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AN APPARENT CASE OF AN INHERITED TENDENCY TO A SPECIFIC TYPE OF TUBERCULOSIS

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During the spring of 1934, one of the authors had the opportunity to observe and record the following case:

The patient, a woman, was admitted to the hospital suffering from a painful growth at the base of the spinal column. The growth was incised and specimens of the exudate were sent to the pathological laboratory for examination. Slides from this material showed many tubercle bacilli and a guinea pig inoculation confirmed the diagnosis of tuberculosis. Six weeks after the growth was removed the patient died.

The information concerning the patient's family, came from the patient herself. Her mental condition was excellent and the facts given here are reasonably accurate.

In the patient's family there are four cases, of a tuberculosis growth at the base of the spine, apparently identically alike. The patient had one sister and two brothers; the sister died in early childhood from unknown causes. One of her brothers died at the age of 28 with a condition like that of the patient, the other brother is 26 years old and is in good health. The maternal line appears to be negative, the maternal grandparents probably being negative also. The patient's father had one brother who also died from a condition like that of the patients. The paternal grandmother died from pulmonary tuberculosis. The paternal grandfather was negative. The patient's father died from a growth at the base of the spine.

It is the opinion of the authors that this case represents a tendency to the inheritance of a specific type of tuberculosis, the tendency acting as a dominant character.

Since in the patient's family, one sister died in youth and one brother is at present not as old as the patient at the time of her death, it seems possible that an age element may have entered in and thus prevented the complete dominance of this tendency.

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