

War Against Disease Is Failure In Britain, Says English Expert

Countries of Europe Must Adopt Prohibition Before They Can Hope to Preserve Race From Poisons that Will Bring About Their Downfall, Says Dr. Saleeby—Hope of Empire Seen in Canada.

(Toronto Globe.)
"We've got to get the alcoholic factor out of the way before we can have a fair field for tackling the problems of 'venereal diseases,'" said Dr. C. W. Saleeby of London, England, in an address at night before the National Public Health convention, held in the Physics building of the University of Toronto. The late and partly-lamented John Saleeby never received such destructive criticism from such high sources of authority in Toronto as it did in the address of Dr. Saleeby. He said that he had fought against venereal diseases in Britain for a long time, but that on the other hand, in the United States marked progress was being made in the campaign.

Prohibition is Big Factor.
"In Great Britain we are trying to stop the spread of venereal diseases and recruiting the increase in drinking. In the United States the campaign against venereal diseases is immensely facilitated by prohibition," declared the speaker. "This prohibition seems to me to be the greatest health-making move in history. It is a lesson to Europe and America will have to learn it."

Dr. Saleeby said there were three racial poisons—that is, poisons that do not die out with the individual, but are transmitted to the next generation. One comes from working with lead; the second comes from alcohol, and the third is venereal disease.

It was a phenomenon in history, said the speaker, that great nations came to pre-eminence and then fell in a night. Somehow, some deterioration of the race set in. Dr. Saleeby said he believed France and Britain were heading that way now. In his reply to the vote of thanks he referred to Lord Roseberry's saying that in great systems rot often first appeared in the heart. "I see phenomena today in the heart of the Empire that look like rot. In Canada," he declared, "is the hope of the Empire."

Dr. Saleeby said that eugenics could encourage worthy parentage, and could also discourage unworthy parenthood. Some time ago, he said, it became evident that large numbers of feeble-minded, for instance, were the products of damage done to the stock by poisons in recent times. Fifteen years ago he had defined these poisons that struck not only at the individual, but at the race, as racial poisons.

What Are Racial Poisons?
He distinguished between poisons that were racial poisons and those that were not. Damage done by measles in leaving after-effects, for instance, had no racial significance. The same thing occurred in wounds or accidents. "So much the greater, then," he said, "is the importance to be attached to those few agents that destroy or damage posterity—the racial poisons. We are beginning to think that the next great step is to eliminate these from our national lives."

One of these poisons came from working with lead. It was found that parents employed where there was risk of lead-poisoning became parents of children who also were victims. Hence the poisoning had a racial significance. Hence, also, the regulations in Britain protected women by prohibiting them from being engaged in those industries.

Then there was alcohol, a typical racial poison. The speaker quoted extracts from a report presented in Britain which showed by experiments that children of non-alcoholic drinkers progressed at a quick rate of development. These same experiments, carried on in various countries of the world, showed that alcoholic damage was more marked in germ cells than in anywhere else. There was higher proportion of damage in these cells than in any other cells in the body.

Protect Parenthood.
"It follows then," asserted the speaker, "that if we are to protect from the beginning the health, and above all the mental health, of subsequent generations, we must, in a brief formula, protect parenthood from alcohol."

They had to prevent the damage done to good parenthood by racial poisons. That was striking hard at alcohol, especially as alcohol struck at the adolescent, the pre-parent.

"In England and Scotland the aspect of the drinking of alcohol that disgusts and horrifies me is not the middle-aged man drinking, but, as for instance, in one town, 20,000 girls under the age of twenty-one who were drinking. This is

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called it a stimulant, but it was not. The first thing it did was to narcotise the highest strata of the being, the judgment, for example. It made easier the reflex actions to the lower centres, and reduced the resisting power to temptation.

The speaker summed up five objections against alcohol. It lowered the resistance to temptation; it lowered the physical resistance to infection; it interfered with disinfection; it aggravated the symptoms of these diseases, and it interfered with and prejudiced treatment. "On these grounds I believe alcohol to be the leading social accompaniment of these racial destructive diseases."

Drinking Increasing.

Ever since the armistice, drinking had been on the increase in Britain, said Dr. Saleeby. In the United States, since prohibition, the campaign against venereal diseases had been greatly facilitated. In one year after prohibition there, in one large city, he said, there was a decrease of twenty-seven per cent. in new cases, while before prohibition in one year there had been an increase of eleven per cent.

"In Europe our idea that we are going to save youth and the race while we are allowing free access to that which makes discipline impossible would be ridiculous if it were not tragic. Health without discipline is impossible."

"Do you see the epoch-making development in North America as regards prohibition?" he asked. "This prohibition seems to me to be the great health-making move in history. It makes possible the elimination of that complicated and handicapped factor against which otherwise we could not fight successfully."

Total Results is Failure.

The third poison was venereal diseases. These diseases in the adult were trivial compared to what they were in the destruction of infants before and after birth. There was more of a certain type of these diseases in Britain than ever, merely going by the terrible index of babies whose blindness came from that cause. In the fight against the disease in Britain, the speaker said, "We are failing conspicuously, beyond dispute. We have not succeeded in checking the spread of venereal diseases. The total result is failure."

The long-continued alcoholic factor was important, he said, in the spreading of the disease. The first thing alcohol did was to strike at self-control. It was a typical narcotic agent—simple people

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