

Nuttall tells us that a tuberculous patient may expectorate at a moderate estimate, from two to four billions of bacilli in twenty-four hours. The sputum quickly dries, and the dried bacilli are spread broadcast. The public generally and tuberculous patients especially must be educated to a due appreciation of this fact. The risk of infecting even nurses and attendants is slight, if proper precautions are taken. This involves much thoughtfulness and care. It is almost impossible to abolish the handkerchief, but with the shaking out of a filthy handkerchief on which tuberculous sputum has dried, millions of the bacilli are thrown into the air to be inhaled, perchance, by susceptible persons. Instruct your patients, then, never to spit on the floor or handkerchief. The danger from spitting on the ground in the sunlight is not so great, but even this must be avoided in the streets of our cities and towns. The sputum should be received into proper spit-cups containing a suitable disinfectant, and finally thrown down the water closet or thoroughly destroyed by boiling. The mouth may be wiped by rags which must be promptly burned or boiled. That the danger from dried sputum on handkerchiefs is a real one is shown by the frequency with which the women who shake out and wash the handkerchiefs of tuberculous persons at health resorts contract the disease.

When consumptives mix with the public, they should be required to carry a spit-cup, and spitting in public conveyances, hospitals, halls, churches and other public places should be made an indictable offence.

The breath of a tuberculous patient is not a source of any considerable danger, but Flügge's experiments convinced him that the expulsion of fine drops of saliva and mucus containing bacilli, during coughing, constituted a real danger. He says that intimate association with coughing consumptives, especially when one frequently approaches the patient nearer than one metre, is dangerous.

I always instruct my patients that dried sputum is a source of danger not only to others, but also to themselves, by infection of previously healthy portions of their own lungs. Selfishness is the mainspring of human conduct, and there is no surer way of making a man careful than to bring into play the instinct of self-preservation. Another important instruction is that rooms in which consumptives live should be dusted with damp cloths.

Every possible means of educating the public concerning these dangers should be utilized, and the distribution and proper care of spittoons containing water or a disinfectant solution to prevent the drying of the sputum in public places, schools, factories, etc., should be encouraged. The Government