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SOME

Are we degenerating? Is our civilization nothing but a disease which is gradially sapping our strength and vitality a people?

nally sapping our strength and vitality as a people?

A prolonged investigation of the drug habit, one of the most terrible curses of modern times, inevitably arouses these questions. Subtle, elusive, the drug is infinitely more demoralizing and horrible in its effects than drink; yet it is a vice indulged in, as far as regards the law, practically with impunity, and by every class of society. The deep-rooted rest-lessness, the nervous tension of our times, is accountable for its prevalence. How far the worry and perplexity of life have accentuated it is for the scientist to determine if he can. Ours is the day of the drug. The drug habit overshadows our national life.

In the United States, where life pulses more feverishly than in this country, the drug habit is like some cancerous growth. The local legislatures, however, have endeavored to cope with it, and drastic restrictions are placed upon the sale of drugs such as morphia and co-caine in certain states. In England, on the other hand, no attempt has been made to grapple with the evil; meanwhile it grows apace. The taking of morphia and cocaine hypodermically—the "needle habit," as it is called—is prevalent chiefly among brain workers. Physicians, clergymen and lawyers especially seek relief from worry in this way.

THE NEEDLE HABIT.

THE NEEDLE HABIT. THE NEEDLE HABIT.

Two terrible cases which have recently of come before me—the one dealing with the cocaine, the other with the morphia habit—may be cited as typical.

A brilliant physician with a large practice disappeared suddenly from his chome. After long search he was found in a penniless condition, his health shattered. Cocaine had made of him a pitimble nervous wreck. He was eking out a livelihood as London correspondent to a French scientific paper, but all his earnings went in the purchase of the hard, and sometimes with but a shilling experience.

The Eaves

"Where is Clover?" cried Mrs. Hastings, entering the great shady sittingone afternoon. Miss Perkins, the village dressmaker, sat there alone, bending over a sewing machine. "I want a her particularly," went on rosy-faced little Mrs. Hastings; "there are biscuits to be baked and strawberries hulled for tea; and I've got my cake in the oven, and the tea is a-drawing. I was sure I'd find Clover in here."

Miss Perkins glanced up, with a contemptrous suiff "You won't ind her any place where she has any work to do," cried that lady, in her shrill, high-pitched voice. "I'm sorry to say it myself, but that girl is the laziest, uselessest—"

"There! that'if do, Miss Perkins," interrupted Mrs. Hastings. "Clover is as dear to me as my own child, and I don't like to hear her censured. We have no child of our own, but John; and we have no child of our own, but John; and we have not like to hear her censured. We have no child of our own, but John; and we have not like to hear her censured. We have no child of our own, but John; and we have not like to hear her censured. We have not have loved her ever since we found her lying out in the street clover at the door eighteen years ago—a little, laughing child of about a year—and she smiled up into my face with her big brown eyes; from that hour Clover—we gave her the name because we found her in the clover—has filled a daughter's place in our hearts. She needn't work if she doesn't want to; she was made for happiness—for life in the free, open air—to dance and sing, and be happy after her own fashion."

Miss Perkins—a prim maiden of uncertain age, sandy-haired, green eyes, and with a tendency to freckles—filled her mouth with pins and proceeded grimly to "tack" together the skirt of the pretty organdie tha she was making for Clover, a dainty device of ruffles and lace, and bows and sashes; "for all the world like a party dress!" she had snapped when Mrs. Hastings had given her the directions.

"Oh, dear me, Mrs. Hastings!" she sneered dreening the nines at last and temptuous sniff.
"You won't find her any place where

"Oh, dear me, Mrs. Hastings!" she sneered, dropping the pins at last, and thus feeling her tongue, which ached

with unaccustomed silence. "I don't pretend to interfere with you and Clover, though why on earth you couldn't give her a Christian name is more than I can tell! But do think it quite the thing to—hand me the lace, if you please, thanks—to allow her to be so much in the company of your son? Aren't you afraid of consequences? The girl will certainly fall in love with him, and then what will you do? You surely want no daughter-in-law who hasn't a name of her own?"

own?"

Mrs. Hastings' rosy face had grown pale, but she tried to force a smile.

"Clover and John are like brother and sister," she said, thoughtfully, "and John, since he has his diploma, and has become a full-fledged physician, is wrapped up in his profession, and has no thought of marriage."

Miss Perkins nodded her saucy head until she looked like a Chinese mandarin.

until she looked like a Uninese mandarin.

"Perhaps so, perhaps so," she returned. "But if that is really the case, Mrs. Hastings, then your son must be an atrocious flirt; for I have reason to believe?—and she paused to bite off her thread with a vicious snip—"to believe that he rather preferred me!"

Mrs. Hastings had all she could do to suppress a laugh.

"You?" she repeated, blandly. "Why, John is only twenty-eight."

"and I'm an old woman, I suppose?" stapped the spinster, viciously. "I was twenty-five on the third day of May; that's hardly antediluvian!"

But she forgot to add that that third of May in question had gone down the broad aisle of the past, a dozen years before.

of May in question had gone down the broad aisle of the past, a dozen years before.

A clear, ringing laugh broke the silence which followed the speech; and a pretty, brown-eyed girl in pink muslin, and with a broad-brimmed straw hat on her flowing hair, danced into the room, her white apron full of wild flowers. There was a wreath of blossoms around the crown of her hat, and knots of wild roses in her corsage. A tall, handsome, blue-eyed man, Dr. John Hastings himself, was not far behind.

"Here we are, mother!" he cried, cheerily; "Clover and I have been out in the woods, and we have come home, hungry as bears. Eh, Clover?"

"You bet!" cried Clover, enjoying the maiden lady's face of horror at the slang, for these two young people de-

"You bet!" cried Clover, enjoying the maiden lady's face of horror at the slang, for these two young people delighted in teasing Miss Perkins, their mutual aversion. "Mamma," she went on, slyly, "I'll go right to work and get tea, and John will entertain Miss Perkins."

"Not this afternoon!" began John, hastily, muttering something about "business down at the office."

Clara gave him a withering glance.

"Will entertain Miss Perkins!" she repeated, slowly. For in that country place the village dressmaker was wont to be treated wit hall due deference. So u Clover deposited her flowers upon a small side table and ran up to her own proom: returning soon, fresh and fair, and with her own deft hands prepared the evening meal.

Miss Perkins looked as sweet.

and with her own deft hands prepared the evening meal.

Miss Perkins looked as sweet as honey, as she bent over her work, occasionally "making eyes" at the handsome doctor. She managed to inveigle him into escorting her home in the early amoonlight, and when John returned he told Clover that he felt as though he had taken a dose of wormwood.

"Kissed her, eh?" said Clover, saucily. His answer was to seize the audacious girl and kiss her again and again.

"Father and mother will both be so pleased," he whispered. "They love you as a daughter already, darling."

But Clover sighed plaintively.

"You do not even know my proper bame," she said, "and you want me to hal in the your wife!"