

# THROUGH A MONOCLE

## DON'T "SWEAR OFF"!

YOU can remember possibly when people took somewhat seriously the custom of "swearing off" at the New Year! Happily the wits have pretty thoroughly killed that particular form of stupidity. This generation of men and women do not need to "swear off" half so much as they need to "swear on." It is not that we do too many things, but that we do too few. Our sins are those of omission—not commission. An idea has been allowed to grow up that, if we would only stop doing enough things, we would be a little lower than the angels. But that is a code of conduct for the nursery—not for life. In life, men are measured by what they do—not by what they refrain from doing. Even man's vices are judged by the effect they have in preventing their victims from doing things. The very choicest specimens of the silly catalogue of "Don't's" owe their bad character wholly to the fact that they interfere with the sensible catalogue of "Do's."

THEN to get a person to "swear off" something that you do not want him to do, is to convict yourself of criminal ignorance of human nature. Human nature—like all other nature—"abhors a vacuum." When you simply strike something out of the life of any individual, that vacuum in his life sticks out in his troubled consciousness like a sore finger. He is always thinking of it—ever reminded of it—and the temptation to "break his pledge" is his constant and doleful companion. You have taken the very best way to endear this particular vice to its late owner, and to finally rivet upon him the chains of its servitude. The proper way to displace a vice or a bad habit, is to crowd it out. Give the man or woman so much else to do which appeals to them as distinctly better worth the doing, and they will slough off their undesirable habits as a snake slips out of last year's skin. The great thing in getting rid of a vice or bad habit, is to enlist the genuine sympathy of the victim in the struggle. If the victim is only an indifferent spectator in the fight, or if his inclinations are secretly

with the enemy, the better course will infallibly lose. A new ambition has cured more drunkards than the "gold cure."

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IF we will fill our lives full of captivating interests, our bad habits will take care of themselves. The trouble with us, as a people, is that our lives are empty and purposeless. For, of course, money-getting never is a purpose. In the nature of things, it cannot be. A dollar bill is the most useless article in the market. You can't eat it; you can't wear it; you can't warm yourself in its flame. When you have sold your labour for money, you have only half completed the bargain. You have sold your "goods"; but you have not yet got the price. The price only arrives when you have sold your money for something you can consume. So to put down mere money-making as a purpose, is to call the half-way house the end of the journey. And that is exactly where an astonishing percentage of our people stick. They think only of getting the money; but have woefully impoverished minds on the subject of what to buy with it. When they buy food too rich to be digested, a house too luxurious to be enjoyed or sanitary, and all the usual ways of bragging how rich they are, they are at the end of their list. They can only turn to and make more money. When this palls, it is no wonder that some of them buy—vices.

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WHAT we need is a universal crusade of "swearing on." Let us get a lot more things to do. Let us get so busy using the money we have that we will find our time limited for making more. You remember what Kipling told the McGill boys in Montreal—"Don't use both hands for making money. Keep one hand free for better things. If you use both hands for money-making, you may have to stoop." Now what will we "swear on?" Well, I will venture to suggest, first, a course of reading. Read something definite and of established repute. Books are very cheap these days, and you can have the best of the world's authors on your shelves for very little money. But don't leave them there. Set aside this winter to get familiar with some classic author. If you haven't tried it, you will be amazed how interesting it is to read one man until you know his style and learn to love him. You will have added another friend to your circle whom you can call to your side at any moment; and you will always find him at his best and brightest. Personally, I have delightful evenings—one in a French provincial town under the guidance of Balzac, another in some English country-house with Jane Austen, a third on some wild adventure of romance with Stevenson, a fourth concerned in the problems of English life with Hardy, Meredith or Wells, and so it goes.

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ANOTHER thing you might "swear on" would be good drama. Regard the theatre as the home of serious art and not merely a scene of relaxation, and you will add another to your purposes in life—another bulwark against the fruits of emptiness and "ennui." Then why not try music? Probably you have. That is a commoner occupation for both men and women in this country than most of the others. And if you lack the seventh or eighth sense which loves good music, you can cultivate it by the simple and pleasant means of putting yourself in the way of hearing it; and it is a sense that will repay you probably better than one or two of the original five—say, the sense of smell which has become more a sentinel than a satisfaction. Again, you might cultivate an interest in the outside world. Things are going on all over the globe which would entertain you better than "bridge" or chess if you took pains to understand the "moves" of the game.

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THERE is an abundance of things to do in this most interesting of worlds. This is a great life we are living—vivid, rapid, exciting, pleasurable, pregnant for all time. Only the blind and the deaf can be "ennuied" or driven to the vacuousness of vice for amusement. We are stirring the crucible of history; and generations to come will envy us our great good fortune in being on earth when so much was in the making. The virile times of the Napoleonic era presented no more fascinating spectacle than that on which we look. The world is in as fluid a state to-day as when Austerlitz was fought. The future of the nations is as uncertain. Just as we would think it stupid of a man who should have fuddled his intelligence or found time heavy on his hands when news might come in any moment from Waterloo; so it is stupid to drowse over a mechanical toy when at any time we may hear the tramp of Armageddon.

THE MONOCLE MAN.

## PLEADING FOR THEIR WIVES AND CHILDREN



REV. L. W. HALL.  
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WHEN the Canadian missionary goes to India, he is allowed to take with him his wife and children. The Canadian being a British subject has that right and privilege. When the Hindu comes to Canada he is not allowed to bring his wife and children. He is a British subject, and he may be a Christian, but these matters count for naught with the Canadian Government.

The finest and best of the Hindus are the Sikhs. They are neither Moslems nor Buddhists. They are Sikhs, and the Sikh religion is Christian in the broadest sense of the word. They are brave and loyal subjects of the King-Emperor. Yet none of the 4,000 Sikhs in British Columbia and Alberta is allowed to bring over his family.

If they went to Great Britain they could take their families with them. If they went to the United States they could take their wives and children with them. Canada, Christian Canada, refuses to give them this privilege.

The four men in the photograph have recently been in Ottawa to ask for this privilege. The Rev. Mr. Hall is the Presbyterian missionary in Victoria, and he pleads for them. The other three bear the title of "Singh," not to designate blood relationship, but religious brotherhood. They are Sikhs, of whom there are two million in the Punjab, and who are the only class of Hindus who emigrate.

What do the men and women of Canada think of this situation? Shall this plea be made in vain?