is a foreign body that causes the cough, which can only be relieved by its removal, hence we give stimulating expectorants in combination with sedatives and analgesics to relieve the nervous spasms and consequent pain.

The sum total of the forces of a consumptive is at the most a low figure, and we try to keep this up by a high diet that often deranges other organs, whereas regard to the conservation of force by lessening the cough will give the same result without detriment to other emunctories.

To allay cough, then, has been the aim of therapeutists from