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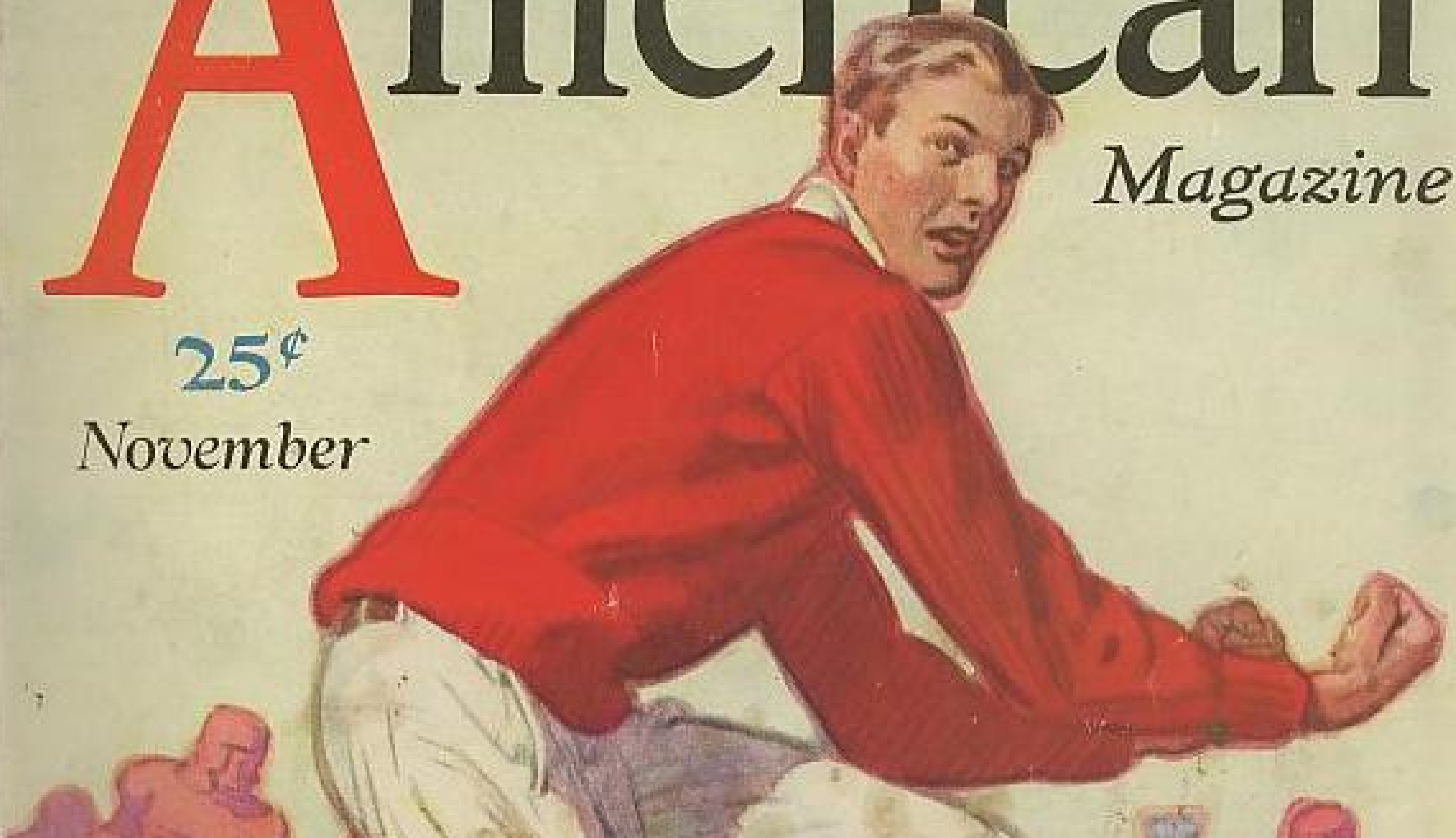

# Coach ZUPPKE tells What Makes Men

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YOU'LL find in this issue a story called "Riches to Rags" which illustrates an apt thought for the approaching Christmas season: that few pleasures in life are more genuinely worth while than close friendship with our fellow men.

Throughout the year, in the swift pace of modern life, we are likely to become forgetful and careless with our friendships. Then Christmas brings us a brighter perspective on the happy associations of the past, and we are imbued with a glowing desire to express anew our good will and devotion to the people who have filled our lives with pleasant memories.

A thoughtful way to remember your friends this Christmas is to send them a year's subscription to THE AMERICAN MAGAZINE. Perhaps no other gift comes nearer to fulfilling your wish for their success and happiness than this generous remembrance which comes twelve times a year.

And it's not an expensive gift—only $2.50 for the year. Moreover, we will send a beautiful Christmas card to announce your gift and convey your Yuletide message.

Turn to page 150 for further particulars, or use the gift order form bound in this issue. We'll do the rest, by making THE AMERICAN MAGAZINE in 1931 more fascinating, more entertaining, more vitally helpful and stimulating than ever before.

## ARTICLES



## FICTION



## SHORT FEATURES



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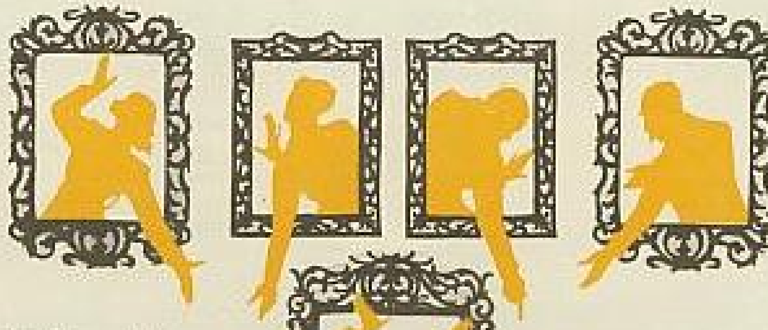
# What you can do about your HEREDITY

## *Putting to rout the bugaboo of inherited bad traits is largely a matter of confidence and discipline*

By WILLIAM S. SADLER, M. D.



A FEW years ago a young man came into my office for medical advice. He was about twenty-three years old, and a more fidgety, shifty-eyed, restless youngster I have never seen. I only needed one look to diagnose his trouble. He was a victim of nerves.

"I don't suppose you can do anything to help me," he said. "I inherit it."

Then the story came out. He had been reading books on heredity and had traced all his troubles to his ancestors. Moreover, among his forbears he had discovered additional afflictions which he expected, with confident pessimism, to inherit before long. He discovered that all his maternal ancestors had been nervous and high-strung, while most of his father's people had been shiftless—some of them on the verge of being ne'er-do-wells and a couple of them drunkards.

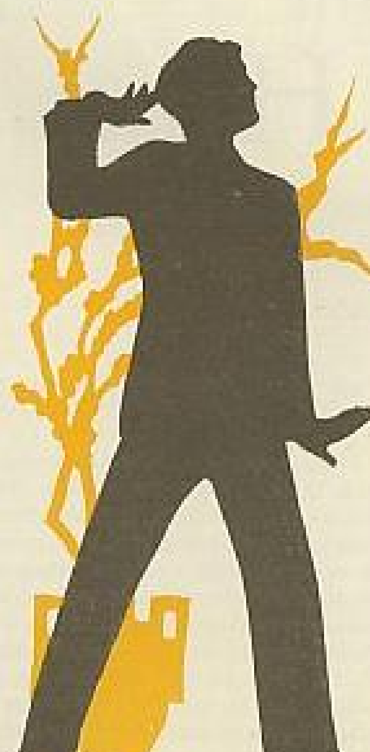
"All right," I said. "That was the trouble with your ancestors. Now, what's the trouble with you?"

"Everything," he said. "I'm getting to be just like all the rest of them. I'm nervous. I can't seem to stick to anything. I quit college before my first year was up. I haven't held any one job six months in my life. I couldn't get along with my fiancée, and we broke up. Everybody says I'm disagreeable, and I guess I am. I can't get along with anybody. Sometimes I think I might as well go jump in the lake and have it over with."

"You've been reading too much about heredity," I told him.

He told me what book he had been reading—a very good one. "Do you mean to say all this heredity stuff is wrong?" he demanded.

"Not at all," I said. "As far as I know, every word in that book is true. The book is perfectly sound. *But there is one chapter missing.* It should be entitled: 'What You Can Do to Overcome a Bad Heredity.'"



*The fidgety young man discovered that his ancestors had been nervous and high-strung*

I would not for a minute belittle the fact of heredity. It is there. I have practiced medicine long enough to know beyond dispute that *blood counts.* I know that the character of our ancestors affects every one of us. I will go so far as to say that it is the chief factor in health and behavior.

But this I know, too, from experience: No man or woman needs to throw up the sponge just because of some hereditary weakness. If you will obey the laws of psychology and physiology—if you will *fight* a bad heredity as you would any other enemy—you can be the master of your own fate, the captain of your own *body*, as well as soul.

ALL this I told the nervous young man, and he turned out to be a perfect example of its truth. He went away from my office with a new realization of his own power. He decided to be fair with himself—to admit to himself that he had some good heredity, as well as some bad, and to make the most of the good, while combating the bad. The laws of heredity always work both ways.

I gave him a long prescription: a long list of things to do and things not to do. And he started fighting. It wasn't easy. He failed at first more often than he succeeded. But gradually his health improved and his ambition developed. Physical exercise gave him new physical courage. His inferiority complex gave way to a new self-confidence. He began to believe that he could do something in the world.

He stuck with a good firm a year—two years—five years—seven years. And they made him general manager. He married a girl who had none of his bad hereditary tendencies, and they have two little children who show every evidence of being normal, healthy human beings.

He hesitated (*Continued on page 114*)

pounding on the frosty car windows. And their car was loaded with baskets, too. Father, half shamefaced, half grinning, at the wheel, on his way to our house. The shouts when they saw Father and Mother Horton. And when they saw our baskets and knew where we had been going—

We were just halfway between the houses. It was double surrender, peace without victory.

We pulled ahead and Father turned their car around, snow flying madly under the wheels. There wasn't another car on the road, so for a bit we drove along, the two cars side by side. Snow blew against the panes, the fragrance of turkey filled the air, the chains rattled, as sweet as any sleighbells in my ears. What was that old poem we had learned in school—"From east and from west, From north and from south, Come the pilgrim and guest—" I could remember only snatches "—round the board, The old broken links of affection restored—When the care-wearied man seeks his mother once more, And the worn matron smiles where the girl smiled before—"

How mad Kathie would be to be called a "worn matron!" The children would eat too much and all be cross tomorrow. Father Horton would look around in the twilight and say, "Well, here we are, Horace, you and I—" Oh, it was all mixed up, sad and funny, and dear, almost unbearably dear. Under the clatter, I found myself whispering, "Thank You—thank You!"

Which was right, of course. Because, after all, it was Thanksgiving Day, at last.

## Heredity

(*Continued from page 33*)

a long time before getting married and having children. "The children would be sure to inherit the same weaknesses I did," he told me.

"Of course they will," I admitted. "But we won't wait until they are twenty-three years old before teaching them the lessons you have learned. We'll start before they are three weeks old. We'll teach them self-control and self-confidence and how to fight their own weaknesses. And don't forget that they will have their mother's good heredity to strengthen them in the fight."

Today I know few men who are more contented with life than that man who was once almost ready to jump in the lake and end it all. There is a special contentment which comes to those who fight against odds, and win.

But suppose one's inheritance is something more than a tendency to nervousness; suppose it is a tendency to some such definite disease as tuberculosis. Let this be perfectly clear: It is only the *tendency* that is inherited, never the disease itself. Anyone who early recognizes this fact and starts to cultivate good health may almost entirely escape or override the tendency.

IT WAS more than fifteen years ago when John Dow came to see me about his lungs. (That is not his name, but it will serve.) He was about twenty-five years old, tall, under-nourished, pale, and anemic. His mother had died of tuberculosis. So had his older sister. His father was not strong.

He himself was coughing, felt weak, and was convinced that he had inherited the disease. I examined him. Yes, he had tuberculosis.

I remember now his look of despair when I told him. "Well," he said, "I suppose there isn't much hope, when it's inherited."

In those days we doctors weren't so sure about tuberculosis as we are now. But, even then, I believed that it was only the tendency, not the disease, which was inherited. I told him so.

He took courage, and began putting up a fight. It lasted three years. Then his case was pronounced arrested—cured to the point where he could again live a normal, workaday life. But John Dow is a wise man. He knows that the tendency is still there. He takes good care of his physical health and stays outdoors as much as possible.

At the same time, he has not allowed himself to be pushed out of the world. He has worked his way to the head of a prosperous business. He presides over a happy home and is the father of two splendid, healthy children.

All over this country you will find men and women like John Dow—men and women who were born with a definite tendency to tuberculosis or other diseases of this sort, but who have learned that if they obey Nature's laws, Nature will help them to weaken, year by year, their unwelcome inheritances.

EARLY in my career as a physician, a young man and a young woman came to consult me. They were first cousins, and they wanted to get married.

Now, when first cousins come from good stock, stock that is free from defective traits and unfavorable hereditary tendencies, their marriage serves to greatly improve the immediate offspring. It is only when they belong to defective families carrying such tendencies as insanity, epilepsy, feeble-mindedness, nervousness, hysteria, or nervous sick headaches that the offspring will be cursed by increased defectiveness. But it happened that the two cousins who came to me had a certain amount of nervous weakness in the family.

I saw that there was no use in opposing their marriage. There seldom is when two young minds are made up. But I cautioned them about children. I advised them to have none.

They disregarded my advice, and a couple of years later they came back to me. They had a little girl baby—one of the most delicately organized and highly nervous creatures I have ever seen. She had convulsions on the slightest provocation, and I knew that if she lived through infancy we should have our hands full overcoming her nervous tendencies.

However, the father and mother were ready to carry out any program I should suggest, and before little Mary was six weeks old we started teaching her self-control. It took some stern bravery on the part of the parents. It was not easy for the mother to stand by and let the baby yell herself blue in the face, but she did it.

"Doctor," she told me, "I would rather see her dead than have her grow up and suffer with nerves as I have."

Little Mary is twelve now, and as robust, healthy, well-nourished, and well-controlled a child as you would be likely to see—unless you take her too much by surprise. Naturally, those nervous tendencies are still there. But she goes to school, plays, does her work about the house, and meets the ordinary disappointments of life quietly and calmly.

Her mother told me the other day, "Mary makes me positively ashamed of myself; she has so much more self-control than I have."

What has been done for Mary can be done for other nervous children.

IF THE training is neglected until later in life, the task is more difficult. About a year ago, I was called in to see a woman of about forty years who was not only a victim of a hereditary nervous tendency, but who had been a spoiled child as well. She had been pampered, petted, and humored all her life.

By the t me I was called in to the case, the woman had convinced herself that she was very sick. She had thought at first that she could not eat certain foods. Then she gave up solid foods, and finally even liquid foods. She went to hospitals and sanitariums, but no matter what food was given her, she was unable to retain it.

I examined her thoroughly and found absolutely nothing wrong except nerves. She was making herself sick by fear. We had to be almost brutal to make her get control of herself. I threatened to use a stomach tube to feed her—and after that she ate quite normally. Then we made her get up and walk, even though it was very painful, for her muscles had wasted away almost to nothing.

Today she can go out and walk a mile. Her weight has increased from seventy-five pounds to one hundred and twenty-five. But it was a real job. She had been raised wrong for forty years.

Yet the very fact that this woman could, after forty years, win a fight against her hereditary tendencies shows how far from hopeless such a fight is, regardless of the odds. It is too bad that both ministers and doctors don't pay more attention to such people and give them a little more individual help.

You may inherit a tendency to lie, to take cold, or to do numerous other things. If you do, you should make a point of cultivating the opposite and corrective traits.

If through heredity you have unfavorable tendencies and are not married, choose a mate, if possible, who shows the opposite traits. This course will insure very largely normal children—at least, in the first generation.

It is still true, not only of the race but of the individual, that "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." True, we have to reap from the sowing of our ancestors; but the biggest harvest is from our own personal sowing.

Make a list of the traits you inherit—good and bad. Then mobilize the good ones. Be sure you are working them to the utmost. And put the bad ones in the background. See if you can't put them out of business. You probably can.

## Four Blocks Apart

(*Continued from page 45*)

that distance in a lifetime. And so I want you to forgive me for thinking I could."

"Forgive you?" Her eyes were shining. "Why, Jimmy, I don't think a girl needs to forgive a man for paying her the highest possible compliment."

"Then—you're going to let me be a friend?"

"Of course I am, Jimmy," she told him.

His blue eyes gleamed, then darkened.

"Aw, what's the use pretending, Julie?" he said. "I'd never be satisfied with that. A man that's crazy about a girl can't stop at friendship. Love isn't something you can turn off at will. When I'm alone, I can figure it all out. I can tell myself that I'm nuts, and that I couldn't get you in a million years, and that you love another guy, and all of that. But when I see you I forget everything, everything in the world except that I love you, and want you, and can't be stopped from trying—well, I guess that ends it, don't it, Julie?"

She braced herself for the answer, the only answer possible for a woman of honor to give. But Trudie Cotton broke in upon the moment.

"Do you know it's long after eleven? Julie, stop vamping Jimmy. He'll lose his job the minute he's landed it."

Julie had never realized before how coarse Trudie Cotton could be.

The after-theater crowd was just beginning ... at the entrance to the restaurant, after having first spoken to a head waiter. That worthy ushered them to a table, on the edge of the dancing space, with an impressive formality that left no doubt as to his opinion of the importance of Jimmy Farrell.

Livingston frankly had eyes for no one but Dolly, and Tim Bond acted in a fashion which made Julie suspect that Trudie's charms were beginning to have their effect upon him. So Julie was the fifth wheel, the unescorted female at the table.

IT WAS a new experience for her, and one not without amusement. But she was delighted that the situation left her with a little time to think about what had just happened to her.

Jimmy had definitely stated that her friendship would not content him. But an engaged girl cannot encourage love-making from another man. It is disloyalty too obvious to be debated. But wasn't it unfair of Ralph to wish her to sever her recently begun friendship with Jimmy?

She became conscious of eyes cast in her direction. She felt, rather than heard, a buzz of voices, and knew that they spoke of her.

Then, amused at her own misgivings, she realized that her picture had been printed in the papers yesterday—and