

# The Veiled Pestilence

By J. W. MACMILLAN.

A sign of the times is to be discerned in the action of a thousand students of the University of Minnesota, who unanimously adopted the following resolution:

"We stand ready to respond to the call of the country in ready and willing service; we undertake to maintain our part of the war free from hatred, brutality or graft, true to the American purpose and ideals; aware of the temptations of camp life and the moral and social wreckage involved, we covenant together as college men, to live the clean life and to seek to establish the uniform as a symbol and guarantee of real manhood."

The war is forcing upon public attention the necessity of grappling with venereal diseases. It is an obligatory part of the programme of national efficiency. If an army is to be fit for fighting it must be free from these forms of illness. And back of that consideration lies this deeper one, that if the male population is to fit for recruitment it, too, must be free from their blighting effects.

It does not appear that soldiers and sailors are peculiarly the victims of venereal disease. Such statistics as are available, which are scanty enough, seem to indicate that the civil portion of any community is as much infected as the military. No one, however, can overlook the fact that the gathering of men into large masses, without the wholesome restraining domestic influences they had formerly known, leaves them especially open to sexual temptations. Though it does not appear that the percentage of infection is greater in the naval and military forces than in normal times, there can be no doubt that the total of infected persons has increased. In the Imperial Army in peace times one quarter of the "constantly sick" were sufferers from these maladies, amounting to an average of two days loss of active service for each man in the ranks. With the enormous multiplication of the strength of both land and sea forces one can see the justification of the exertions now being made by the Army Medical Corps to reduce the consequent impairment of the Army's efficiency.

One has but to read the appropriate chapters in such a work as the United States Bulletin on National Vitality, by Professor Irving Fisher, to realize the terrific threat which venereal diseases contain for our modern world. Syphilis was unknown to the ancients. Its origin is obscure, but it appears to have been brought to Europe by sailors who had accompanied Columbus. It spread with extraordinary rapidity, and continues to extend its curse and destruction over the whole earth. Measured by its deadly effects upon the human race it is worthy to be classed with tuberculosis and alcohol. Yet it has not become the object of any widespread propaganda seeking its removal. Those who speak out against it find themselves face to face with obstacles which the protagonists of liquor and the white plague have not had to meet.

One reason for this opposition lies in the morbid appeal which all matters concerning the abnormal in sex life make to the average mind. It is sometimes said that the human race is over-sexed. Comparing man with the lower animals, and it is impossible to make any other comparison, sex certainly counts for much more. The sex instinct in its various modes, including parentage, reproduction and romantic love, is probably the cause of more human effort, for good or ill, than any other instinct we possess. The very thought of it has a secret attraction for our minds. Hence the prevalence of both prudery and obscenity. One may almost say that there is no topic so rigidly excluded from public discussion, and none so eagerly welcomed in private conversation. This hyper-interest in the subject is the cause of the crusade against sexual vice attracting so many unbalanced champions, who, dealing tactlessly with a most delicate condition in society, do more harm than good, while it brings the sanest and most sagacious of advocates to an audience of whom a large part are prepared to frown and another large part are prepared to snicker at anything he says.

Another obstacle to the overthrow of these pernicious diseases lies in the prevalence of exploded ideas as to the necessity of incontinence, and the wisdom of tolerance and control of sexual traffic. If any of my readers are in doubt on these questions I would refer them to the book called "Prostitution in Europe," by Abraham Flexner. Mr. Flexner was sent to Europe by the Rockefeller Vice Commission of New York, shortly after they had

issued their report on vice conditions in New York. The imprimatur of their choice of him as an investigator is on the report which he made. That report is a careful summary of opinions, conditions, practices and experiments conducted in the continent which has been the centre of civilization for centuries. It is impossible to resist the evidence he has gathered against even the best-meant endeavors to permit and regulate vice. Add to this the unanimous dictum of intelligent medical practice, that continence is not pathological, and one will no longer be under the sway of these mistaken ideas. Nevertheless, they have had and still have a great vogue, and count for much of the antipathy toward any efforts to root out vice and its consequent diseases.

A third obstacle lies in an over-sanguine confidence in modern therapeutic specifics. Some think that salvarsan has destroyed the harmfulness of syphilis. And some think that the evils of sexual vice can be met by popularizing or making compulsory the practice of personal artificial prophylaxis. These are matters for an expert to pronounce upon. Hence I quote the opinion of Otto May, M.A., M.D., etc., Joint Secretary of the National Council of Great Britain for Combating Venereal Diseases. Dr. May says:

"Two extreme schools of opinion may be said to exist, the one regarding the introduction of such measures as the complete solution of a problem, in which morals find no place, and the other looking with abhorrence on any proposals for diminishing the danger of illicit intercourse. As with so many other questions, the sanest and most practical attitude is to be found between these extremes. The encouragement of continence by education, temperance and the provision of suitable recreation for the body and mind is undoubtedly of the utmost importance in diminishing disease, and should be pursued with all possible vigor in the Services. But it is futile to pretend that nothing more is necessary, and that all men will respond to these efforts and become monuments of 'virtue.' As a supplement to these efforts, the provision of some form of artificial prophylaxis is undeniably necessary, if all steps are to be taken to control these diseases."

"On the other hand such provision alone would be lamentably deficient. Even apart from the encouragement thus given to incontinence, with its many social ill-consequences, it would fail to achieve its object. However efficient the methods might be in theory, it would be impossible in practice to make certain of their employment in every case, particularly when the man is more or less inebriated at the time of his debauch. Experience in the Austrian and German armies seems to show that the provision of various preventive measures diminishes, but by no means abolishes, the incidence of disease. . . .

"The utilization of such measures could be made compulsory by severely punishing all men found to be suffering from venereal disease who had not availed themselves of this treatment. Such compulsion would have, however, the serious practical disadvantage of tending to encourage concealment of disease, and it is probable that the provision of voluntary opportunity for this early treatment, combined with sound instruction on the educational lines sketched above, offers the best solution of the problem of diminishing these diseases in the army."

With the formation of the huge armies which the United States is preparing to throw into the war has come the need of facing this problem. Secretary of War Baker has appointed a Commission on Training Camp Activities, with Raymond Fosdick as Chairman, to safeguard moral conditions and promote athletic contests and social activities in the camps. Secretary of the Navy Daniels has followed his example for the men in the naval and marine training camps. The foremost items of the programme adopted by these commissions are the removal of prostitution from anywhere within five miles of any camp, and of liquor from within a mile, together with the enforcement of the federal law forbidding the sale of liquor to anyone in military uniform. The next move is the organization of numerous clubs—athletic, dramatic, musical and literary,—and the instituting of athletic games and contests. They are sending special men to each camp to take hold of the formation of groups which will promote these activities.

It may be that one of the bright by-products of the war will be a new attitude towards the veiled pestilence. The veil may be rent, showing how vile and deadly and abhorrent it is. And mankind may find courage to undertake its destruction.

## Trade With Brazil

### What the Brazil market will take

A commercial circular of recent date addressed to American manufacturers, says Brazil offers a good market for the following articles:

Wheat flour, illuminating oil, turpentine, linseed oil, white zinc, rosin, cement, cotton edgings and braids, German style; laces, embroideries, bicos, filos and crivos from cotton, linen and silk, Swiss style; cotton, satin, moire and liberty ribbons, Swiss style; fancy cloths, voiles, crepes, farquahards, etc., from cotton, linen, satin and silk, thin, and light, for ladies dressing, etc., sterling woolen and cotton mixtured cloths, thin and light for ladies dressing, sterling woolen and cotton mixtured cloths, light, for gentlemen's clothing; men's and women's mercerized cotton, silk lisle and silk hosiery, velvet cloths from cotton, satin and silk, satin cloths in cotton and silk, cotton blankets, end fringed towels, light and up-to-date boys suits, men's shirts from cotton, linen, silkstraw and silk, French style; aluminum and horn combs, all class of sewing machine needles and household needles in paper and cardtubes, etc., German style; hair ornaments, tin rod, printing and lytographing ink, all sort of painters powdered ink, to be made in oil; minium of plumb yellows, greens, vermilion, etc.; calcium carbide, granulated and lump salt-peter, refined and crystallized; dry fruits, tins and cases, juice preserved fruits, white and color window glass, etc., iron and steel in slabs, bars, wrought, cast, round, square, ingots, etc., sheet zinc galvanized, plain and painted sheet iron, plain galvanized iron wire, all thicknesses and all use, bare and protected copper wire, for electricity, all numbers; barbed fence wire and fence staples, galvanized corrugated sheet iron n. 30 etc., plain brass wire, several widths, plain sheet copper, dry common codfish, 128 lbs. bbls. and 64 lbs. half bbls.; first quality big codfish tin lined cases of 20 and 60 kilos; paper on reels for periodicals, nacar, bone and pearl buttons, all kinds and all use; iron, zinc, steel and brass tacks, cotton muslins cambrics, longcloths and madapolams, thin and light; pencils

and penholders, steel and aluminum pens, fine pen-fumery, French style; paper, all kinds and all purpose; cardboard and cartoline, electric lamps of any description; all sort of parchmyrn, stanyn, golden and fancy paper, etc.; all sort of lamp chimneys; trade advertising novelties, general gas and electric supplies, iron shovels, ploughs, machinery and general agricultural implements, machinery and general apparatus for sugar, alcohol and brandy making, iron and steel rails, locomotives and all railway tools, iron and steel eye hoes, British style; household table and kitchen metal and aluminum goods, polished and varnished iron locks for doors, drawers, mails, trunks, chests, desk, etc., German style; brick trowels, German style; reaping scythes, etc., British style; painters brushes and fitches, with tin and copper bound, all sort, French and German style; sand paper and coth, table and kitchen, rough and fine cutlery; door brass hinges and butt hinges, etc.; white metal hooks, black and white metal spring snap fasteners, German style; white metal and iron harnesses, buckles, white and black sewing thread on spools, hanks and skeins, brodering wool and silk on spools, hanks and skeins, loaded and empty paper and metal shells for firearms; thin paper for cigarettes, repeating rifles and shotguns, cloth, tooth and hair brushes, French style; general dental supplies, furniture cane, Austrian style; spring celluloid coated buttons, firearms, spotlights, BB, BG, etc; gun locks, printed single and in-relief tinplates, lytho, bronze and aluminum powders, black, white and brown chevreaux and sheep-leather, biseaute birror glass, spices, black pepper (seed), cloves (flower), cuminseed, aniseed, cinnamon (cork and powder); table earthenware, ironstone and Chinaware, etc., lump brimstone, sewing machines, jewellery, watches, clocks, optic, novelties, etc., bijouteries, hardware and other saleable items; general ironware, typewriting machines, surgical instruments, general office and stationery supplies, ultra-marine blue, cycles, motor cars, motor trucks, tires and inner tubes; medicinal plants and chemicals,