

DRUGS A MENACE TO CIVILIZATION

World Resistance Necessary to Octopus-like Evil That Undermines Race, Says Nation's Health—U. S. Role in Fight.

The Nation's Health says editorially that in drug addiction the public is face to face with a situation which, if uncontrolled, may tend to undermine the very foundations of civilization itself. The writer asserts that the medical profession, by its "criminal carelessness" in prescribing habit-forming drugs, is partly to blame for the present situation. He says that this country must get into the fight against the drug evil, declaring that it is as much its fight as would be a devastating plague epidemic in Europe, Asia or Africa.

"The widespread prevalence of drug addiction constitutes a situation which may well prove serious thought on the part of the profession of preventive medicine," says the writer. "It is no exaggeration to state that we are face to face with a condition which, if uncontrolled, may tend to undermine the very foundations of civilization itself. So serious is this threat that half-way measures will not do; the circumstances are such as to call for drastic and thoroughgoing measures."

"These are not the alarmist beliefs of fanatical reformers, but the sober judgments of capable physicians, wise jurists and well-balanced men and women who know from personal experience and observation the way in which the great army of drug addicts is being recruited daily and the misery and degradation which are thus produced."

"It is a herid thought that modern chemistry and therapeutics should have let loose upon humanity agents which have been directed from their original purpose of relieving human suffering to that of debasing and destroying mankind. Prohibition, the stress of modern life, the ignis fatuus of a desire for new sensations, mental degeneration, and the criminal carelessness of the medical profession in prescribing habit-forming drugs have all been blamed for this destructive blight which civilization has imposed upon itself, but these are only indirectly contributory. The real cause is much simpler and far more sordid. The production and sale of narcotics pay enormous returns upon the original investment. The basic source is greed."

"Great international organizations have been formed for the marketing of narcotics. They ruthlessly violate any law of God or man to carry on their debasing trade. They fearlessly corrupt customs officers, the police and the very courts themselves in order that their contraband may reach and destroy the consumer. Certain physicians have even so far prostituted their professional standards as to become panders to habits, and men of responsibility in the community have so yielded to the pressure of the dollar that they have protected drug peddlers from punishment by the law."

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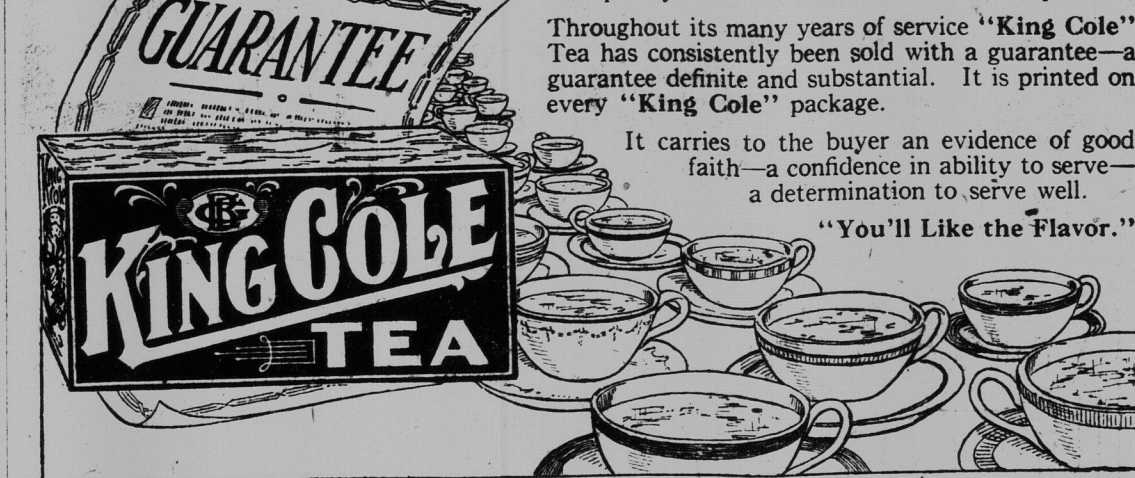
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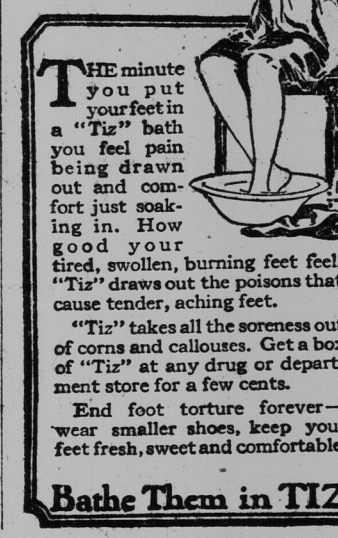
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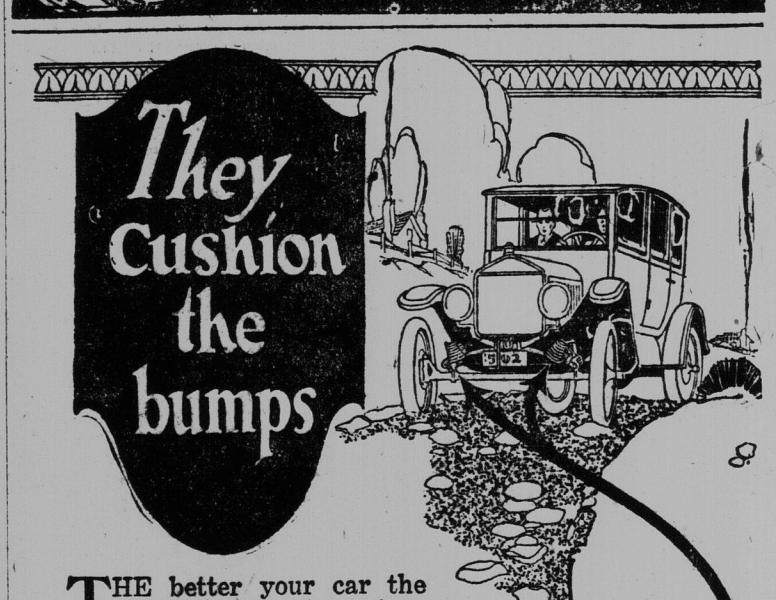


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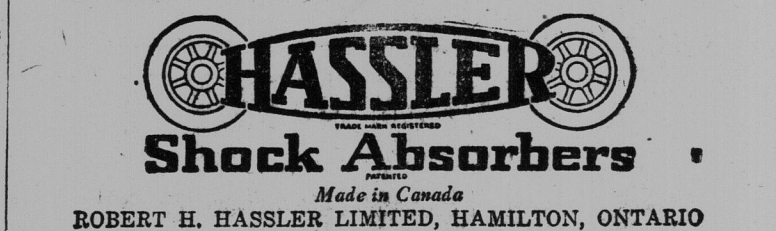
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United States are reported to be falling off, but cocaine is coming in in greater quantities and in far greater amounts than are necessary for the therapeutic prevention and relief of pain. It should be borne in mind that in addition to the quantities which are declared at ports of entry an enormous amount is being smuggled into the country and delivered to consumers with devilish ingenuity. Customs seizures of narcotics at the port of San Francisco alone are reported to exceed \$102,000 in 1922. For every dollar's worth thus seized it is probable that at least \$10 worth is smuggled in.

"Under the system developed by modern banking it is possible to transport and deliver money to any part of the world with scarcely the chance of a single loss. The same sort of system could prevail with regard to the habit-forming drugs. It is possible to put it into force if the nations of the world will get together and rigorously carry out a united policy. The Hague Committee tried to bring about such an arrangement and failed. The League of Nations now has a board sitting to formulate plans with the same object in view.

"The United States has sent observers to the meeting apparently to lend the moral influence of an onlooker sitting on the fence. Whatever may be our views regarding 'entangling alliances' this is no time to be hanging back timidly. The international traffic in dangerous drugs is not a political question, it is a great health issue. It is an affair of the greatest possible moment. It is a responsibility which, if doled by us or if not met in the open by our people, is going to do us an infinite amount of damage.

"We cannot sit by as critics. We must get into the fight instead of telling the other nations what they should do and how they should do it. It is just as much our fight, just as much to our interest as would be a devastating plague in Europe, Asia or Africa. The civilized world must combine against this menace and we must not be too proud to fight an enemy which threatens the integrity of civilization."

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