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COCAINE ADDICTION AND ITS DIAGNOSIS.

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Since the introduction of Cocaine some fifteen years ago, and its stimulating action when taken into the human system has become known, its seductive qualities have produced a widespread evil, resulting in a malady known as Cocaine addiction. The importance of an accurate diagnosis in this malady is second in importance only to that of opium addiction, and must be sought for in the physical and mental symptoms as well as by chemical analysis of the urine.

Most of those addicted to the use of the drug are neurotics, and like many such are always on the outlook for some medicine or stimulant to quiet their unstable nervous organization; these fall an easy prey to numerous proprietary medicines and medicinal wines, which owe their potency to the Erythoxylon Cocoa or its alkaloid Cocaine, and many an habitué can date the advent of his malady to these apparently innocent but subtle nostrums. The dentist, rhinologist and general practitioner have, by their prescriptions and applications, contributed their quota to the number of habitual Cocaine users. The alcoholic inebriate and opium habitué have also grasped at this once lauded panacea for the cure of their affliction, with the almost invariable result of failure to cure their disease, and usually resulting in a double and sometimes triple addiction.

The quantity of the drug consumed by those accustomed to its habitual use varies between wide limits. I have met with cases taking only a fraction of a grain, whilst in others it mounted up to sixty grains in twenty-four hours, and in one instance the limit was marked by the enormous amount of ninety grains a day.

The mode by which the drug is taken is as variable as the quantity consumed. It is taken by the mouth, sprays, snuffing, washes, etc., but chiefly by means of the hypodermic syringe.

The early physical manifestations of the malady are somewhat obscure and difficult to detect. The patient has perhaps been toying with the drug for a considerable period before a daily dose becomes a necessity. The early symptoms may, however, be noted as follows: A condition of unnatural buoyancy of spirits and self-confidence, exalted mental