

Let me briefly picture to you the agonizing symptoms produced by sudden and total deprivation of the accustomed drug which, for years, has given relief to pain and possibly kept life in a next to lifeless body. A few hours after the time for the accustomed dose they begin to manifest themselves by a restlessness so great that the patient cannot remain quiet or sit still for many consecutive minutes. Soon this restlessness becomes intensified, time passes so slowly that moments seem minutes and minutes appear as hours. The patient cannot now stand, sit or lie down, he must be constantly in motion, walking up and down his room; he becomes tired in every limb, nay, in every muscle; and every nerve filament cries out from a thousand different parts of the body at once, "give me opium." Neuralgic and rheumatoid pains add to his misery, flashes of heat and cold play hide-and-peek all over his body and hold high carnival up and down his spine. One moment he is burning in "Hades," the next so icy cold that Alpine temperatures would be as warmth to his soul. Sleep is absent beyond recall. Added to these motor disturbances the mucous membranes, which have been dried up for so many months by the opiate, now open their floodgates and pour forth their secretions, the eyes, nose and mouth seem to vie with one another to find out which can discharge the greatest amount of fluid in the shortest space of time. The skin from head to foot becomes bathed in a profuse cold clammy perspiration, uncontrollable diarrhoea, cramps in the stomach and intestines add to the torture, whilst sneezing, singultus and vomiting contribute to form a picture of one of the most miserable creatures on earth. As time—which passes, oh, so slowly!—goes on these symptoms become more and more pronounced, the diarrhoea is converted into a bloody flux, with tormina and tenesmus unbearable; the circulation seems to be fast ebbing away, and yet there is a sensation as of molten metal passing through the vessels; the heart begins to flag and stimulants are necessary to keep it in action; the restlessness and loss of sleep give place to wild delirium, which may last for days, weeks, or months, until the unfortunate victim passed from under this tyrannical ordeal with a permanent scar in his nervous system, a physical wreck, with mind impaired. Dr. Charles H. Hughes, of St. Loins, thus tersely comments upon this plan of treatment.* He says: "Medical men of violent therapeutic proclivities, who advise abrupt abandonment of all opium, overlook the fact that a shattered, nervous system is to be reconstructed, which never was, perhaps, very strong; a system in

* "Alienist and Neurologist," Vol. V., No. 4, page 135.