

The White Ribbon

FOR GOD AND HOME AND HUMANITY

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SAVE THE BABIES.

How often has this motto and others of similar meaning greeted us from show windows and hoardings during the last week or two. Our newspapers have given much information on how to care for "our best immigrants." Doctors and Social Reformers have lectured on babies and baby-culture. While agreeing with most that has been said, we think that to find the cause we must probe deeper than has yet been done. What is it that wrecks so oft the cradleship ere its precious freight can be landed upon the shores of time, or brings the cargo to the starting point in such a weakened condition that the voyage of life is no sooner begun than it is ended? From statistics taken in the United States, it was shown that of the babies that die under one year old, 14 per cent. lived less than a day, 30 per cent. lived under one week, and 45 per cent. under a month. No amount of post-natal care would save these little immigrants; they were doomed ere they were born. As General Booth puts it, "They were damned into the world, not born." And what are the causes of this fearful mortality. All experts agree that the twin evils of Alcohol and the Red Plague rob us of these little strangers that we need so badly to supply the place of those whom the red fangs of war have swallowed up. Over 90 per cent. of cases of Red Plague are admittedly due to alcohol. When our cousins in America have put their troops "on the water waggon," the officers report, "No offences and no venereal disease." Therefore, when

the Empire asks the question, "Where are my children," the reply comes from every student of this subject, "Stolen from you by King Alcohol."

Dr. Ballantyne states, in summing up the results of experimental work regarding the effects of alcohol in pre-natal life: "There is good reason to believe, on the evidence which has been thus collected, that alcohol produces its most serious and lasting evil effects in the germinal period." The ancient nations possessed sufficient knowledge to make them very specific in denouncing alcoholic conceptions. Diogenes said to a stupid child, "Young man, thy father was very drunk when thy mother conceived thee." Also we may note the observations made by experts as to the greater frequency of idiocy and mortality among children conceived during carnival seasons. "The long-continued experiments of Stockard and Papinicolaou on guinea pigs have placed the degenerative effects of alcohol on germ cells practically beyond the reach of criticism," says Dr. Ballantyne. The points chiefly noted in these experiments are the following:—The animals who inhaled alcohol were little changed or injured so far as their behaviour and their structure were concerned, but evil effects were emphatically shown in the offspring to which they gave rise, and these effects were produced whether the alcoholised animals were mated together or with normal individuals. The bad effects were manifest in the first generation of offspring, but they were still more marked and serious in later generations; then the young ones were born weakly, suffered from a neurosis resembling paralysis agi-

tans, and in some instances were monsters with eye deformity. The great and outstanding fact appears to be that alcohol produces an injurious effect upon the so-called carriers of heredity in the germ cells of one generation, which can be seen not in less but in more marked degree in the great-grandchildren of the original pair of animals.

We quote the following from an article in "McClure's Magazine," March, 1917:—"Young women should be told plainly that the procreative powers of the heavy drinker, or even of the steady, moderate drinker, are seriously impaired, not always sufficiently, however, to prevent him from having defective children. As illustrating what hereditary damage is done by even moderate drinking, I may mention the case of five distinguished brothers who, 25 years ago, were heads of corporations, bank presidents, men who made and spent large sums of money. One of them held a very high position in the United States Government. They were all moderate drinkers, and all died at a good age, apparently none the worse for this indulgence, but—of their 18 sons not one made a success of his life. All were either steady drinkers or heavy drinkers. Two-thirds of them died before they were 35, and only one of them reached the age of 50. This one, a friend of mine, a man in poor health, admits that he cannot live without whisky. His only daughter, a young woman of 28, died recently of cerebro-spinal meningitis, and her little child of four has been attacked by the same disease." Another case recently noted was that of a man who died at