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THE JEWS AND RACE SURVIVAL.

BY EDWARD M. MERRINS, M.D., WUCHANG, CHINA.

II.

IV. THE BIRTH RATE OF A NATION.

"That our sons may grow up as the young plants, and that our daughters may be as the polished corners of the Temple."

Jewish Psalm.

WHEN family life deteriorates, the birth rate falls; and this is regarded as a sure sign of the actual or impending decline of the nation. Whatever else may have led to the passing of ancient civilizations, in each instance it was attended by a dearth of children. The steadily declining birth rate in Europe and America is therefore an ominous feature of Western civilization. It is so serious in English-speaking countries, particularly, as to strengthen the conviction that not only the political dominance but also the distinctive religion and culture of the Anglo-Saxon race are passing away.

On the other hand, it is argued: (1) that quality is of more importance than quantity, as a multitude of unprofitable children does not increase the strength of the nation but weaken it, and the fewer the children the better are their chances in life; (2) that the increase of population even at its present diminished rate, if unchecked by pestilence, war, famine, and other racial scourges, will soon lead to a vast

population which the earth will be unable to support;¹ (3) that the decline which is causing so much alarm is due to causes at present inexplicable and beyond human control;² (4) that it is simply the desire of warlike nations to bring their armies up to the greatest possible numerical strength in order to be prepared for war that lies behind the uneasiness over a falling birth rate; (5) that with regard to all forms of life, naturalists scoff at the idea that survival depends solely or mainly on numbers: "The thicker the grass, the easier it is mown"; "The wolf cares not how many the sheep may be."

Notwithstanding all that may be urged in favor of a limited population, it must surely be granted that a declining birth rate is significant of national decay when the children that do come to the birth are not only fewer in number, but are also deteriorating in quality, and when the decline is due in no small degree to waning morality and patriotism. Official statistics prove that the decline is not due to a decrease in the number of the females of a child-bearing age; nor to a decrease in the number of marriages. The postponement of marriage until middle life is reached is responsible for only a very slight decrease, and there is also a slight decrease in the number of illegitimate children. The fall in the birth

¹ In Canada, the population has multiplied in the course of the last century by 28; in the United States by 16; in Prussia by 5; in Russia by 4; in Italy by 3; in the Argentines by 12; in Australia by 900 almost; in Norway and Sweden by 3. So in the East. The population of Java 120 years ago was three millions, it is now thirty millions. In almost every part of the civilized world, except Ireland, the same story is told. In England and Wales, if the present superfluity of births over deaths is maintained, three more centuries will find these small countries trying hard to support a population of 2,400,000,000 people (Edmund, *The National Review*, 1912).

² Sir Shirley Murphy, *The Lancet*, 1912.

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rate is almost wholly attributable to the voluntary limitation of the number of offspring;¹ and this, in turn, springs from the pagan outlook of large sections of the community, with their love of ease and their irresponsibility. As some one has said, their main desire is to warm both hands at the fire of life without incurring the slightest possible risk of burning their fingers.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the decline is most marked among the upper classes, which is the more to be regretted, as, in the course of social development, they have become the trustees of the most valuable racial qualities, and as their children, starting with almost every advantage, should be counted on to add greatly to the strength of the nation. The decline is least among the very poor, the improvident, the degenerate, and criminal classes. It may be claimed, as an offset to the decline, that the average span of human life is lengthening. But this is no real compensation. When the number of old people is increasing, and year by year a larger proportion of the young are the children of the weakest and least desirable part of the population, it means that the nation as a whole is becoming old and infirm, and sooner or later must succumb to a more vigorous nation.

Even more than for personal honor and immortality, the Jews longed for the glory and perpetuity of their nation. They rejoiced in the promise made to their ancestors that God would bless and multiply them as the stars of heaven, and as the sands upon the seashore. They regarded the family as the unit of the state. The whole glory of an Israelite lay in his family pedigree. As the childless were

¹Newsholme, *The Declining Birth-Rate*. At the First International Congress on Eugenics, the statement was publicly made that in the last thirty years the births in the world were fewer by 25,000,000 than they might have been, because of voluntary restriction.

struck out of the genealogical tree of the tribe, it was everything to the married to have a numerous offspring. Apart then from the personal joys of parenthood, the Jews were glad to have children. They were counted as a gift from the Lord. They were as arrows in the hands of the mighty. "Happy is the man," exclaimed the Psalmist, "that hath his quiver full of them." In degenerate periods, no doubt, there were Jews who shrank from the burden of a family and were inclined to follow heathen practices; but it was against religious law,¹ and the restriction could never have become common, as the Jews were particularly praised by Tacitus and other Gentile historians for the rarity of infanticide among them. The high Jewish birth rate is still maintained, even under the most unfavorable circumstances.²

In various countries, measures are being adopted which, it is hoped, will tend to increase the number of births; such as, the granting of special political privileges to the fathers of large families, the heavier taxation of bachelors, pecuniary and other aid to mothers at the birth of each child. These expedients were tried in olden time without much result. They may be more effective now; but what is mainly required is a change of heart and mind, a different attitude

¹ Josephus, *Against Apion*, book II. sect. 26. As an indication of the power of religion in this direction over family life, in countries under the influence of the Roman Catholic Church, which bans preventive measures against child-bearing, the birth rate remains high, and it is also higher among the Protestant clergy than among the laity by whom they are surrounded (*Newsholme, The Declining Birth-Rate*).

² In Vienna, for example, their birth rate is said to be double that of the peoples of other nationalities living in the same city (*The Lancet*, January 7, 1911). The municipal health report from which this statement is taken expressly emphasizes the beneficent results of adherence to the religious and hygienic rules of the Mosaic law, and commends the considerate arrangements made for mothers, and the good care taken of infants.

towards life; in other words, a nobler faith in God, and national hopes of a high character such as those which inspired the Jews.

V. THE WEAKLINGS AND WASTRELS OF THE NATION.

“That He might hear the mournings of such as are in captivity, and deliver the children appointed unto death.”—*Jewish Psalm*.

In connection with the frequency of divorce¹ and the declining birth rate, reference must be made to the social evil, the darkest blot on human civilization, and everywhere a source of national weakness. The “strange woman,” as Lecky remarks, is the most mournful and most awful figure in history. She remains while civilizations rise and fall, the eternal sacrifice of humanity blasted for the sins of men. In turn she ruins many of those who associate with her. She hath cast down many wounded, yea, all her slain are a mighty host. How to overcome the evil is a baffling, an almost insoluble, problem.

The Jewish laws framed to safeguard feminine purity were of great severity. The man guilty of criminal assault on a betrothed damsel—and almost all damsels were betrothed—was put to death (Deut. xxii. 25). A betrothed damsel who went astray unresistingly, was put to death with her accomplice (ver. 23, 24). The man who wronged a damsel not betrothed, was compelled to take her into his home as a wife, where she held an honorable though inferior position (ver. 28, 29). Children of illegitimate birth, and their descendants unto the tenth generation, were excluded from the assembly of Jehovah, i.e., they were denied the political

¹The Vice Commission of Chicago, after exhaustive consideration of the question, records itself as of the opinion that divorce, to a large extent, is a contributory factor to sexual vice (Report on the Social Evil, p. 41).

and religious privileges of the state, to the lasting shame of the family (xxiii. 2). The sale of a Hebrew woman to foreigners was forbidden (xxiii. 17). A master was to take as a wife, or emancipate, a slave of Hebrew parents (Ex. xxi. 8). No daughter of Israel was permitted to become a *kedeshah*, or religious prostitute (Deut. xxiii. 17). The punishment for adultery was the death of both parties (xxii. 24).

Nevertheless, the social evil existed among the Jews, as the numerous warnings and prohibitions in the Scriptures prove. There were, also, the licentious rites of worship at the heathen shrines, which were little more than means of prostitution under the guise of religion. But the incumbency of early marriage upon both sexes, the small size of Jewish cities and towns, the freedom from the deadening, soul-destroying poverty of modern large cities, and the very heavy punishment to which the unchaste were liable, must always have kept the number of Jewish outcast women very low. Indeed, in the book of Proverbs, which deals with the practical affairs of daily life, the "strange woman" is nearly always referred to as a foreigner, a non-Israelite. This comparative freedom from the social evil has doubtless done much to preserve the vitality of the Jewish nation.

In these days, even in Christian lands, the evil has grown to alarming proportions; it has become an organized, an international traffic that should be dealt with sternly by the state. The evil is eradicable, as few of the victims plunge deliberately and intelligently into this mode of life, but are drawn into it through ignorance attributable to the excessive modesty of parents, or driven to it by low wages and unemployment, or are entangled in it by the iniquities of the liquor traffic.¹ Many of the girls and women — what proportion it

¹ Miss Jane Addams, *A New Conscience and an Ancient Evil*.

is impossible to say, though doubtless it is large— are mentally deficient, and therefore more or less morally irresponsible.

This leads to the consideration of what is generally regarded as a grave menace to the vitality of a nation, the existence and steadily increasing number of the physically, mentally, and morally unfit,— the deaf and dumb, crippled and deformed, paralytics, drunkards, habitual criminals, epileptics, lunatics, feeble-minded, hysterics, neurasthenics, and other queer, helpless, and morally irresponsible persons. In ancient times weakly, defective, and malformed infants were not allowed to survive, and doubtless this murderous selection did much to safeguard the physical strength of the nations who practiced it. In these days, civilization protects the weaklings, and most of them are allowed to marry without restraint.

In discussing this subject, the greatest care should be taken to preserve the distinction between the born degenerates, on the one side, and, on the other, those of good stock who are more or less disabled because of acquired prenatal or postnatal disease, or by accidents and dangerous occupations, or by the general effects of an evil environment.

In the first class, the abnormality is inherited from abnormal ancestors. In the stock, there is "some strain of the stuff," "some warping past the aim." The inborn weakness may manifest itself in various ways, as in the record of one degenerate family, in which the unfortunate children in the order of their birth were, or eventually came to be, a ne'er-do-weel, a periodical lunatic, a dipsomaniacal daughter, deformed triplets who died at birth, a prostitute, a double monster which also died at birth, a normal daughter, a paranoiac son. The eugenicist pronounces stern judgment on the

degenerate. It may be summed up in the words of the poet:—

“And as the son of Thetis said,
I hear thee saying now:
Greater by far than thou are dead,
Strive not: die also thou.”

To some extent nature weeds out these weaklings, and it is urged that society should act more vigorously in the same direction. Sympathy with the unfortunate, and the feeling of the solidarity of the race, will never sanction measures too Draconian. The following have been suggested as not too harsh or unreasonable:—

(1) Criminals of the worst kind should be incarcerated for life; or, as in some of the American States, compelled to submit to vasectomy — a surgical operation not at all serious, which retains sexuality but insures sterility.

(2) Celibacy should be enforced by law upon the insane, feeble-minded, epileptics, and others of the unmistakably degenerate class. This is already the law in several American States. Possibly in the not distant future, before any marriage whatever is performed, the contracting parties will have to produce medical certificates of their mental and physical soundness.

(3) Celibacy might be enforced by separating and isolating the unfit of each sex — not in prison, but in island communities, where, in exchange for their sacrifice, they would be supported by the state.

But the great majority of those classed as undesirables are not born degenerates. When the stock is good, nature seems to give almost every child a good physical start in the world. In no single instance has it been proved that ill-nourished or unhealthy babies are more frequent at the time of birth

among the poor than among the rich, or that so-called hereditary diseases affect the newly born children of the rich and poor unequally. The poorest and most ill-nourished women bring forth as hale and strong-looking babies as those in the very best conditions. In fact, it almost appears as though the unborn child fights strenuously for its own health at the expense of the mother, and arrives in the world with a full chance of living a normal physical existence.¹

The lack of proper nurture, care, and training is responsible for most of the physical and mental ills which render people unfit for the battle of life, and preventable disease for the remainder.² As we become more capable of coping with injury and disease in all their forms, the class comprising the crippled, the deformed, debilitated, and infirm, apart from those who suffer from the wear and tear of advancing years, will be very small. Even with regard to mental weakness and disorder, the outlook is more hopeful, as recent medical and psychological research is proving that many mental disorders are caused, not primarily by structural changes in the brain, but by toxins circulating in the system, a condition much more amenable to effective treatment.

Tramps, beggars, and others of the improvident class, besides many criminals, are unregenerate rather than degenerate, harking back to the restless, nomadic life of remote

¹ Report of the English Privy Council upon *Physical Deterioration*, *The Lancet*, September, 1904.

² "To me it seems overwhelmingly probable that slum-dwellers, factory hands, and the like are physically inferior, not because they are as a class incapable of developing as well as the best sections of the community, but mainly, if not solely, because their surroundings are such that they have not the chance of developing as well as they might. I think we have only to improve their surroundings sufficiently, and the deteriorations will vanish in the very next generation" (G. Archdall Reid, M.B., F.R.S.E., *The Laws of Heredity*, 1910).

ancestors. Discipline their wayward inclinations, turn their restless energies into proper channels, and they render invaluable service to mankind as soldiers, sailors, geographical explorers, missionaries, in fact, in any occupation that offers change and adventure. It is too often forgotten that the persistence of criminal tendencies in the same family, generation after generation, may be due, not so much to heredity, as to the difficulties besetting the members of a family with an evil reputation, however well inclined, who try to gain an honest and sufficient livelihood. If beaten in the struggle, they are almost compelled to return to evil ways, the children follow the example of the parents, and thus furnish statistics for the supposed transmission of acquired bad habits.¹ When the state insists that all its children shall be properly cared for and educated, and that a fair wage, a decent living, an even chance in life, shall be the heritage of all adults who deserve it, the undesirable class in the course of one or two generations will be reduced to very small dimensions. It should be mentioned in this connection that the Jews always take care of their own poor, cheerfully complying with the Levitical

¹The famous Juke family is often cited as a striking illustration of this hereditary criminality, one Ada Juke having left, it is said, 1,200 direct descendants, of whom nearly 1,000 were criminals, paupers, inebriates, insane, or prostitutes. It appears that such statements are not justified by the original report. The statistical summary shows that of the 540 direct descendants of five sisters of the Juke family, and 161 related by marriage or otherwise, there were 76 criminals, 206 who received charitable aid, one person of Juke blood was insane, and one idiotic. It is from those of other blood who married into the third and fourth generations of the Jukes, that the worst strains were produced. Ada herself is described as being "temperate not criminal," the worst things against her being that she was a harlot before marriage, and not industrious. The Report exhibits the consequences of a continuous evil environment, not the proofs of hereditary criminal tendencies. See *The Jukes; a Study in Crime, Pauperism, Disease, and Heredity*, by R. L. Dugdale; also *The Lancet*, October 7, 1900.

command: "If thy brother be waxen poor, and his hand fail with thee; then thou shalt uphold or relieve him."

VI. THE HEALTH OF A NATION.

"Hygiene aims to make growth more perfect, life more vigorous, decay less rapid, death more remote."

Among the causes usually assigned for the downfall of the Roman empire in the West are the frightful epidemics which swept over it during the period of its decline. Niebuhr states that the ancient world never recovered from the blow inflicted by the plague which visited it in the reign of Marcus Aurelius. The Justinian plague was even more terrible. But these epidemics affected other nations also, including those which rose upon the ruins of the empire. It is doubtful if a great nation ever perishes from pestilence, unless at the time it was smitten it was already in a state of decay. The Black Death, which destroyed nearly a third of the population of England in the fourteenth century, disorganized the social system, but inflicted no irremediable injury, as the subsequent history of the country proves. When the national life is strong and healthy, such sharp visitations come and go, causing great losses at the time, but leaving no lasting traces.

It is more difficult to estimate the effect upon the national life of chronic endemic diseases, such as tuberculosis, malaria, and syphilis, which cause more disability and a far greater mortality than the periodic visitations of epidemics. Some eugenists contend that the mortality due to disease is in the long run beneficial to a nation, as people of weak or tainted stock are thus weeded out, leaving it hardier and stronger. Indeed, the argument is advanced that to produce a strong race, well endowed with vital qualities, it is well for that race to multiply to excess, and then to undergo

a murderous reduction by exposure to disease and unhygienic conditions. Beyond a certain limit, however, much disease is a sign of decay. It is now held that the empires of ancient Greece and Rome, the Latin kingdom of the Crusaders, and perhaps other states, all perished from the ravages of malarial disease. Of Rome it is said that "a careful study of history will show there was a definite degradation of the national character in spite of the introduction of fresh blood from healthier races. The extravagant cruelty, and the absence of soberness and self-control seen in the Roman society of the first century may well be explicable as the result of malaria." On the face of it this argument is not very convincing. Those who suffer from malarial disease have no monopoly of the faults of cruelty and want of self-control, and these are just the faults which are all but universal in the early as well as in the later stages of civilization. Besides, in nearly all tropical and subtropical lands; malaria has been prevalent for centuries, yet the indigenous races still survive and are flourishing. In India, a very malarial country, the population is increasing, proportionately as well as in the aggregate, far more rapidly than in England, where malaria is unknown. On the whole, it may be sufficient to say that disease, in whatever form it appears, may hasten but is never the principal cause of a nation's decay.

The Jewish nation, as its records prove, was not exempt from decimating plagues and pestilences. Over and over again it is stated in the Scriptures that the anger of the Lord was kindled against the people, and thousands of them perished, smitten by some unnamed plague or pestilence. Knowing little or nothing of the physical causes of pestilence,—in fact these visitations for many centuries were ascribed in all lands to supernatural influences,—the Jews regarded pesti-

lence as a punishment direct from God for their moral iniquities, rather than as the consequence of their violation of sanitary laws. Yet the inculcation of sanitary knowledge was not neglected. They were given the singularly enlightened hygienic rules and regulations embedded in the Pentateuch, and by long observance of them, the Hebrew stock became healthier and sturdier than any other of the period. The fact that Jews are still found everywhere, amid surroundings the most various and adverse, in effect following the same code in daily life, is enough to give it a strong claim on our attention and respect, not only because of its religious associations, but also for its value to social science.

These regulations so numerous and minute, covering nearly all the functions of the individual, domestic, and social life, may seem uninteresting and burdensome to the Gentile. But they were reasonable to the Jew, and were willingly obeyed by him because he made no distinction between the sacred and the secular. For him the law seized upon the whole of life, both in its inward experiences and in its outward manifestations. It was the expression of the will of God, and obedience to it was the highest service he could render. The Jewish nature was not satisfied with a general, undefined law of holiness; it demanded rules and regulations which should govern the details of daily life, and all were to be a part of the great law of holiness, whether they referred to bodily hygiene, the ceremonial services of the Tabernacle or Temple, or the lofty requirements of the moral law. Nothing was considered too humble to come within the purview of Him whose glory fills the universe. And in keeping these laws there was great reward. For they were not only of value in promoting the health and comfort of the people, but obedience constituted a moral discipline which trained

them to self-conquest, and it unified them as nothing else could, when they were scattered to the four corners of the earth.¹

1. *Sanitary Regulations.* Dwelling houses were required to be dry and well-built. Damp, unhealthy houses were described as plague stricken. As will be pointed out later, the word "plague" has a very wide meaning in the Hebrew scriptures. Applied to dwellings it may have meant saltpeter rot, the ordinary stains of damp, or the growth of molds, various vegetable organisms some of which, as the "red rain," are remarkable for their color. Such houses are decidedly unhealthy. Moreover, as it is an established fact that the *materies morbi* of certain diseases clings to houses; it may have been noticed that the members of one family after another occupying a particular dwelling were smitten with the same fatal disease. To describe such a house as plague stricken is not an unwarranted use of language. As present methods of disinfection were then unknown, it was a proper regulation which required the complete renovation of the house, or, if that could not be done, its destruction (Lev. xiv.). So with the "plague" of clothing.² The garments worn by persons suffering from contagious diseases can disseminate disease. It has been conjectured that the disease

¹ Zangwill, *Children of the Ghetto*.

² As an instance of the prevalence of similar beliefs and use of terms down to quite a late period in England, it may be mentioned that in the records of St. Bartholomew's Hospital, London, belonging to the middle of the sixteenth century, in connection with the statement of the expenditure incurred by the removal of a number of patients from the hospital to a lazaret-house, leprosy is referred to as "the linenless disease," as it was believed that the true cause of the disease was the wearing of woolen garments next the skin which were not often washed. It was noticed that with the introduction of linen which was washed frequently, certain loathsome skin diseases began to disappear.

of Naaman, which few maintain was true leprosy, was transmitted to Gehazi by the garments which the latter obtained from Naaman by deceit. In the East, where fashions do not change rapidly, expensive garments are family possessions, and often pass from one person to another. To guard against the transmission of disease it was proper to order the destruction of garments which seemed to be infected.

As in other Oriental countries, the houses were built with battlemented roofs, which gave provision for outdoor life, even in crowded cities. During the Feast of Tabernacles the family dwelt in a booth on the roof, and this temporary change of habitation, with the happy, open-air life, tended to relieve the strain of city life. Every year, before the Feast of the Passover, all houses were carefully searched for leaven, a proceeding which constituted an annual sanitary inspection of an exhaustive character, and this was followed by the most rigid cleansing. All roads, streets, wells, and sewers were at this time examined and repaired, and the sepulchers were painted.¹

All refuse from the city, it is asserted, was burned outside the city walls—the best way of disposal for those times. During the journeyings of the people in the wilderness, night soil was buried in the ground some distance from the camp. This was a proper method, as it is now known that the contagion of typhoid fever and other intestinal diseases is carried by flies from ordure to food and drink, thus spreading disease far and wide. It is the principal object of modern sanitarians, in the disposal of refuse, to prevent the access of flies to it. Earth burial still has its advocates.²

2. *Regulations concerning Eating and Drinking.* "Who-

¹ Gillespie, *The Sanitary Code of the Pentateuch.*

² Poore, "Flies and the Science of Scavenging," *The Lancet*, 1901.

soever eateth not of faith, it is sin unto him," wrote St. Paul in deciding the question whether or no it was lawful to eat meat which had been offered to idols. In designating certain animals as unclean, and therefore uneatable, it cannot be said with certainty how far the Hebrews were influenced by animistic or totemistic ideas peculiarly their own, whether the repulsiveness of the flesh or the filthy habits of some animals may not have caused their rejection as food, or whether such animals may not have been regarded as unclean because connected with idolatrous practices incongruous with the worship of the true and holy God. It can hardly be denied that nearly all the animals declared by the Mosaic law to be unclean entered into the sacrificial rites and the myths of many ancient peoples, including the Egyptians and the Pre-Semitic inhabitants of Palestine, with whom the Hebrews were in close relations, and were, in consequence, largely influenced by their religious ideas and practices. The belief that human beings acquired the tastes and habits of the animals eaten by them; that the blood of an animal was identical with its life, and blood actually shed meant the letting loose of mysterious life-power, with baneful consequences; and that the fat of animals as well as the blood had its living qualities,—these and other notions of a like kind may have been held by the Hebrews, for, morally and socially, they had been hewn from the rock and digged from the pit (Isa. li. 1). To classify as unclean the animals used in heathen sacrificial rites was perhaps the only way by which the Hebrews could be weaned from similar practices. In the fullness of time a Christian apostle could see, in a supernatural vision, a great sheet, as it were, containing all manner of four-footed beasts and creeping things, and was told that none were to be called common or unclean.

The Pentateuch required that animals should be slaughtered swiftly and mercifully. Those slain for sacrificial purposes were to be without discernible blemish, and were therefore carefully inspected, a regulation which led inevitably to the similar inspection of animals intended for human food. It is now well known that the flesh of unhealthy animals can give disease to human beings. The pig, with its numerous diseases, is among the worst offenders in this respect. The milk and flesh of tuberculous cows may also cause disease, especially in children. It is a remarkable fact that the mortality from tuberculosis among Jews is about one half what it is among Christians, a difference which cannot be wholly due, as alleged, to the adaptation of Jews to city life for the past two thousand years, but is rather to be ascribed to their consumption of "kosher" meat only. In nearly all civilized countries it is now the custom for the sanitary authorities to inspect meat offered for sale, or at least to inspect that which is imported. The Pentateuchal regulations did much to safeguard the public health, and to train the Hebrews to regard themselves as a holy people who were not to be indifferent to the religious beliefs and practices associated with the food consumed by them.

The regulation of the drinking habits of a people raises much more difficult problems. Should the aim be temperance or total abstinence in the matter of alcoholic beverages? It cannot be denied that when alcohol is first introduced to peoples unaccustomed to its use, it works dreadful havoc. On the other hand, where alcohol has slain its thousands, water-borne diseases, such as cholera, typhoid fever, dysentery, etc., have slain their millions. Drunkenness is not in itself a sign of national decay. Many nations afterwards great, notably the Anglo-Saxon, were very heavy

drinkers. In England, down to late in the eighteenth century, drunkenness was appallingly common among all classes, from the very highest to the lowest. Most regrettable to state from the religious standpoint, "it is the fact, indisputable if lamentable, that it is the great nations, the victorious nations, the progressive nations, the nations that are in the van of civilization, that are the drinking nations." Nevertheless, there is practical unanimity among physicians that the abuse of alcohol is prejudicial to the race as well as to the individual.

It may simplify the subject to divide drunkards into two main classes. The first consists of those not born with the craving for drink, but who become drunkards owing to the convivial customs of their time, or because they wish to forget the pain, troubles, and hardships of their existence, or are driven to it by other extraneous causes. The influences of religion, refinement of manners and customs, improved circumstances, may lift these out of their drunkenness; and if they come of good stock, the acquired weakness, even if they never reform, is not transmitted to their descendants. A nation may have numerous drunkards of this class without being dragged to destruction by them.

The other class consists of those born with a fatal craving for alcohol, which may be kept under but can never be totally eradicated. Because in their case it is an innate, hereditary weakness, their descendants are born with the same craving. A nation with a large proportion of actual or potential drunkards of this class is in a perilous state. Fortunately, for the welfare of the race, families which produce incorrigible drunkards tend to become extinct.

"They say the lion and the lizard keep
The courts where Jamshyd gloried and drank deep."

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While total abstinence from alcoholic beverages has not been commonly observed among the Jews, as a people they are noted for their sobriety. In their own land, wine, the common drink of the country, was not forbidden to them by their laws. But total abstinence was held before them as the best course for those in positions of power and responsibility. It was not for kings to drink wine, nor for princes to ask for strong drink. Nazirites, Rechabites, and other societies, lived under vows of total abstinence. Priests were forbidden to touch strong drink while on religious duty. During their wanderings in the wilderness for forty years, even the people at large did not drink wine, so they might know that Jehovah was their God (Deut. xxix. 6). Temperance was also indirectly promoted by the association of the drinking of wine with religious ceremonies, such as those of the ordinary Sabbath eve and the annual Feast of the Passover. In fact, the drinking of wine formed part of almost every Jewish rite, including the marriage ceremony. Consequently, overindulgence came to be regarded not only as a personal vice, but also as a sin against God. The frequent warnings against drunkenness in the Scriptures seem to indicate that at one period intemperance was perhaps common; but as the Jews eventually became a very sober people, it may be inferred that in time drunken families became extinct.

3. *The Isolation of the Sick and Unclean.* The amazing advances in medicine and surgery during recent years are mainly due to the discovery of the part taken by micro-organisms in the causation of disease. A trifling external injury in which they gain access may become so serious as to cause death. The success of a surgical operation depends on the complete removal and exclusion from the field of op-

eration of these germs, which necessitates that the patient's skin, the surgical instruments, and the surgeon's hands shall all be scrupulously clean. In the ordinary affairs of daily life, as well as in surgery, unclean hands may be a source of danger, as disease may be received and conveyed by them. The injunctions of the Pentateuch, forbidding contact with unclean things, and isolating those who were thus unclean, as well as those suffering from infective diseases, are in harmony with the requirements of modern hygiene.

According to the Talmud, the principal sources of tactual uncleanness were the following:—

(1) The carcasses of all animals classed by the law as unclean. Among these were rats and mice. As there is strong evidence for believing that epidemics of bubonic plague often visited Palestine, this was a most reasonable precaution, as the infection of this dreadful disease is conveyed to human beings by the fleas of plague-infected rats and mice. Rodents die in large numbers during these epidemics; so the handling of their bodies is extremely dangerous. But the handling of the decomposing bodies of all animals is not devoid of danger.

(2) The corpses of human beings. All unnecessary handling even of the dead bodies of human beings should be avoided, especially in hot countries. Post-mortem wounds are sometimes the most deadly that can be received. The custom of early interment to which this regulation led is quite commendable.

(3) Persons suffering from sexual disturbances and diseases. If one of the "issues" mentioned in Leviticus was a common venereal disease, the measures prescribed for preventing the transmission of the infection were not too stringent.

(4) Women during menstruation and after childbirth. Perhaps this regulation was connected with beliefs which have now been discarded; but during the puerperium a prolonged period of rest and the avoidance of all possible sources of infection are of the greatest importance, so the regulation may have worked most beneficially.

(5) The propitiatory parts of a sacrifice and the water of purification. This regulation probably rested on purely religious grounds.

(6) Persons afflicted with various skin diseases, described as plagues, "leprosy" being the word used in the English translation of the Scriptures.

The word "plague" (*tsara'ath*), as used in the Pentateuch, was given a very wide application. Originally, it simply meant a "stroke," i.e. an affliction of almost any kind which appeared with rapidity. It was formerly supposed by English commentators that all the morbid conditions described in Lev. xiii. were but different manifestations of the one disease of leprosy as known to us. It is very doubtful if any medical man who has given the chapter careful consideration can agree with this diagnosis. At any rate, some of the highest authorities are of a contrary opinion. As the medical author of a work upon tropical diseases observes: "Our early conceptions of the disease, derived for the most part from the Bible or poetical literature, in which the leper is symbolical of all that is loathsome and hopeless, are apt to mislead. As a matter of fact, in its earlier stages leprosy is far from being always, or even generally, a striking disease. Often for years the only visible evidence of its existence may be two or three small patches of pale or pigmented skin about the trunk or limbs—very likely concealed by the clothes, and perhaps disregarded by the patient himself,—whose true

significance and nature can be appreciated only by the expert. It is generally not until the later stages that we see the disfiguring and extensive lesions on which the popular conception is founded."¹

There is not the least doubt that in ancient, as in comparatively modern, times, the term "lepra" was applied indiscriminately to a number of skin diseases, mostly of a loathsome kind. In the German of the Middle Ages, the term was translated *aussasaig*, indicating an outcast, or one deemed for any cause unfit to live with others.² Among the ancient Egyptians, judging by their mummies, true leprosy was an extremely rare disease, and modern observers familiar with the disease state it is not at all common among the Jews.

As the classification of skin diseases on a basis satisfactory to all is, even at the present time, most difficult, and the

¹ Manson on Tropical Diseases (1st ed.), p. 388.

² Three or four centuries ago there was scarcely a town of any size in England without its lazarus-house. Though commonly known as leper hospitals, the inmates often included a preponderance of the aged, sick, and infirm, also sufferers from a number of contagious or incurable diseases. Suspected lepers had to submit themselves to the examination of the parish priest, to an unscientific diagnosis which was more frequently wrong than right. Scrofulous and cancerous persons, all those suffering with *lues venerea*, those who were "full of sores" from any loathsome form of skin eruption, even the mangy and dirty, were all of them very often included under the elastic and convenient name of lepers (Hackwood).

"Unquestionably, a certain number of the unfortunate inmates of the lazarus houses of the Middle Ages were sufferers from syphilis and chronic diseases of the skin; for we know that in the beginning of the sixteenth century, when physicians were better acquainted with such diseases, and especially with the diagnostic signs of syphilis, a revision was made of the lazarus houses of France and Italy, and it was then found that in many of them the majority of the inmates were not suffering from leprosy" (Allbutt's System of Medicine, 1897).

nomenclature is very confusing, it is hardly to be expected that the descriptions of diseases of the skin, as given in Leviticus, will serve to identify unmistakably the disease to which they point. There are two indications, however, of valuable diagnostic significance. To determine whether the cases of so-called leprosy were clean or unclean, they were isolated. This period of isolation lasted only one week, or at the most two, so the diseases were of rapid development. In the East it takes a great deal to excite loathing; and, as some of the diseases, to say the least, were not of a horrible nature, practical experience must have shown that all of them were more or less contagious, and were to be avoided as unclean on that account. Where there is so much uncertainty, prolonged inquiry to ascertain their exact nature is neither interesting nor profitable. It seems to the present writer that the ground is fairly well covered by the following classification:—

(a) Diseases marked by a pimple or vesicle, “a rising,” the *φλύκταινα* of the Greek physicians. These would include the acute exanthematous fevers, such as smallpox and chicken pox; possibly also skin diseases of a pustular nature, as scabies and impetigo.

(b) Diseases marked by “freckled spots,” “bright spots,” “spots somewhat dark,” which appear to have been the scaly eruptions commonly found in eczema and psoriasis. The latter disease (the Greek *λέπρα*, whence have been derived the Latin *lepra* and the English “leprosy”), formerly called *lepra vulgaris*, is one to which even in these days the Jews are particularly prone.

(c) Diseases marked by scabs and crusts, such as impetigo, eczema, syphilis, and because of the scabs produced by

scratching, parasitic affections, such as scabies and phthiriasis.

(d) Diseases characterized by inflammatory swellings which often proceed to suppuration and ulceration: "when the flesh hath in the skin thereof a boil" (Lev. xiii. 18). The "boils and blains" which formed one of the worst of the plagues of the Egyptians at the time of the Exodus (Ex. ix. 9);¹ the "emerods" which afflicted the Philistines in the days of Samuel (1 Sam. v. 6);² the "boil" which nearly proved fatal to Hezekiah (Isa. xxxviii. 21)³ may all be regarded as the buboes or swellings of the bubonic plague. The tumors and ulcerations of tuberculosis, syphilis, and leprosy, often most repulsive, may have fallen within this division. Perhaps also the "botch," or "Oriental sore," of which we read: "The Lord will smite thee in the knees, and in the legs, with a sore boil, whereof thou cannot be healed, from the sole of thy foot unto the crown of thy head" (Deut. xxviii. 35). Unless it can be brought within this class, it is difficult to place the disease described in the words: "If the leprosy break out abroad in the skin, and the leprosy cover all the skin of him that hath the plague from his head even to his feet, as far as appeareth to the priest; then the priest shall look: and, behold, if the leprosy have covered all his flesh, he shall pronounce him clean that hath the plague; it is all turned white: he is clean. But whensoever raw flesh shall appear in him, he is unclean" (Lev. xiii. 12-14). It may have been some infective disease which in the course of time has changed its character.

¹ Merrins, "The Plagues of Egypt," *Bibliotheca Sacra*, October, 1908.

² Merrins, "Biblical Epidemics of Bubonic Plague," *Bibliotheca Sacra*, April, 1904.

³ *Ibid.*

(e) Acute inflammatory diseases of an infective nature, such as erysipelas and anthrax: "when the flesh hath in the skin thereof a burning by fire" (Lev. xiii. 24).

(f) Epiphytic diseases of the hairy parts of the body, especially of the scalp and beard. These are the various ring-worms, favus, sycosis, etc., all of which are extremely common in the East.

Nearly all the diseases included in this classification are of an infective nature, or closely resemble such affections. Therefore the isolation of persons afflicted with them was a proper sanitary measure. On recovery, the patient was required to shave the hair and wash his clothes before he could return to society,—simple but effective regulations.

Reviewing the whole subject, perhaps the close supervision and severe treatment here described, would be intolerable in these days, but the state cannot afford to neglect such matters. Many of the diseases which have been the scourge of densely populated countries are filth-begotten, and the communities which are the most cleanly, and otherwise intelligent in avoiding disease, have a better chance of survival in the struggle for racial existence. The general effect of the elaborate Pentateuchal system of hygiene, public and private, was a scrupulous attention to the avoidance of personal and household defilement, and the development of certain customs and manners which have maintained the health of the Jewish people at a high standard.

It may not be amiss to add that, while observance of the laws of hygiene will do much to preserve the vigor of a nation, in and by itself it will not save the nation if there are other forces at work undermining its vitality. To improve the environment by sanitation does not necessarily lead to the production of a finer race, for the improvement may be

taken advantage of by degenerate stock and their undesirable multiplication be encouraged by it. And under the cover of hygienic regulations, immorality and other evils more harmful to the national life than epidemic disease may continue to flourish. "Woe betide a nation," it has been well said, "that pins its faith in social regeneration to a policy of excellent police and admirable sanitation."

(To be continued.)