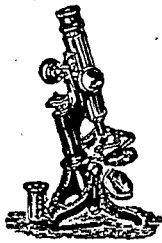


Medical Matters.

AMYL NITRITE IN HÆMOPTYSIS.



Dr. George A. Crace-Calvert, Physician to the Vale of Clwyd Sanatorium, Ruthin, N. Wales, writing in the *Lancet* on the methods and appliances for the treatment of hæmoptysis, says that until recently these have not on the whole been satisfactory. He states that ergot, adrenalin, morphine, calcium chloride, or lactate, though they may help considerably if there is time for them to act, are none of them of supreme value; that morphine is useful in some cases, yet it checks the cough by depressing the respiratory centre, and though to check the cough may undoubtedly help to check the bleeding, yet at the same time it tends to cause accumulation in the air passages of the blood already effused, and if the blood be retained it will almost certainly decompose and form a most favourable medium for the development of any number of septic and other organisms which will probably land the patient into septic pneumonia or a rapid extension of his tuberculous condition. He goes on to say:

"The drug, however, which seems to me to be most valuable in practically all cases of hæmoptysis is nitrite of amyl. At first sight it appears to be madness to give a patient with a wounded and bleeding vessel a drug which acts powerfully as a dilator of vessels, but—even though its action be only transient—it produces such an immediate fall in the general blood pressure by dilatation of the vessels throughout the body that the pressure at the bleeding point is lowered, and there is time for clotting to take place, and the hæmoptysis usually ceases almost instantly. Even if the pulmonary vessels are dilated the ill-effects are more than counter-balanced by the fall in blood pressure, but Dr. Francis W. E. Hare (who first suggested the use of nitrite of amyl) quotes in an article in the first number of the *British Journal of Tuberculosis* experiments which seem to prove that it has a direct vaso-constrictor action on the vessels of the pulmonary periphery in spite of a vaso-dilator action elsewhere. It may, however, be urged that this constriction of the pulmonary vessels is bad in that it must raise the blood pressure in those vessels, but this seems to be more than counterbalanced by the fall in general pressure, whereas in the case of adrenalin, ergot, etc., there is no corresponding fall in general pressure. Moreover, nitrite of

amyl causes no reactionary pulmonary hyperæmia (after the anæmia), while adrenalin apparently does, for I have heard of a cyst being removed by a "bloodless" operation under cocaine and adrenalin and next day a large clot of blood being found in the place which the cyst had occupied. Again, nitrite of amyl has a further good point, and that is the fact that it does not interfere with coughing and so does not place any obstacle in the way of the patient getting rid of the effused blood, and hence it considerably lessens the risk of septic trouble later.

"I now always carry three-minim capsules of amyl nitrite, and as soon as I am called to a case of hæmoptysis break one and tell the patient to inhale it quietly and regularly, and at the same time warn him of the feeling of fulness in the head which it produces. The bleeding usually stops almost at once, though the patient may go on coughing up clotted blood which has been already effused. After that, if the patient is excited or alarmed, or the lungs appear to be irritable, I may give a hypodermic of morphine. I believe that in nitrite of amyl we have the best drug to administer first in any case of hæmorrhage."

ACID MILK PREPARATIONS.

Dr. J. Maddison Taylor, of Philadelphia, says in the *Dietetic and Hygienic Gazette*:

"Many years ago I was impressed with the vitalising effects of a diet of buttermilk on patients in the neurologic clinic of the Howard Hospital. We found there a large proportion of frail old women who, having outlived their usefulness, subsisted precariously on the cheapest obtainable diet, which consisted for the most part of bread and tea. In consequence of the semi-starvation, the poison of the thein, the psychic effects of a dreary future, loneliness, a hopeless outlook, inaction and the like, there were induced a variety of neuroses. Instigated chiefly to substitute an equally inexpensive diet, richer in assimilable proteids, and to get away from the tea, tannin, etc., I put them all on buttermilk. It surprised me to observe remarkable enhancements of vigour, activities, digestion, elimination, bowel action, urination, better sleep, a serenity of mind and temper. The roses of youth in many instances came back in sallow cheeks long withered; wrinkles disappeared; capacity for work long dormant awakened, and I enjoyed many voluble blessings. This was attributed at the time to the sustaining properties of the finely comminuted proteids and the vaguely understood diuretic and laxative effects. Now we can explain the rationale, at least in part."

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