



CANADIAN COURIER



VOL. XXIII. No. 12

MARCH 16, 1918

GOOD FOR WHAT AILS YOU

DOCTORS and osteopaths do not agree about the rest of us. Mental science differs from both of them. The Military Service Act examinations have shown that for a northern, somewhat supposed to be Viking race, we have a high percentage of disorderly ailments, some of them incurable. We never knew before what camouflage lurks in clothes and cosmetics. We never suspected how many young men who looked hale and hearty had something radically wrong with them. And we were disappointed.

Now we are about to have a man-power census of the entire country. We want to find out exactly how many men we have that can be put to good honest productive work one way and another besides going to war. The man-power census follows the military draft. It will comb the population between the ages of the first safety razor and grandfatherhood. There will be no room for slackers. The country needs us all. And the country has to put up with a very large percentage of under normal ineffectives.

Why does the curve of our physical efficiency fall so far below the norm? Many reasons. Hereditary ailments of a cumulative character; diseases induced by indoor habits; bad habits of eating and drinking, bad air, lack of exercise, improper breathing, and so on. Diseases due to infection and contagion, or to accident. Make due deduction for all of these. Add to them diseases due to the mind—

And here we are on the edge of the greatest known source of actual disease—the mental suggestion expert; the specialist in distortion and mis-statement, who probes into the ordinary casual sensations of healthy people and perverts them into symptoms. You have known this gentleman before. He is an old offender. He lurks in all ages and countries. He began on you when you were a little bigger than a child, just able to read the almanac. He has stayed with you right down through the age of the newspaper and the doctor book and the “dope” book mailed free or slipped into your letter box. He will be with your children; is perhaps with them now.

Ask Dr. Munyon! Look along the fence rails! Read the writing done in lurid letters on a thousand barns! See the signs in this morning's paper! Learn something of the reason from the kitchen almanac which the kiddies were reading yesterday or the day before! Every bill-board, street-car, newspaper, theatre programme, fence-rail, telegraph-pole and barn-side, shrieks out a suggestion of sickness. Is it any wonder we don't feel well?

Here is a good illustration. A young man who through overwork and too much indoor poring over books had found his nerves playing upon him, has become somewhat alarmed as to his condition. Not caring to consult a doctor, he took to reading “dope” sheets suggested by advertisements in the newspapers. The more he read the more diseases he discovered that he had. He probed into doctor books. There he found confirmation of all his fears. He discovered that he had at least seven diseases traceable by the symptoms; that one of them was fatal after a short term of years, and another would unfit him to be a decent member of society. He sent for boxes and bottles of medicine which came with all sorts of mysterious instructions. He took the stuff. He got no better. He became melancholic. He even despaired of his life. He was filled with misery. Unable to work—

And the only thing that cured that young man was getting back on to the farm for a spell. All he wanted was fresh air, ordinary muscular exercise and a vacation from symptom literature. He took them all. He found that he was as healthy as a young moose. Most of his troubles came from trying to hitch up a muscular physique to a nervous accupation. He had played on his nerves. He got a form of neurasthenia, in which condition he was a chronic easy mark for all the suggestions of the expert, who converted ordinary sensations characteristic of any healthy person into symptoms of deadly ailments needing this and that nostrum.

MYSELF when young did not know where to drive for the back-line doctor; but I knew the address of the patent-medicine man, on the board fence, in the almanac and the weekly newspaper. Now that I am old I observe that whereas I was scheduled by the suggestion expert to die young, I have lived to see civilization magnify inventions and multiply diseases. We are abolishing the bar. We still have the bottle.



By ONE WHO HAS TAKEN IT

Thanks to the mental suggestion expert who in all countries antedates even the German spy and works as stealthily.

Running, riding, or sitting down to it, the theme is constantly thrust before anyone who can read. It matters not how healthy you may be there is a piece of print somewhere in your daily round—put there by the cure-all crook or patent medicine faker—to prod you into a belief that some slight sensation you may be barely conscious of is a symptom of insidious disease. The poison is as ubiquitous as a pernicious use of the printing press and paint pot can make it. And the poison has been working its way for several generations until now it is one of the most colossal indications of the power of suggestion.

It is surprising how easy it is to convince the average man that he isn't as well as he might be. Either fear or vanity will turn the trick and the cure-all crook is well aware of the way to make these inherent weaknesses work for him. He keeps pace with the times. Nowadays his trap is baited with a lot of blatherskite about “100% efficiency” and “re-juvenation” or some such twaddle. It is the same old appeal to vanity overlaying a subtle suggestion that a nervous breakdown, the operating room or an undertaker's parlor is just ahead on your engagement list if you don't take this course, that concoction or the other treatment. All of which catches the eye of some budding young business executive or a youngster ambitious to be such. And for the rank and file there are the old-timers, under some new names often enough, promising bright eyes and a clear complexion with lots of pep, for two bits and the excise stamp on a box of pills or a bottle of dope.

Leaving aside for a moment the disaster which always waits on simpletons who dose themselves

with unknown drugs, consider the debilitating effect of the doctrine these harpies teach—the mental poison spread by their pernicious propaganda. With his or her vanity tickled by a vision of the forceful personality and efficient functioning which may be bought for fifty cents by asking for So and So's stuff at the corner drug store, the victim becomes conscious of a failure to measure up to standard. It is then the quack gets in his big punch. In spite of his lying catch lines he does not want to make folks well. The whole purpose of his artful scheme is to make multitudes sick. And he does it. His nostrums, nine times out of ten, are concocted to irritate into abnormal action the very functions he promises to make efficient. He knows that an extravagant promise of vigorous health—the 100% efficiency stuff—will catch the fancy of the foolish and that fear, following vanity, will work its mischief in their minds and magnify some minor sensation into a malignant symptom. Any psychologist or physician will tell you how the process works, but Gabriel alone has a complete record of the millions who have been hurried prematurely to permanent peace or the other place by the practice of these charlatans.

Their clutching tentacles reach into every nook and corner of the country—and the Government acts as their most effective ally. If the mails were closed against his advertising matter—either in periodicals, newspapers or circulars, the cure-all crook who battens on the sick, the near sick and the simply foolish, would be put out of business almost immediately. Legislation attempting to tone down the lies on the label and prohibiting the use of such noxious drugs as cocaine and morphin in nostrums, has been tried and found wanting. Forbidden the use of an hypnotic or opiate to enslave his victims, the crook nickle-plates a piece of gas pipe, fills it with coke-dust, attaches three flimsy wires and a disc of zinc, labels the contraption an Oxypathic something or other and then prints a lot of piffle about a new discovery which will heal the sick and pretty near raise the dead. As long as it is in print and the Government will carry his truck in the mails, vanity and fear will do the rest. The only vulnerable point to attack the vicious traffic is the advertising. Separate the scoundrel from a use of the printing press—and the next generation will show