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Original Communications

THE VALUE OF NITROGLYCERIN AS A PREVENT- ATIVE OF HEMOPTYSIS IN PULMONARY TUBERCULOSIS

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There is no symptom nor complication in the course of a case of pulmonary tuberculosis which causes so much alarm to the patient and anxiety to the attending physician as hemoptysis. No matter how scanty the hemorrhage may be, it is not to be regarded lightly. In the vast majority of cases a recurrence is to be expected. And if it be at all profuse the possibility of death from suffocation, from subsequent exhaustion, or broncho-pneumonia is never to be disregarded.

The frequency of this complication may be said to be about 60 per cent. of all cases. Varying estimates are given by different authorities, ranging from 25 to 80 per cent. From the records of 4,466 cases at the Phipps Institute it occurred in 49.9 per cent. At the Adirondack Cottage Sanatorium, in 1795 cases it occurred in 44.1 per cent. Of one hundred consecutive cases admitted to the Toronto Free Hospital previous to May 1st, 1908, the records show a percentage of 47.

These figures show the frequency of this symptom as observed in institutions—a frequency which is perhaps surprising, and somewhat greater than ordinary clinical experience would suggest. A common observation, moreover, in connection with the occurrence of hemoptysis in institutions has been that they do not often occur as isolated cases.