

# Inborn Ability May Decide Race's Fate

*Eugenics*

Man can escape racial degeneration such as has occurred in past ages by safeguarding the inherited and inborn human quality of coping successfully with his environment, Dr. Clarence G. Campbell of New York City declared in his presidential address before the Eugenics Research Association meeting in New York.

"Perhaps the most instructive racial lesson to be drawn from history is of the cyclic retrogressions of civilization, which have been sufficient often to destroy the results of human progress and check its advance for generations," Dr. Campbell said. "And pre-history as well is full of evidence, or perhaps traces, of such racial retrogressions. The environist quite likely might claim that these retrogressions were due to adverse environmental influences. Granting this to have a certain truth, the fact re-

mains that the retrogression occurs because the human group involved, which has previously coped successfully with its environment, now does so ineffectively. Let us not lose sight of the important fact that the degree of ability to take advantage of environment when it is favorable and to surmount it when it is unfavorable is inborn and inherited.

"A general decrease in this inborn ability simply means racial degeneration. If the decrease is moderate there will be a check to racial progress; if it is marked, the racial group will face the danger of extinction. History does not present a picture of a rapidly changing environment, other than the changes which man makes for himself. But generations are perpetually changing one way or the other in their attitudes

and their reactions to their environment."

The future of mankind depends wholly upon the kind of humanity that is produced, Dr. Campbell said.

He pointed out that man is involved in the same process of evolution and engaged in the same struggle for survival as other species. Evolution and change in the human race is inevitable, and there are two horns to man's destiny.

He will either evolve biologically into a being superior to what he is, with increased inherent physical and mental ability to cope with his environment, an evolution for which he does not yet know the biological formula, or he will degenerate and eventually become extinct," he said. "And it is these questions which are the particular concern of eugenics."

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# Wrong Man Credited for Potato

*Agriculture*

Sir Francis Drake popularly gets credit for having brought the so-called Irish potato to Europe, and he even has a statue in his honor as distributor of the potato, erected by a grateful people. As a matter of fact, it is extremely doubtful whether or not Sir Francis ever brought potatoes to Europe, Prof. Donald Reddick of Cornell University points out in *The Journal of Heredity*. The statue itself, which is the only monument to the introducer of the potato, stands quite by accident in the small city of Offenbourg, Baden, Germany.

This statue is frequently mentioned to support the notion of Drake's having brought the potato to Europe. The inscription on it calls Drake the distributor or disseminator of the potato in Europe, according to Prof. Reddick, and says: "The blessing of the millions of people who cultivate the potato to his immortal glory; this precious gift of God contributes to the stinging penury of the poor a help against misery". Which is a nice sentiment, but the people of Offenbourg had little to do with it and

potatoes are not grown in the vicinity to any extent, Prof. Reddick found.

The statue was made by an Alsatian sculptor, Andreas Friedrich, who first tried unsuccessfully to sell it to his native city of Strasbourg. Finally he disposed of it to Offenbourg at a very favorable price. In return for the statue the sculptor was made a citizen of the city and was

given an honorarium. The only condition he imposed was that the statue be placed with its back to Strasbourg, which was apparently done.

"The connection of Sir Francis Drake with the potato remains obscure", states Prof. Reddick. Potatoes first were found growing in Peru. Spanish ships which Drake captured may have had potatoes as well as precious metals in their cargoes, but Professor Reddick considers this improbable. The Spaniards were not accustomed to the potato and probably did not bring it with them in any quantity. In fact, potatoes did not become generally popular in Europe until the time of the French Revolution, when they were practically forced on the people by a philanthropist, Parmentier, for whom potato soup is named.

The contemporary accounts of Drake's voyages do not mention the potato, even when written by men who were intimate friends, likely to know all the details. However, the Drake legend persists.

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