

engrossing than scientific romancing, however ingratiating. I do not say that Dr. Pearl's volume will sell better than Mr. Stoddard's; on the contrary, I predict formally that it will not, for Stoddard will drive a brisk trade among the Ku Kluxers and Colonial Dames, as Thomson will engage the suburban Unitarians and the more advanced Episcopalians. What I do say is that Pearl's book, to any man whose acquaintance with biology goes beyond the speculations printed in the Hearst newspapers, will make a far more persuasive appeal—that it will interest him more, and he will get more out of it.

In form it is a series of reprints of scientific papers, many of them published originally in journals of small circulation, and now hard to come by. There is one on the relation of the size of the head to mental capacity; there is another—an extremely interesting one—on the comparative death-rates in man and some of the lower organisms; there is another—even more interesting—upon the constitutional (or hereditary) factor in tuberculosis; there are five on the problem of population, in which the author presents some of the evidence behind the theory he set forth in *THE AMERICAN MERCURY* last November. He is an investigator of quite unusual equipment, for his wide and profound biological knowledge is supported by a natural facility for statistical studies, and in addition he shows a great deal of shrewd common sense, something not too often met with in scientific men. Finally, he has a lucid and attractive style. The result is that his book, though it is addressed to biometrists, lifts itself clearly above the level of the usual scientific rumble-bumble, and may be read with pleasure and profit by any educated reader.

Mr. Huntington's large volume also has a great deal of charm. Its central thesis is that the characters that we observe in races are all due to natural selection—that a race inevitably tends to show a complaisant face to the world it must live in. This thesis is surely not new, but seldom has it

been supported by a greater array of observations, or with more eloquence and plausibility. It is not to be confused, of course, with environmentalism. Mr. Huntington does not argue that the environment greatly modifies the individual—in fact, in his last chapter he specifically denies it—but simply that the environment determines what individuals shall survive, and that in the long run it thus modifies the racial inheritance. His studies of the Chinese and the American Indians are of especial interest, for he has first-hand knowledge of both peoples, and has devoted many years to an investigation of their racial history. At times, as I have said, he is highly speculative; it is difficult to follow a few of his steps in reasoning. But of all the books upon the same general subject that have come out during the past ten years there have been few better worth a careful reading.

Babbitt als Philosoph

THE ECONOMIC WASTE OF SIN, by Lahman Forrest Bower. New York: *The Abingdon Press*.

HERE is a first attempt at a detailed study of the total annual cost of sin in the United States—what it costs the American people, in hard cash, to be happy in this world and red-hot in the next. Why was the inquiry not made long ago? It is hard to imagine a reason. All over the land there are Christian economists, baptized men, eager for good works, and every year they turn out great stacks of professional treatises—tracts on taxes, on the tariff, on food prices, on trades unionism, on the open shop, on the Bolshevik heresies—tracts full of hard work and daring speculation, statistical graphs and moral indignation. In such great centres of Christian enlightenment as the Southern Methodist University, the Ohio Wesleyan, the Baptist Christian and the Coca-Cola of Atlanta there are whole schools of them. And yet, for year after year, they have neglected the one great investigation that lay directly under their noses, beckoning them almost

voluptuously. It remained for a simple business man to make it, to wit, Mr. Lahman Forrest Bower, of Carlisle, Pa. This Mr. Bower is an A.M. of Wesleyan and once taught school, but beyond that he pretends to no learning. All his days and nights, until his retirement in 1918, were spent in manufacturing. He was successively comptroller, secretary and vice-president of the eminent Allis-Chalmers Company, and a member of its board of directors. He was in charge of great plants at Scranton, Philadelphia, Cincinnati, Chicago and Milwaukee. He was thrifty as well as diligent; he acquired a competence. And all the while, busy though he was, he took note of the cost of sin. Everywhere he saw men wasting their money on drink, frittering it away on theatrical shows, and lavishing it upon loose women. He began to make memoranda, to amass statistics, to get into communication with experts. When he retired he devoted himself seriously to the inquiry, and the result is now before us in a neat duodecimo of 272 pages.

I give Mr. Bower's final conclusion at once: it costs the people of the United States \$13,568,588,743 a year to be sinful. I give it—and file a caveat. What ails it is the fact that it covers only half the ground; thousands of varieties of sin are not so much as mentioned. For example, cigarette-smoking. If anything has been well established by moral scientists, certainly it is the fact that cigarette-smoking is an immense and crying evil—that it is responsible for at least half of all the current debauchery among the young, that it destroys the mind and palsies the frame, that it has a part in the etiology of practically every form of crime. Yet Mr. Bower does not mention it. Nor does he mention tobacco-chewing. Nor joy-riding. Nor petting. Nor the use of cosmetics. Nor the bobbing of hair. Nor gambling in any of its protean forms. Nor dancing. I am no statistician as he is, but in the cases of many of these things the figures are not hard to find. The women of America, according to a report lately in circulation,

spend \$73,000,000 a year on rouges, powders, lip-sticks, hair dyes, etc. I here allude only to the white women; the colored women spend \$15,500,000 more on preparations for straightening their hair. Nearly 200,000 Americans cross the Canadian border every year to tank up, and more than 30,000 go to Havana and Nassau. The former, perhaps, spend \$50 apiece; the latter, nearer \$500. Total: certainly not less than \$115,000,000. Even before the war Americans in search of thrills spent \$100,000,000 in Europe every Summer; now they probably spend \$500,000,000; last Summer, indeed, their expenditures were so high that the movement of gold to the United States was halted, and several shipments had to be made eastward. I add these expenses—all wasteful, all for sin—and Mr. Bower's \$13,568,588,743 swells to more than \$14,000,000,000.

What the country's tobacco bill is every year I don't know, but it must be gigantic. So long ago as 1919 we raised a billion and a half pounds of the leaf, worth half a billion dollars, and imported nearly 100,000,000 pounds of cigars and cigarettes. During the same year the cigars, cigarettes and smoking tobacco we produced at home were valued, at wholesale, at \$1,012,933,213. But this is only the beginning of the story. The consumption of all this tobacco probably wasted \$25,000,000 worth of matches, not otherwise necessary. The ashes, falling upon rugs, carpets, table-cloths and clothes, caused perhaps \$50,000,000 damage. (I myself, during 1921, lost a suit of clothes worth \$32, and had to pay for seven table-cloths in restaurants, at \$4 apiece.) Tobacco smoke fills all our houses with dust; getting rid of it costs millions for servant girls, vacuum cleaners, furniture polish, etc. It causes bronchitis, gastritis and asthma, thus enormously increasing the annual bill for medical services, drugs, hospital accommodations, tickets to and from sanatoria, time lost from productive industry, and funeral expenses. Nor is this all. There is sound ground for holding that

cigarette-smoking among the young has dreadful mental effects. Some time ago, for example, I was told by a Christian professor at Yale that if all the students at that university were non-smokers it would be so much easier to teach them that at least 150 of the 452 professors, associate professors and instructors now on the roll might be laid off. By actual experiment it has been found that it takes an average of 18 minutes to teach a cigarette-smoking student one page of James' "Psychology," whereas a non-smoker masters it in 13½ minutes. Moreover, the non-smoker spends less with the New Haven bootleggers, eats simpler and cheaper food, and never gets into trouble with the town fancy women. Altogether, it is estimated that the abolition of the cigarette would save Yale at least \$1,500,000 a year—and Yale is but one of the 37,432 universities in America.

I mention these facts, not to cavil at Mr. Bower, but to praise him for his moderation. He says nothing whatever, for example, about the movies. They cost the American people \$500,000,000 a year, and teach them only patriotism and adultery. Nor does he mention the theatres—schools of every vice known to the Babylonians. Again, he is silent about joy-riding, with its roll of 72,000 killed and 432,500 mutilated every year, not to mention its countless girls betrayed, its colossal waste of gas and rubber, its multiplication of mortgages, its costly doubling of the police force everywhere. Worse, he is absurdly low in the estimates that he actually sets down. For example, he puts the total annual drink bill of the country at \$825,000,000. What could be more ridiculous? New York alone consumes 2,000,000 cases of Scotch a year at an average cost of \$42, not to mention 10,000,000 gallons of synthetic gin. Last Autumn its receipts of grapes from California, as officially reported, ran beyond 13,000 carloads. Made into wine, these grapes sold for at least \$50,000,000 in the speak-easies and stews of the town. Altogether, it probably spends at least \$150,000,000 a year on alcohol. If

so, then Chicago spends \$75,000,000 and Detroit \$50,000,000. Mr. Bower, I fear, is deceived by the optimistic reports of the Prohibition Bureau at Washington—reports about as accurate, roughly speaking, as those of Broadway press-agents. Let him visit Washington himself and see how Prohibition is working in the very citadel of Law Enforcement. "In the old days," to quote a recent authority, "the virtuous complained because the policemen, school-teachers and saloon-keepers of Washington were about equal in numbers. Now the town has one bootlegger for every hundred inhabitants." There are 435 members of the House of Representatives and they receive \$3,362,500 a year in salaries. Many of them, after they have paid their bootlegger bills, have to borrow money to get home.

Nor is Mr. Bower to be taken seriously as a statistician when he puts the total cost of harlotry in the United States at \$530,000,000 a year. This, in point of fact, is scarcely more than the cost of new construction of hotels and apartment houses for ladies of joy in New York alone. But I do not press the point. All I desire to do is argue that his total of \$13,568,588,743 is grossly under the facts. Sin costs the people of the United States, not thirteen billions a year, but at least forty billions. Every day in the year, Sundays included, they blow in more than \$100,000,000 on their vices and follies—say a dollar apiece, counting out valetudinarians, persons in jail and the rev. clergy. That is what it costs them to be wicked. If they turned from their evil ways and saved all that money they'd have so much in ten years that every bank in the land would bulge and burst. They could pay their pastors \$50,000 a year apiece, and yet roll in gold. They could send \$1,000,000,000 a year to the missionaries in Siam, and still be richer per capita than the bootleggers of Asbury Park, N. J. They'd be healthy, at peace, and as sure of heaven as so many archbishops. But on this earth they'd have no place to go.

THE AMERICAN MERCURY AUTHORS

HERBERT ASBURY's *article sufficiently explains who he is. He is at present a member of the staff of the New York Herald-Tribune.*

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