

Our Racial Curse

The Anglo-Saxon is not the Supreme Economic Race of the World. The Day of the War-like Race has Passed.---Never Again will Civilization Fear the Goth or the Turk.

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One race of men differs from another race much as one man differs from another man.

Now, if we ask concerning the British race — which is the dominant stock in the United States as well as in all the British Empire — what is its chief quality we shall get an answer which throws a flood of light both on its strength and its weakness. We shall be in possession of the secret both of its power and of the hidden peril which may some day destroy it.

That this is the supreme race of the world to-day there can be no doubt. Its language, its literature, its industry, its commerce, the method of government it worked out, its standards of life and judgment, and its vigor in exploration and arms are not to be challenged by any rival. Much more than a quarter of the soil of the earth is its territory, and many more than a quarter of the earth's population salute the two flags under which it musters. The wealth and power of the world are, beyond all comparison, in its hands.

It is not the supreme economic race of the world. The sense of values is not the thing it lives by. That belongs, in the western world, to the races which the Mediterranean nourished, the Jew, the Greek, the Armenian. Long before the Roman Empire fell these peoples had become commercialized. They gained a lead of a millennium upon our ancestors. Indeed, one of the reasons why the Roman Empire fell was that the Senate and nobility had changed the military virtues for those of the merchant. They had learned to make money and to prize a whole skin. Hence they went down at the assault of the northern warriors, men "of passionate courage and the sway of impulse and imagination."

One has only to observe the effects upon our trade of the irruption of a comparative few of the economic races into our midst. The Italians and Greeks have driven Canadians from the fruit and confectionery shops. The Jews are gaining possession of

the clothing trade. The Chinese—an Oriental economic race—have their laundries everywhere, and are planting their "chop suey" beside each one. In spite of the advantages of possession, greater capital and the sympathy of neighbors, we have been defeated in these economic contests by a few exiles, for the most part moneyless and illiterate, who are of the real economic type.

Nor is the strength of the British race in its martial qualities. The day of the warlike race passed when Kitchener obliterated the Dervishes at Omdurman. War is now "an extra hazardous branch of engineering." The present war is a titanic exhibition of the factory system. It is co-operative efficiency of men and machinery turned to the task of slaughter. "Never again will civilization tremble with fear of the Goth or the Turk, the warlike savage."

Yet, in rejecting the latter alternative we have come very close to the answer to our question. For the capital quality of our race is its adventurousness. It loves excitement. Hence its love of travel and exploration, of violent and dangerous sports, and of gambling ventures in business. It is as pioneer, prospector and promoter rather than as broker and trader that the Anglo-Saxon prospers. The Jew in the Yukon keeps a shop or office in Dawson City. The man who makes a strike in the gulches is of another temperament. With less foresight and patience, but with more enterprise and self-reliance, the British race meets the finesse of the economic races with force. So far, in a world yet hardly explored, and still brimming with romance, mystery and undiscovered treasures, he more than holds his own. He is strong in war, in government and the building of cities. He will live up to a standard of comfort, and, because he means to spend he drives himself to get. He is master of the world by reason of his adventurousness.

Now, quite logical with all this is his craving for

strong drink. It comes of his love of excitement. As with his predatory ancestors it fills in the dull intervals between forays, and stimulates the revelry in the hour of triumph. Not for him the calm potations which but feebly stir the blood, nor the measured moderation of more lethargic peoples. To drink, and to drink hard and deep, had been the inveterate custom of all his fathers. Both biologically and socially he is a born drinker.

Nor has he shown a disposition to covet other vices. Not for him the drugs which bring sleep and dreams. He has not indeed been sexually pure, but neither has he been sexually perverse or abnormal. His passions may have been ill-controlled, but he has despised the abominations and desecrations which softer and slyer races have adopted.

Drink is the curse of our race as opium is of the Chinese. And one who has sufficient breadth of sympathy to think racially will find in this fact a new reason for refusing to give it quarter.

As the earth becomes increasingly subdued under the hand of man the peculiar strength of the British race becomes less of an advantage and its peculiar weakness becomes more of a handicap. As the objective field of excitement narrows the subjective grows more alluring. The thrills which can no more be found in sport or speculation are likely to be sought in drink. There will be more dull intervals to be filled in. Life is already very dull for the working classes. Long hours in a factory, with the night to spend in a tenement! Is that the proper habitat for a man whose ancestors followed Harry the fifth to Harfleur or raged down the pass of Killiecrankie? The cage puts an intense strain on the lion's nature. Something must be done, both to lessen the thirst for an artificial stimulus and to supply a stimulus less deadly in its consequences if we are to hold our own in a world whose population is growing and whose rivalries are being intensified.

Some Standards in the Retail Trade

It is not True that the Retailer is the "King of Business."---That He Alone Directs and is Responsible for Trade Policy and Trade Practice.

By W. W. SWANSON.

It is not true to assert that the retailer is the "king of business," and that he alone directs and is responsible for trade policy and trade practice. Consumers are equally responsible for commercial morality; and, in fact, for the most part, must be compelled to bear the burden of causing quackery and questionable trade practices wherever they appear. No doubt, an enormous amount of valuable work has been done in educating the taste of the consuming public, by our leading commercial men; and of teaching them what is the just and generous policy to be pursued in the retail business. Industrial and commercial leaders have in large measure educated the public in business practice and in business methods, and have helped to create decent standards of trade. At the same time it must be recognized that the dictates of self interest on both sides count for much. The cupidity of some consumers—the demanding of something for nothing—has corrupted a considerable part of the buying public as well as a few retailers, and has led to the perpetrating of many shams in business. Consumers, indeed, may be directly charged with having brought about certain demoralizing conditions in the retail market. In some towns and cities they have not been content with receiving real value and efficient service for their money, but have compelled merchants to adopt such expedients as the giving of trading stamps, daily bargains and cut rates, and of even individual prices. Such people cannot recognize a genuine bargain when they see it; and have raised such a clamor that some retail dealers have felt compelled, even at the cost of their own respect, to pander to this species of debased craving for a continuous bargain parade. The sooner that all merchants realize that the retail trade is not based wholly or solely upon price competition, the better it will be for all concerned. The truth is, that the progressive and reliable merchant to-day avoids price-

cutting and sensational advertising and is well content to pass this particular class of customers by; for he well knows that business is concerned with something much more vital than mere prices. He knows, for instance, that a reputation for values, for the quality of his goods, and for courteous and efficient service, amounts to much more in the estimation of worth-while customers than the advertising of meretricious values and cut-throat prices. His advertising and his service appeal to the public because they are based upon sincerity and truth, as well as upon fair dealing. If in addition to all this, he is wide awake and progressive enough to have the styles and fashions required and to have them first, he can feel sure that the quality of his business will win him profits and friends when his rivals have long since sought newer fields and greener pastures.

We have said that the consumer should share at least equal responsibility with the retailer in bringing about decent standards in the commercial world. He must realize that a bargain is not a bargain unless the article in question is really needed; and that he can usually secure a low price if his interests and purse so dictate, by buying from a reputable dealer at the close of the season when low prices usually rule. Hunting for bargains from store to store is an arduous occupation, as every woman knows; and the efficient housewife has learned that it pays ten times over to deal with a reliable firm that places the emphasis upon quality and service and not upon mere price. The merchant who is ever advertising bargains is sure to provide disappointments for oversanguine buyers; for the slight gains that may be made through buying at odd prices can in no way compensate for the drain made upon mental and physical energy. Where large sums are involved it will, of course, pay the housewife to make a careful comparison of goods, both as to quality and price,

offered in the regular way at different stores; but it rarely pays her to hunt around for special bargains on staple products.

Consumers have learned, in a word, that a merchant's reputation for fairness and honesty is worth a great deal more than cut prices. By patronizing such retailers, the consumer is actually and specifically casting a vote for decent standards in business practice. It is this "reaction of consumption upon production" that the wise merchant takes cognizance of when he founds his business upon the quality of his goods and the efficiency of his service — for repeat orders are the ones that take care of overhead expenses and yield business profits. The intelligent consumer realizes also that prices alone count for little, and that bargains offered in the guise of odd prices — at ninety-nine cents, forty-nine cents, and nineteen cents, and so forth — mean little or nothing unless quality is assured; and for assurance with respect to quality, the reputation of the merchant is everything or nothing. Moreover, the customer can make better comparisons when undisturbed by odd prices and the consideration of a cent or two that may be saved. In conclusion, it is certain that retail buyers need to be reformed at least as much as retail merchants themselves; and that it is essential for their future welfare that young men and women — the future fathers and mothers — be educated with respect to markets, qualities of goods, prices, and the proper uses to which the various commodities of the commercial should be put. Until that time the lure of odd prices and infinitesimal gains will continue to attract customers — but customers who in the end are bound to be themselves disappointed and who will furnish no reliable clientele to the retailing class.