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NEGRO COCAINE "FIENDS" ARE A NEW SOUTHERN MENACE

Murder and Insanity Increasing Among Lower Class Blacks Because They Have Taken to "Sniffing" Since Deprived of Whisky by Prohibition.

By Edward Huntington Williams, M. D.

FOR some years there have been rumors about the increase in drug taking in the Southern vagus, but always insistent rumors that the addiction to such drugs as morphine and cocaine was becoming a veritable curse to the colored race in certain regions. Some of these reports of alleged conditions read like the wildest flights of a sensational fiction writer. Stories of cocaine orgies and "sniffing parties," followed by wholesale murders, seem like lurid journalism of the yellowest variety.

But in point of fact there was nothing "yellow" about many of these reports. Nine men killed in Mississippi on one occasion by crazed cocaine takers, five in North Carolina, three in Tennessee—these are facts that need no imaginative coloring. And since this gruesome evidence is supported by the printed records of insane hospitals, police courts, jails, and penitentiaries, there is no escaping the conviction that drug taking has become a rare menace in certain regions south of the line.

In the North drug addiction is prevalent enough, in all conscience. The hospitals for the insane in New York State admitted one insane drug taker to every 356 other patients last year; and New York's record is about the same as that of her immediate neighbors. But in Georgia the proportion was 1 to 42; in North Carolina about 1 to 84; in Tennessee 1 to 74, and in one of the Mississippi hospitals 1 to 23.

Stated otherwise, those Southern States had from five to fifteen times as many insane drug takers as New York State.

But these comparisons, although sufficiently startling, fail to show the extent of drug addiction in the South. For most of these insane drug users, both North and South, were the victims of morphine; whereas the negro drug "fiend" uses cocaine almost exclusively.

This preference is not explained by the difference in the effects of the two drugs, but rather in the manner that each may be taken. Morphine when taken into the stomach acts slowly, and tends to upset digestion. If taken hypodermically its effects are produced almost immediately, and gastric functions are less disturbed. But hypodermic medication requires special apparatus, a fresh solution of the drug, and a somewhat complicated process of preparation.

Cocaine, on the other hand, can be taken in the dry form by the simple process of sniffing into the nose like an ordinary pinch of snuff. And its effects are almost instantaneous when so taken. It can, indeed, be sold with a brown powder that resembles ordinary snuff, and taken without detection under the very eyes of watchful officers.

The drug produces an exhilaration which is usually simply a mild intoxication, although it may produce the wildest form of insane exaltation, accompanied by the fantastic hallucinations and delusions that characterize mania. But this condition is followed by a state of terrible depression a few hours later—or would be followed by such depression if the drug were not again taken to prevent it. It is for the purpose of averting this depressed state, as well as to produce the exhilaration, that the "fiend" continues to use the drug once he has experienced either condition.

Stated thus, the effects of cocaine do not seem very different from those of alcohol. But in point of fact cocaine exhilaration is much more marked, and the depression far more profound and destructive to the nervous system. The victim is much more likely to have peculiar delusions, and develop hallucinations of an unpleasant character. He imagines that he hears people taunting or abusing him, and this often incites homicidal attacks upon innocent and unsuspecting victims.

Proof Against Bullets.

But the drug produces several other conditions that make the "fiend" a peculiarly dangerous criminal. One of these conditions is a temporary immunity to shock—a resistance to the "knock down" effects of fatal wounds. Bullets fired into vital parts, that would drop a race man in his tracks, fail to check the "fiend"—fail to stop his rush or weaken his attack.

A few weeks ago Dr. Crile's method of preventing shock in anaesthetized patients by the use of a cocaine preparation was described in these columns. A similar fortification against shock this condition seems to be produced in the cocaine-sniffing negro.

A recent experience of Chief of Police Gerty of Asheville, N. C., illustrates this particular phase of cocainism. The Chief was informed that a hitherto inoffensive negro, with whom he was well acquainted, was "running amuck" in a cocaine frenzy, had attempted to stab a storekeeper, and was at the moment engaged in "boosting up" the various members of his own household. Being fully aware of the respect that the negro has for Colt's guns buttons, (and, incidentally, having a record for courage,) the officer went single-handed to the negro's house for the purpose of arresting him.

But when he arrived there the negro had completed the beatings and left the place. A few moments later, however, the man returned, and entered the room where the Chief was waiting for him, concealed behind a door. When the unsuspecting negro reached the middle of the room, the officer stepped the door to prevent his escape, and informed him quietly that he was under arrest, and asked him to come to the station. In reply the crazed negro drew a long knife, grappled with the officer, and slashed him viciously across the shoulder.

Knowing that he must kill the man or be killed himself, the Chief drew his revolver, pierced the assailant over the negro's heart, and fired—intending to kill him right quick," as the officer put it. But the shot did not even stagger the man. And a second shot that pierced the arm and entered the chest had just the same effect in stopping the negro or checking his attack.

Meanwhile the Chief, out of the corner of his eye, saw infuriated negroes rushing toward the cabin from all directions. He had only three cartridges remaining in his gun, and he might need those in a minute to stop the mob. He ejected the empty shells and "finished the man with his club."

The following day the Chief exchanged his revolver for one of heavier calibre. Yet he was one with whom he shot the negro was a heavy army model, using a cartridge that Lieut. Townsend Whelen, who is an authority on such matters, recently declared was large enough to "kill any game in America." And many other officers in the South, who appreciate the increased vitality of the cocaine-crazed negroes, have made a similar exchange for guns of greater shocking power for the express purpose of combating the "fiend" when he runs amuck.

The list of dangerous effects produced by cocaine just described—hallucinations and delusions, increased courage, homicidal tendencies, resistance to shock—is certainly long enough. But there is still another, and a most important one. This is a temporary steadying of the nervous and muscular system, so as to increase, rather than interfere with, good marksmanship.

Makes Better Marksmen.

Many of the wholesale killings in the South may be cited as indicating that accuracy in shooting is not interfered with—is, indeed, probably improved—by cocaine. For a large proportion of such shootings have been the result of drug taking. But I believe the record of the "cocaine nigger" near Asheville, who dropped five men dead in their tracks, using only one cartridge for each, offers evidence that is sufficiently convincing. I doubt if this shooting record has been equaled in recent years: certainly not by a man under the influence of any other form of intoxicant. For the bad marksmanship that the drinking man is proverbial; while the deadly accuracy of the cocaine user has become automatic in Southern police circles.

Since every case in authority in the South is alive to the dangers of the cocaine habit, and eager to suppress it, two questions arise. How does the negro get his supply? And why do not the officers in authority prevent his getting it?

The reply to the first question is simple; the exact source of supply is unknown. The question as to why these in authority do not stop the practice of drug taking may be answered even more tersely: they can't stop it.

Of course the immediate channels of local distribution are frequently detected. Newsboys and bootblacks act as local vendors, and frequently these culprits are caught and punished. But this does not solve the mystery of the general clandestine traffic; for these local vendors refuse to "peach" on their associates.

One newsboy in a North Carolina city accumulated a small fortune by his sale of the drug. His regular price was "10 cents a sniff," or 25 cents for a day's supply, which he dispensed in small pill boxes. This is a common method of distributing the drug—a vile concoction of cocaine mixed with some inert powder to give it bulk. The boy procured his supply in the pure (more or less) form, and prepared the mixture to meet trade demands. He was the most honored guest at frequent gatherings of the cocaine-taking brotherhood, (and sisterhood,) supplying his patrons when they dropped in casually for their "dose," to tell about, luxuriating in the delicious exhilaration. Any cabin might serve as a resort, safe from the prying eyes of police officers.

Although these officers suspected the boy of peddling the drug they failed to catch him at it. And even when he finally acquired the drug habit himself, as most of these peddlers do eventually, and was so thoroughly "doped" that he squandered his money and gave away the drug, he would never reveal the source of his supply. But there is every reason to believe that he obtained regular consignments through the underground channels that flourish in many localities, entirely out of reach of the police.

The Mississippi River is probably the greatest highway for "wholesale" distribution, but Gulf ports and seaports are also avenues of entrance. It is perfectly easy for a man to drop over the side of a boat coming into Mobile harbor or one of the numerous channels at the mouth of the Mississippi, and disappear into the interior carrying a few pounds of the deadly powder, every ounce of which represents one thousand average doses.

But in all probability the greatest wholesale traffic is carried on from fixed shipping points, from which packages are sent to local peddlers, disguised in one of a hundred ways that escape detection. And when we consider that even a single ounce—a quantity that does not fill an ordinary watch pocket—will keep fifty "fiends" well "doped" for a week or more, we can readily understand why every effort to suppress the traffic utterly fails.

Why Do They Do It?

Many of the negroes, even those who have not yet become addicted, appreciate the frightful penalty of dabbling with the drug. Why, then, do so many of them "dabble"?

There are various facts that suggest an answer to this question, and evidence in the form of the opinions of physicians, officers, and the cocaine users themselves, that supports these facts. The "fiend" when questioned, frequently gives his reason in this brief sentence: "'Cause I couldn't git nothin' else, boss." That seems to be the crux of the whole matter.

A brief survey of conditions in the South and a bit of recent legislative history make it perfectly evident why the negro "couldn't git nothin' else."

In many States in the South the negro population constitutes from 30 to 60 per cent. of the total population. Most of the negroes are poor, illiterate, and shiftless. If we include in this class the poor whites, who are on a par with the average negro in poverty, ignorance, and general lack of thrift, we may reckon the aggregate number as representing about one person in three in the entire population. Governing, or even keeping in reasonable control, such a host is an onerous task, even when most of the individuals of the host are sober. The inevitable number of alcoholics adds to that task enormously.

The simplest way to remove this added menace—it seems simple, theoretically, at least—would be to keep whisky out of the low-class negro's hands by legislating it out of existence as far as he was concerned. And as Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Mississippi, Tennessee, and West Virginia passed laws intended to abolish the saloon and keep whisky and the negro separated.

These laws do not, and were not intended to, prevent the white man or the well-to-do negro getting his accustomed beverages through legitimate channels. They obliged him to forego the pleasure of leaning against a bar and "taking his drink perpendicularly," to be sure; but a large proportion of the intelligent whites were ready to make this sacrifice if by doing so they could eliminate the drunken negro.

That their only sacrifice, was in method of taking, not in the amount of ardent spirits consumed, is shown by the records of liquor shipments that go to individual consumers. The Interstate Commerce Commission reported in 1911, using the figures presented by the Southern Express Company as a basis, that "the total annual movement indicated (for the South alone) is 6,085,564 gallons," almost exclusively into prohibition territory, of course.

In December, 1913, the officials in Asheville, N. C., reported that they were receiving 400 gallon-packages daily, 12,000 gallons monthly, or about three gallons per month for each inhabitant. And Asheville is quite as abstemious as the other well-governed cities of the South.

But none of these countless gallon-packets reached the lower class negro, the "one man in every three" in the South. His own ignorance and poverty make this a certainty, as the governing units intended.

Of course it is nothing short of "class legislation," this aiding to the rich and depriving the poor. But what of it, so long as the discrimination applies to whisky? Nothing, of course—provided, always, that those discriminated against do not find some substitute worse than the original troublemaker. But unfortunately for the negro, and for his community, such a substitute was found almost immediately—a substitute that is inestimably worse even than the "moonshine whisky," drug-store nostrums, or the deadly wood alcohol poison. This substitute, as I have pointed out, is cocaine; and a trail of blood and disaster has marked the progress of its substitution.

Should any one doubt that prohibition is directly responsible for the introduction, and increase, of cocaine-taking in the South, let him consider a few pertinent facts adduced by the opinions of competent observers.

Hospital and police records show that during the prohibition period drug habits have increased with alarming rapidity. Physicians, officers, and "fiends," with very few dissenting opinions, attribute the rise of cocainism to the low-class negroes inability to get his accustomed beverages. Of course "fiends" are usually Black, and even officers of the law or practitioners of medicine may be mistaken. But it is entirely improbable that all these men, from such widely different walks of life, should reach the same conclusion without adequate grounds for doing so.

Moreover, in cities where prohibition is strictly enforced, (relatively speaking,) the drug habit is increasing with alarming rapidity; whereas in cities in which little attempt is made to prevent liquor traffic, there is a comparatively slight increase in cocaine taking. Thus the officials of Raleigh, N. C., and Knoxville, Tenn., to mention but two places where the prohibitory statute is enforced, report that cocaine taking has doubled and quadrupled in the last four years. The Knoxville police arrested seven cocaine-taking women in a single day recently. In Memphis, on the other hand, where half the population is colored, but where no attempt is made to prevent the sale of liquors, the drug habit is increasing slowly, if at all.

From Bad to Worse.

In short, the South is attempting to correct a bad condition, and created one infinitely worse. For the evils of alcoholism—to coffers upon the individual, or upon the community—are not to be compared with the horrors of cocainism.

What is the South going to do about it?

As far as the thousands who have already formed the habit are concerned, there is little choice in the matter. Once the negro has formed the habit he is irreclaimable. The only method to keep him from taking the drug is by imprisoning him. And this is merely palliative—it does not, or he returns inevitably to the drug habit when released.

For the thousands of negroes who have not yet acquired the habit, but who will do so eventually if present conditions continue, the outlook is scarcely more hopeful. The drug traffic puts an irresistible temptation in their way, and this traffic continues to flourish.

The failure to suppress it cannot be attributed to lack of interest or strenuous endeavor on the part of officials. Every one of them, to a man, is doing his utmost to stop it, not merely from a sense of duty, but because of the much more compelling motive, self-preservation. It is literally a matter of life and death with them. And yet they fall utterly.

The great stumbling block in the way of suppressing the traffic is the fact that the causes that produce it have become entangled with a political issue. The question is not merely—what is best for the negro, or the race? But it is: What is best for the politician? Presently the issue will take some other fantastic political twist, and then they will "call in the surgeons to patch up the wounded."

But meanwhile these politicians have forced a new and terrible form of slavery upon thousands of colored men—a hideous bondage from which they cannot escape by mere proclamation or civil war.

FOR THE WOULD-BE EXPERT IN AUCTION BRIDGE

That Nullos Give Experts One More Chance Against Poor Players Is No Valid Objection to Them.

By Florence Irwin.

THE most naive objection that has ever been raised to nullos is that they give the expert player one more means of defeating the inexpert. I love them.

Suppose a man should bring you a new golf club that he had just invented; suppose he should tell you that, properly used, it could do all the things that had hitherto been impossible and that the expert player who added it to his collection would never find himself in a situation which he could not handle; and suppose, again, that he could substantiate his claims. Would you say: "Take it away; it is just one more thing to help good players to beat bad ones"? I'll bet you wouldn't; I'll bet you would want that club.

Some one must win—the expert or the inexpert. Let us imagine that two good players are sitting in an auction game together against two poor players. Some one has to win. Either the good must beat the poor or the poor must beat the good. Which would seem more fitting to your sense of justice—that the experts should win a well merited victory by force of their superior skill or that the duffers should win by the mere fact that they hold all the winning cards?

Why should good players not defeat poor ones, since the only alternative is that they should be defeated by those poor ones? What is skill for if not to achieve victory?

It is a comforting thing that skill should win—for skill may be acquired and luck may not.

The test hand of Jan. 25 was one of the most interesting I have ever given. It came from the Anthracite Bridge Club, Carbondale, Penn. All the players were of the first order, and B's game was especially good. Z-Y were one game in and 600 to the good on the honor score, and the cards fell thus:

	♠J975 ♥A ♦Q9876543 ♣2	
♠A9864 ♥KJ9765 ♦A ♣3		♠K7 ♥8 ♦KJ9 ♣AKJ A B
	♠Q8632 ♥Q432 ♦2 ♣Q9752	

Nullos were not being used (cheer up, "Western Admirer"; here is a hand that was bid without nullos) and original bidding ran thus:

Z, "one diamond"; A, "two clubs"; Y, "two royals"; B, "three hearts." Now, I have been pushing my hand to decide why B said "three hearts" instead of "two no-trumps," after he knew about his partner's club suit. On a close score I should certainly have chosen the declaration that meant game in three-end. I have given this hand to numerous classes, and the majority have chosen the no-trump declaration. However, the original B was a top-notch player, and must have had reasons for his choice. Perhaps he feared his short diamonds at no-trump, sitting on the wrong side of the diamond bid. His own suit was not established, and, if his partner's clubs lacked the ace, the adversaries' diamonds might hurt.

Perhaps, again, B wanted to force Y's royals. By declaring no-trump he would show general strength and a royal-stopper, and Y might not go up. Whereas, by declaring hearts, B showed but one suit, and might tempt Y to his supposed ruin. However—to continue the bidding: B, "three hearts"; Z and A, "pass"; Y, "three royals"; B, "double"; closed. And, of course, Y made his contract, taking game and rubber. My opinion was asked as to the double, and as to whether A should not have said "four hearts."

I am a wary doubler, as you know. The word "double" doesn't pass my lips once in a hundred times; I have seen so many peculiar combinations that have killed apparently safe doubles; and, if I have an inclination to double, I fear letting the other man out; when I want to play the suit he names, I sit still and play it and risk no shifts.

But, admitting that few players treat a double with as much respect as I do, the fact remains that this present double was bad. Because, if B failed, Z-Y took rubber, which they could not have done on "three royals," undoubled. B did not have what is known as a "free" double (when the adversary's bid is going to put him rubber, anyhow, so you might as well venture on the double;) and he did not have a "safe" double, because he raised presenting the rubber to his adversaries.

No, A should not have changed his partner's double to a bid of "four hearts." For aught he knew, B was going to make 100 a trick on all tricks over four, and they would recover some of those lost penalties; it is well to cut down an adverse penalty score of 600. Rubber itself would be a loss at that figure. A had no business to interfere.

Had nullos been used in this hand, it is a wonderful example of a great principle which I discovered some months ago, and which I have already quoted twice or thrice. It looks as though Z-Y had a perfect nullo hand, against ordinary defense; they make five nullos; against expert defense, they are "up against it;" if Y is the dummy.

You remember, perhaps, this hand on which I said dummy once raised me to "five nullos":

	♠Q5 ♥10868543 ♦A ♣32	
♠J9 ♥A ♦KJ9 ♣AKJ		♠A9 ♥KJ7 ♦8 ♣Q9 A B
	♠K7 ♥Q ♦Q7 ♣10876543	

And I told you that the trouble with that hand was that it lacked the deuce of its long suit, and held no string side card. After wondering over it, I evolved this general rule.

In nullos, a long suit in dummy should hold its deuce to be safe. Lacking its deuce, but holding its ace, it is safe with one strong side card. Lacking both its deuce and its ace, it needs two strong side cards for safety.

Now, if you will let me say it, that discovery was a bonanza. Every hand that comes to me proves its worth and confirms it. Take this one, for example:

	♠K9543 ♥A ♦A765 ♣2	
♠10135 ♥K8 ♦KJ9 ♣1098		♠AQ87 ♥Q9 ♦8 ♣KJ75 A B
	♠J6432 ♥10765 ♦K4 ♣A4	

Z is playing a high nullo bid, and dummy goes down with a long suit that lacks its ace and lacks its deuce; but dummy holds the two requisite high side cards. Let Z waste neither of them in discard or he will get into trouble when he tries to pull the deuce of clubs. If A's first lead is the nine of hearts (or ace of diamonds) one of dummy's clubs, instead of the ace of spades (or ace of diamonds) Z needs both those "strong side cards" in his business.

Now let us return to the hand from the Anthracite Bridge Club, which I will give again, to save you trouble:

	♠J975 ♥A ♦Q9876543 ♣2	
♠A9864 ♥KJ9765 ♦A ♣3		♠K7 ♥8 ♦KJ9 ♣AKJ A B
	♠Q8632 ♥Q432 ♦2 ♣Q9752	

Suppose Z opens nullos on a blank suit and all the rest of the two-spots. Y will know himself to be an unsafe nullo dummy; he has a long suit unprotected at both ends (backing both its ace and deuce) and no strong side cards with which to hold up the adversaries' scheme. His other suit (hearts) runs also to the trey and not the deuce.

Y could declare nullos because his hand would not be seen. He could not be a safe nullo dummy; he must overcall his partner's nullos with royals, on the first hand.

Z himself holds the deuce of spades, but not the deuce of hearts and that is his undoing.

If Z plays nullos, A's first lead is the nine of diamonds. Dummy gets rid of his eight. But the moment B sees dummy he should play thus:

The king of diamonds, unavoidably; his three spades. A discarding his three highest hearts and dummy ducking. It wouldn't help him any to take the third round of spades; he would be at one trick more. Then B should play his king of hearts (A throwing the eight) and cash his five-spot. After that, dummy takes every trick. He cannot help himself.

To make a discovery like this is to know real pleasure. Simply to record the opinions and expressions of others is to be a mere auction phonograph, but to force ahead and discover the great underlying principles of the game is about the keenest joy I know.

"Western Admirer": Nullos are the newest and most universally discussed auction subject of the day. You cannot avoid them; they are the thing on which instruction is most needed. On both sides of the ocean players are demanding more information about them. New vistas are constantly opening, and must be described. All my mail is auto-nullo; therefore my answers must be nullo answers. I try to mix general auction information with my nullo notes. Nullo simply means unanswered queries and unrecorded discoveries.

As to "high spades" it is no longer necessary to learn them, even in self-protection. They are fast disappearing. Numbers of clubs that took them up, a year ago, have abandoned them in disgust. I never used them and never again expect to waste time writing about them. I will gladly, however, answer any queries, discuss any hands, that are sent me, and write on any legitimate auction topic that is specifically requested.

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Just a Clerk

LORD, I am but a little clerk,
That scratches with a pen;
I rise and sat and toil and slep,
Just as all other men.

The only omen in my life
Is Stars, and dime, and grace,
Yet on the whole I am content
To tread the beaten ways.

But sometimes when the mid-Spring nine
Floats in the scented night,
Some bird sings a lilaper in my ear,
And visions cross my sight.

I see myself a gracious youth,
In purple and bright steel;
The golden spurs of knightly worth
Are glistening on each heel.

I ride into a world of dreams,
And with my pensoned lance
I pierce the mystic veil that hides
The land of high romance.

Put as I pass through Oakhold's glades
Adventuring on my way,
A ghost is ever at my back,
The ghost of every day.

And one or late its horrid hand,
That never yields or stays,
Will hurl me from my land of dreams,
Back to the beaten ways.

Oh, Lord, some prey to Time for gold,
Some for a woman's smile;
But all I ask is a breath of life,
Once for a little while.

Great me, before I pass beyond,
One chance to play a part,
To drop the guise of the little clerk
And show the man at heart.

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