

## NEW ZEALAND WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN TEMPERANCE UNION

(Incorporated)

Organised 1885

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## The White Ribbon.

"For God, and Home, and Humanity"

WELLINGTON, JULY 1, 1947.

"PARENTAGE AND STRONG  
DRINK"ALCOHOL AFFECTS THE  
GERM CELLS

Although probably most scientists hold that from the point of view of heredity the germ cells are sacrosanct, many believe that they can be damaged by environmental agencies like lead, venereal diseases and alcohol in the blood of the parents, and that these poisons may produce "enduring modifications" that may continue for several generations.

To find out the extent of the influence of alcohol on the reproductive cells, statistical data has often been used, and although this confirms the findings of experiments on animals, this method is open to the criticism that any excessive incidence of defect in the children of habitual drunkards might be due not to the influence of parental alcoholism, but to the presence of a syphilitic taint or to an original faultiness in the stock. On this account it is better to rely mainly on data obtainable from the systematic examination of the genital glands in alcoholic subjects and from breeding experiments on animals.

The state of the reproductory glands in habitual drunkards has been investigated by various observers, two of the

more recent ones being Bertholet and Weichselbaum, who have shown that "a wasting of the testicles with absence or scanty production of the fertilising cells (spermatozoa) is to be found in the majority of male alcoholics dying in the prime of life, while in the female, alterations of a similar character may be discovered in the ovaries." It has been shown by experiments on rabbits that corresponding morbid changes can be produced in the genital glands. Stockard showed that in a series of experiments on guinea-pigs, the offspring of the alcoholised animals in comparison with the young of the control animals, were conspicuously inferior in strength and vitality, and in many cases showed gross abnormalities, and that these bad effects were transmitted through several generations.

Dr. Mjoen in "The Problems of Eugenics" says: "In the infant embryo and at conception we find a still greater sensitiveness than in adults, which in all probability is so great that the harm done by alcohol would be fatal to the race in a short time if Nature had not provided the germ cells with special protective arrangements. Alcohol does not affect sound stock except when taken during conception, maternity or lactation." But Dr. Courtenay C. Weeks says all the newer evidence points to the fact that, in spite of Nature's barriers, alcohol can affect the germ cells, and that procreation during a period of intoxication entails a definite hazard as to the quality of the offspring which may result.

Dr. Fraser Harris says: "Possibly one of the most fruitful sources of the birth of infants who will later become imbecile is the alcoholic sperms of the father."

Dr. Watt Eden says: "I do not think that it can be disputed that alcohol consumed by the mother will pass into the foetal circulation . . ."; and Dr. C. C. Weeks says—"There is no way in which she (the mother) can safeguard her unborn child except by complete abstinence during the course of her pregnancy."

Dr. Bunge long ago pointed out how often the daughters of alcoholic fathers were unable to nurse their babies.

Dame Louise Mellroy and Prof. Amy Fleming (the past and present Professors of Midwifery at the Royal Free Hospital, London), have both repeatedly emphasised the danger of

"THE POWER OF WOMAN-  
HOOD"Address given by the Rev J. F. Jack,  
Palmerston North.

Mr. Jack said that the war was not really over, as the world was still passing through unprecedented trials and tribulations. The war of 1914-18, waged in the cause of liberty, had been a colossal failure. The supposed peace ended in 1939 with the bugles ringing out "War with Germany." The world's centre of defence had been the small island of Britain. It had been "The thin red line." Frances Willard had been the thin white line. She had organised the world's womanhood, not for injuring and slaying, but for doing good. She had made an organised defence against the cause, not the effect. The cause of war was sin—an old-fashioned word today, but all it connoted was alive and powerful as ever. The loss of the Sabbath was threatened; material things were becoming more and more prominent, the spiritual receding more and more into the background. Strong drink was slaying its thousands. Multitudes of men, women and little children were dying of starvation while the food they should have eaten was being used to make grog.

These evils would have to be destroyed if the world was to be the land of milk and honey the Creator intended, and man was to live in the image of God, and not as the brute beast. Here came in the work of woman. She was the "power behind the throne." History made mention of the hero and the reformer, but there was no word of the woman in the background who created his ideals.

Womanhood owed much to Jesus Christ. In Roman times woman was under the thumb of man, and was her husband's property. Members of the family were reckoned only on the father's side.

In Aryan times, the wife was under the absolute control of her husband, and could be sold, beaten or killed, but, in  
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alcohol to motherhood and the unborn child.

Then, of course, there is the post-natal stage to be considered. None would deny that the welfare of the child after its birth is almost bound to be adversely affected if either or both of the parents are addicted to alcohol.

RUBY ADENDORFF.

—Cape of Good Hope "White Ribbon,"  
April, 1946.