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## Original Communications.

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### THE TREATMENT OF INSOMNIA.

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(Read at Meeting of Maritime Medical Association.)

So many causes underlie the inability to sleep, which is such a frequent and such a distressing symptom, that it will be impossible to afford time for the discussion of all. Yet the question of etiology is by far the most important matter for consideration when the treatment of insomnia is demanded. So regularly do authorities insist upon it that insomnia is only a symptom, that I almost feel an apology is due you for reminding you of the fact. And yet it is a little information which may prove dangerous. The loose tendency to treat symptoms rather than disease—a tendency which is all too prevalent—is perhaps especially manifested in connection with this very symptom *insomnia*. The patient complains of sleeplessness—the physician prescribes chloral, or morphia, or bromide, or one of the host of semi-proprietary preparations so much vaunted in the advertising pages of our journals. Relief is, of course, afforded, and without any further consultation with his physician, the patient has the recipe repeated time and time over, has the chloral, or morphia, or some drug-habit superadded to his original habit of sleeplessness, and quickly degenerates both physically and morally, until the last state of that man has become decidedly worse than the first. For the very reason, then, that insomnia is *only* a symptom, it behooves the