Essays in war-time / by Havelock Ellis.

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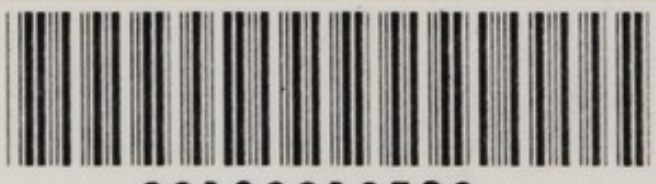

ESSAYS IN WAR-TIME

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ESSAYS IN WAR-TIME

BY

HAVELOCK ELLIS

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I

INTRODUCTION

FROM the point of view of literature, the Great War of to-day has brought us into a new and closer sympathy with the England of the past. Dr. Woods and Mr. Baltzly in their recent careful study of European Warfare, *Is War Diminishing?* come to the conclusion that England during the period of her great activity in the world has been "fighting about half the time." We had begun to look on war as belonging to the past and insensibly fallen into the view of Buckle that in England "a love of war is, as a national taste, utterly extinct." Now we have awakened to realise that we belong to a people who have been "fighting about half the time."

Thus it is, for instance, that we witness a revival of interest in Wordsworth, not that Wordsworth, the high-priest of Nature among the solitary Lakes, whom we have never forsaken, but the Wordsworth who sang exultantly of Carnage as God's Daughter. To-day we turn to the war-like Wordsworth, the stern patriot

hurling defiance at the enemies who threatened our island fortress, as the authentic voice of England.

But this new sense of community with the past comes to us again and again on every hand when to-day we look back to the records of the past. I chance to take down the *Epistles* of Erasmus, and turn to the letters which the great Humanist of Rotterdam wrote from Cambridge and London four hundred years ago when young Henry VIII had just suddenly (in 1514) plunged into war. One reads them to-day with vivid interest, for here in the supple and sensitive brain of the old scholar we see mirrored precisely the same thoughts and the same problems which exercise the more scholarly brains of to-day. Erasmus, as his Pan-German friends liked to remind him, was a sort of German, but he was, nevertheless, what we should now call a Pacifist. He can see nothing good in war and he eloquently sets forth what he regards as its evils. It is interesting to observe, how, even in its small details as well as in its great calamities, war brought precisely the same experiences four centuries ago as to-day. Prices are rising every day, Erasmus declares, taxation has become so heavy that no one can afford to be liberal, imports are hampered and wine is scarce, it is difficult even to get one's foreign letters. In fact the preparations of war are rapidly changing " the genius of the Island." Thereupon Erasmus launches into more general considerations on war. Even animals, he points out, do not fight, save rarely, and then with only those of other species, and, moreover, not, like us, " with machines upon which we expend the

ingenuity of devils." In every war also it is the non-combatants who suffer most, the people build cities and the folly of their rulers destroys them, the most righteous, the most victorious war brings more evil than good, and even when a real issue is in dispute, it could better have been settled by arbitration. The moral contagion of a war, moreover, lasts long after the war is over, and Erasmus proceeds to express himself freely on the crimes of fighters and fighting.

Erasmus was a cosmopolitan scholar who habitually dwelt in the world of the spirit and in no wise expressed the general feelings either of his own time or ours. It is interesting to turn to a very ordinary, it may be typical, Englishman who lived a century later, again in a period of war and also of quite ordinary and but moderately glorious war. John Rous, a Cambridge graduate of old Suffolk family, was in 1623 appointed incumbent of Santon Downham, then called a town, though now it has dwindled away almost to nothing. Here, or rather at Weeting or at Brandon where he lived, Rous began two years later, on the accession of Charles I, a private diary which was printed by the Camden Society sixty years ago, and has probably remained unread ever since, unless, as in the present case, by some person of anti-quarian tastes interested in this remote corner of East Anglia. But to-day one detects a new streak of interest in this ancient series of miscellaneous entries where we find that war brought to the front the very same problems which confront us to-day.

Santon Downham lies in a remote and desolate and

salubrious region, not without its attractions to-day, nor, for all its isolation, devoid of ancient and modern associations. For here in Weeting parish we have the great prehistoric centre of the flint implement industry, still lingering on at Brandon after untold ages, a shrine of the archæologist. And here also, or at all events near by, at Lackenheath, doubtless a shrine also for all men in khaki, the villager proudly points out the unpretentious little house which is the ancestral home of the Kitcheners, who lie in orderly rank in the churchyard beside the old church notable for its rarely quaint mediæval carvings.

Rous was an ordinary respectable type of country parson, a solid Englishman, cautious and temperate in his opinions, even in the privacy of his diary, something of a country gentleman as well as a scholar, and interested in everything that went on, in the season's crops, in the rising price of produce, in the execution of a youth for burglary or the burning of a woman for murdering her husband. He frequently refers to the outbreak of plague in various parts of the country, and notes, for instance, that "Cambridge is wondrously reformed since the plague there; scholars frequent not the streets and taverns as before; but," he adds later on better information, "do worse." And at the same time he is full of interest in the small incidents of Nature around him, and notes, for instance, how a crow had built a nest and laid an egg in the poke of the topsail of the windmill.

But Rous's Diary is not concerned only with matters of local interest. All the rumours of the world reached the Vicar of Downham and were by him faithfully set

down from day to day. Europe was seething with war; these were the days of that famous Thirty Years' War of which we have so often heard of late, and from time to time England was joining in the general disturbance, whether in France, Spain, or the Netherlands. As usual the English attack was mostly from the basis of the Fleet, and never before, Rous notes, had England possessed so great and powerful a fleet. Soon after the Diary begins the English Expedition to Rochelle took place, and a version of its history is here embodied. Rous was kept in touch with the outside world not only by the proclamations constantly set up at Thetford on the corner post of the Bell Inn—still the centre of that ancient town—but by as numerous and as varied a crop of reports as we find floating among us to-day, often indeed of very similar character. The vicar sets them down, not committing himself to belief but with a patient confidence that "time may tell us what we may safely think." In the meanwhile measures with which we are familiar to-day were actively in progress: recruits or "voluntaries" were being "gathered up by the drum," many soldiers, mostly Irish, were billeted, sometimes not without friction, all over East Anglia, the coasts were being fortified, the price of corn was rising, and even the problem of international exchange is discussed with precise data by Rous.

On one occasion, in 1627, Rous reports a discussion concerning the Rochelle Expedition which exactly counterparts our experience to-day. He was at Brandon with two gentlemen named Paine and Howlet, when the former

began to criticise the management of the expedition, disputing the possibility of its success and then "fell in general to speak distrustfully of the voyage, and then of our war with France, which he would make our King the cause of"; and so went on to topics of old popular discontent, of the great cost, the hazard to ships, etc. Rous, like a good patriot, thought it "foul for any man to lay the blame upon our own King and State. I told them I would always speak the best of what our King and State did, and think the best too, till I had good grounds." And then in his Diary he comments that he saw hereby, what he had often seen before, that men be disposed to speak the worst of State business, as though it were always being mismanaged, and so nourish a discontent which is itself a worse mischief and can only give joy to false hearts. That is a reflection which comes home to us to-day when we find the descendants of Mr. Paine following so vigorously the example which the parson of Downham reprobated.

That little incident at Brandon, however, and indeed the whole picture of the ordinary English life of his time which Rous sets forth, suggest a wider reflection. We realise what has always been the English temper. It is the temper of a vigorous, independent, opinionated, free-spoken yet sometimes suspicious people among whom every individual feels in himself the impulse to rule. It is also the temper of a people always prepared in the face of danger to subordinate these native impulses. The one tendency and the other opposing tendency are alike based on the history and traditions of the race.

Fifteen centuries ago, Sidonius Apollinaris gazed inquisitively at the Saxon barbarians, most ferocious of all foes, who came to Aquitania, with faces daubed with blue paint and hair pushed back over their foreheads; shy and awkward among the courtiers, free and turbulent when back again in their ships, they were all teaching and learning at once, and counted even shipwreck as good training. One would think, the Bishop remarks, that each oarsman was himself the arch-pirate.[1] These were the men who so largely went to the making of the "Anglo-Saxon," and Sidonius might doubtless still utter the same comment could he observe their descendants in England to-day. Every Englishman believes in his heart, however modestly he may conceal the conviction, that he could himself organise as large an army as Kitchener and organise it better. But there is not only the instinct to order and to teach but also to learn and to obey. For every Englishman is the descendant of sailors, and even this island of Britain seemed to men of old like a great ship anchored in the sea. Nothing can overcome the impulse of the sailor to stand by his post at the moment of danger, and to play his sailorly part, whatever his individual convictions may be concerning the expedition to Rochelle or the expedition to the Dardanelles, or even concerning his right to play no part at all. That has ever been the Englishman's impulse in the hour of peril of his island Ship of State, as to-day we see illustrated in an almost miraculous degree. It is the saving grace of an obstinately independent and indisciplinable people.

[1] O. Dalton, *Letters of Sidonius*, Vol. II., p. 149.

Yet let us not forget that this same English temper is shown not only in warfare, not only in adventure in the physical world, but also in the greater, and—may we not say ?—equally arduous tasks of peace. For to build up is even yet more difficult than to pull down, to create new life a still more difficult and complex task than to destroy it. Our English habits of restless adventure, of latent revolt subdued to the ends of law and order, of uncontrollable freedom and independence, are even more fruitful here, in the organisation of the progressive tasks of life, than they are in the organisation of the tasks of war.

That is the spirit in which these essays have been written by an Englishman of English stock in the narrowest sense, whose national and family instincts of independence and warfare have been transmuted into a preoccupation with the more constructive tasks of life. It is a spirit which may give to these little essays--mostly produced while war was in progress—a certain unity which was not designed when I wrote them.

II

EVOLUTION AND WAR

THE Great War of to-day has rendered acute the question of the place of warfare in Nature and the effect of war on the human race. These have long been debated problems concerning which there is no complete agreement. But until we make up our minds on these fundamental questions we can gain no solid ground from which to face serenely, or at all events firmly, the crisis through which mankind is now passing.

It has been widely held that war has played an essential part in the evolutionary struggle for survival among our animal ancestors, that war has been a factor of the first importance in the social development of primitive human races, and that war always will be an essential method of preserving the human virtues even in the highest civilisation. It must be observed that these are three separate and quite distinct propositions. It is possible to accept one, or even two, of them without affirming them all. If we wish to clear our minds of confusion on this matter,

so vital to our civilisation, we must face each of the questions by itself.

It has sometimes been maintained—never more energetically than to-day, especially among the nations which most eagerly entered the present conflict—that war is a biological necessity. War, we are told, is a manifestation of the "Struggle for Life"; it is the inevitable application to mankind of the Darwinian "law" of natural selection. There are, however, two capital and final objections to this view. On the one hand it is not supported by anything that Darwin himself said, and on the other hand it is denied as a fact by those authorities on natural history who speak with most knowledge. That Darwin regarded war as an insignificant or even non-existent part of natural selection must be clear to all who have read his books. He was careful to state that he used the term "struggle for existence" in a "metaphorical sense," and the dominant factors in the struggle for existence, as Darwin understood it, were natural suitability to the organic and inorganic environment and the capacity for adaptation to circumstances; one species flourishes while a less efficient species living alongside it languishes, yet they may never come in actual contact and there is nothing in the least approaching human warfare. The conditions much more resemble what, among ourselves, we may see in business, where the better equipped species, that is to say, the big capitalist, flourishes, while the less well equipped species, the small capitalist, succumbs. Mr. Chalmers Mitchell, Secretary of the London Zoological Society and familiar

with the habits of animals, has lately emphasised the contention of Darwin and shown that even the most widely current notions of the extermination of one species by another have no foundation in fact.[1] Thus the thylacine or Tasmanian wolf, the fiercest of the marsupials, has been entirely driven out of Australia and its place taken by a later and higher animal, of the dog family, the dingo. But there is not the slightest reason to believe that the dingo ever made war on the thylacine. If there was any struggle at all it was a common struggle against the environment, in which the dingo, by superior intelligence in finding food and rearing young, and by greater resisting power to climate and disease, was able to succeed where the thylacine failed. Again, the supposed war of extermination waged in Europe by the brown rat against the black rat is (as Chalmers Mitchell points out) pure fiction. In England, where this war is said to have been ferociously waged, both rats exist and flourish, and under conditions which do not usually even bring them into competition with each other. The black rat (*Mus rattus*) is smaller than the other, but more active and a better climber; he is the rat of the barn and the granary. The brown or Norway rat (*Mus decumanus*) is larger but less active, a burrower rather than a climber, and though both rats are omnivorous the brown rat is more especially a scavenger; he is the rat of sewers and drains. The black rat came to Northern Europe first—both of them probably being Asiatic animals—and has no doubt been to some extent replaced by the brown rat, who has been

[1] P. Chalmers Mitchell, *Evolution and the War*, 1915.

specially favoured by the modern extension of drains and sewers, which exactly suit his peculiar tastes. But each flourishes in his own environment; neither of them is adapted to the other's environment; there is no war between them, nor any occasion for war, for they do not really come into competition with each other. The cockroaches, or "blackbeetles," furnish another example. These pests are comparatively modern and their great migrations in recent times are largely due to the activity of human commerce. There are three main species of cockroach—the Oriental, the American, and the German (or Croton bug)—and they flourish near together in many countries, though not with equal success, for while in England the Oriental is most prosperous, in America the German cockroach is most abundant. They are seldom found in actual association, each is best adapted to a particular environment; there is no reason to suppose that they fight. It is so throughout Nature. Animals may utilise other species as food; but that is true of even the most peaceable and civilised human races. The struggle for existence means that one species is more favoured by circumstances than another species; there is not the remotest resemblance anywhere to human warfare.

We may pass on to the second claim for war: that it is an essential factor in the social development of primitive human races. War has no part, though competition has a very large part, in what we call "Nature." But when we come to primitive man the conditions are somewhat changed; men, unlike the lower animals, are able to

form large communities—" tribes," as we call them—with common interests, and two primitive tribes can come into a competition which is acute to the point of warfare because being of the same, and not of two different, species, the conditions of life which they both demand are identical; they are impelled to fight for the possession of these conditions as animals of different species are not impelled to fight. We are often told that animals are more " moral " than human beings, and it is largely to the fact that, except under the immediate stress of hunger, they are better able to live in peace with each other, that the greater morality of animals is due. Yet, we have to recognise, this mischievous tendency to warfare, so often (though by no means always, and in the earliest stages probably never) found in primitive man, was bound up with his superior and progressive qualities. His intelligence, his quickness of sense, his muscular skill, his courage and endurance, his aptitude for discipline and for organisation—all of them qualities on which civilisation is based—were fostered by warfare. With warfare in primitive life was closely associated the still more fundamental art, older than humanity, of dancing. The dance was the training school for all the activities which man developed in a supreme degree—for love, for religion, for art, for organised labour—and in primitive days dancing was the chief military school, a perpetual exercise in mimic warfare during times of peace, and in times of war the most powerful stimulus to military prowess by the excitement it aroused. Not only was war a formative and developmental social force of the

first importance among early men, but it was comparatively free from the disadvantages which warfare later on developed ; the hardness of their life and the obtuseness of their sensibility reduced to a minimum the bad results of wounds and shocks, while their warfare, being free from the awful devices due to the devilry of modern man, was comparatively innocuous ; even if very destructive, its destruction was necessarily limited by the fact that those accumulated treasures of the past which largely make civilisation had not come into existence. We may admire the beautiful humanity, the finely developed social organisation, and the skill in the arts attained by such people as the Eskimo tribes, which know nothing of war, but we must also recognise that warfare among primitive peoples has often been a progressive and developmental force of the first importance, creating virtues apt for use in quite other than military spheres.[1]

The case is altered when we turn from savagery to civilisation. The new and more complex social order while, on the one hand, it presents substitutes for war in so far as war is a source of virtues, on the other hand, renders war a much more dangerous performance both to the individual and to the community, becoming indeed progressively more dangerous to both, until it reaches such a climax of world-wide injury as we witness to-day. The claim made in primitive societies that warfare is necessary to the maintenance of virility and courage, a claim so fully admitted that only the youth furnished with trophies

[1] On the advantages of war in primitive society, see W. MacDougall, *Social Psychology*, Ch. XI.

of heads or scalps can hope to become an accepted lover, is out of date in civilisation. For under civilised conditions there are hundreds of avocations which furnish exactly the same conditions as warfare for the cultivation of all the manly virtues of enterprise and courage and endurance, physical or moral. Not only are these new avocations equally potent for the cultivation of virility, but far more useful for the social ends of civilisation. For these ends warfare is altogether less adapted than it is for the social ends of savagery. It is much less congenial to the tastes and aptitudes of the individual, while at the same time it is incomparably more injurious to Society. In savagery little is risked by war, for the precious heirlooms of humanity have not yet been created, and war can destroy nothing which cannot easily be remade by the people who first made it. But civilisation possesses—and in that possession, indeed, civilisation largely consists—the precious traditions of past ages that can never live again, embodied in part in exquisite productions of varied beauty which are a continual joy and inspiration to mankind, and in part in slowly evolved habits and laws of social amenity, and reasonable freedom, and mutual independence, which under civilised conditions war, whether between nations or between classes, tends to destroy, and in so destroying to inflict a permanent loss in the material heirlooms of Mankind and a serious injury to the spiritual traditions of civilisation.

It is possible to go further and to declare that warfare is in contradiction with the whole of the influences which build up and organise civilisation. A tribe is a small but

very closely knit unity, so closely knit that the individual is entirely subordinated to the whole and has little independence of action or even of thought. The tendency of civilisation is to create webs of social organisation which grow ever larger, but at the same time looser, so that the individual gains a continually growing freedom and independence. The tribe becomes merged in the nation, and beyond even this great unit, bonds of international relationship are progressively formed. War, which at first favoured this movement, becomes an ever greater impediment to its ultimate progress. This is recognised at the threshold of civilisation, and the large community, or nation, abolishes warfare between the units of which it is composed by the device of establishing law courts to dispense impartial justice. As soon as civilised society realised that it was necessary to forbid two persons to settle their disputes by individual fighting, or by initiating blood-feuds, or by arming friends and followers, setting up courts of justice for the peaceable settlement of disputes, the death-blow of all war was struck. For all the arguments that proved strong enough to condemn war between two individuals are infinitely stronger to condemn war between the populations of two-thirds of the earth. But, while it was a comparatively easy task for a State to abolish war and impose peace within its own boundaries—and nearly all over Europe the process was begun and for the most part ended centuries ago—it is a vastly more difficult task to abolish war and impose peace between powerful States. Yet at the point at which we stand to-day civilisation can

make no further progress until this is done. Solitary thinkers, like the Abbé de Saint-Pierre, and even great practical statesmen like Sully and Penn, have from time to time realised this fact during the past four centuries, and attempted to convert it into actuality. But it cannot be done until the great democracies are won over to a conviction of its inevitable necessity. We need an international organisation of law courts which shall dispense justice as between nation and nation in the same way as the existing law courts of all civilised countries now dispense justice as between man and man; and we further need, behind this international organisation of justice, an international organisation of police strong enough to carry out the decisions of these courts, not to exercise tyranny but to ensure to every nation, even the smallest, that measure of reasonable freedom and security to go about its own business which every civilised nation now, in some small degree at all events, already ensures to the humblest of its individual citizens. The task may take centuries to complete, but there is no more urgent task before mankind to-day.[1]

These considerations are very elementary, and a year or two ago they might have seemed to many—though not to all of us—merely academic, chiefly suitable to put before schoolchildren. But now they have ceased to be merely academic; they have indeed acquired a vital actuality almost agonisingly intense. For one realises

[1] It is doubtless a task beset by difficulties, some of which are set forth, in no hostile spirit, by Lord Cromer, "Thinking Internationally," *Nineteenth Century*, July, 1916; but the statement of most of these difficulties is enough to suggest the solution.

to-day that the considerations here set forth, widely accepted as they are, yet are not generally accepted by the rulers and leaders of the greatest and foremost nations of the world. Thus Germany, in its present Prussianised state, through the mouths as well as through the actions of those rulers and leaders, denies most of the conclusions here set forth. In Germany it is a commonplace to declare that war is the law of Nature, that the "struggle for existence" means the arbitration of warfare, that it is by war that all evolution proceeds, that not only in savagery but in the highest civilisation the same rule holds good, that human war is the source of all virtues, the divinely inspired method of regenerating and purifying mankind, and every war may properly be regarded as a holy war. These beliefs have been implicit in the Prussian spirit ever since the Goths and Vandals issued from the forests of the Vistula in the dawn of European history. But they have now become a sort of religious dogma, preached from pulpits, taught in Universities, acted out by statesmen. From this Prussian point of view, whether right or wrong, civilisation, as it has hitherto been understood in the world, is of little consequence compared to German militaristic Kultur. Therefore the German quite logically regards the Russians as barbarians, and the French as decadents, and the English as contemptibly negligible, although the Russians, however yet dominated by a military bureaucracy (moulded by Teutonic influences, as some maliciously point out), are the most humane people of Europe, and the French the natural leaders of civilisation as commonly understood, and the

English, however much they may rely on amateurish methods of organisation by emergency, have scattered the seeds of progress over a large part of the earth's surface. It is equally logical that the Germans should feel peculiar admiration and sympathy for the Turks, and find in Turkey, a State founded on military ideals, their own ally in the present war. That war, from our present point of view, is a war of States which use military methods for special ends (often indeed ends that have been thoroughly evil) against a State which still cherishes the primitive ideal of warfare as an end in itself. And while such a State must enjoy immense advantages in the struggle, it is difficult, when we survey the whole course of human development, to believe that there can be any doubt about the final issue.

For one who writes as an Englishman, it may be necessary to point out clearly that that final issue by no means involves the destruction, or even the subjugation, of Germany. It is indeed an almost pathetic fact that Germany, which idealises warfare, stands to gain more than any country by an assured rule of international peace which would save her from warfare. Placed in a position which renders militaristic organisation indispensable, the Germans are more highly endowed than almost any people with the high qualities of intelligence, of receptiveness, of adaptability, of thoroughness, of capacity for organisation, which ensure success in the arts and sciences of peace, in the whole work of civilisation. This is amply demonstrated by the immense progress and the manifold achievements of Germany

during forty years of peace, which have enabled her to establish a prosperity and a good name in the world which are now both in peril. Germany must be built up again, and the interests of civilisation itself, which Germany has trampled under foot, demand that Germany shall be built up again, under conditions, let us hope, which will render her old ideals useless and out of date. We shall then be able to assert as the mere truisms they are, and not as a defiance flung in the face of one of the world's greatest nations, the elementary propositions I have here set forth. War is not a permanent factor of national evolution, but for the most part has no place in Nature at all; it has played a part in the early development of primitive human society, but, as savagery passes into civilisation, its beneficial effects are lost, and, on the highest stages of human progress, mankind once more tends to be enfolded, this time consciously and deliberately, in the general harmony of Nature.

III

WAR AND EUGENICS

In dealing with war it is not enough to discuss the place of warfare in Nature or its effects on primitive peoples. Even if we decide that the general tendency of civilisation is unfavourable to war we have scarcely settled matters. It is necessary to push the question further home. Primitive warfare among savages, when it fails to kill, may be a stimulating and invigorating exercise, simply a more dangerous form of dancing. But civilised warfare is a different kind of thing, to a very limited extent depending on, or encouraging, the prowess of the individual fighting men, and to be judged by other standards. *What precisely is the measurable effect of war, if any, on the civilised human breed?* If we want to know what to do about war in the future, that is the question we have to answer.

"Wars are not paid for in war-time," said Benjamin Franklin, "the bill comes later." Franklin, who was a pioneer in so many fields, seems to have been a pioneer in eugenics also by arguing that a standing army diminishes

the size and breed of the human species. He had, however, no definite facts wherewith to demonstrate conclusively that proposition. Even to-day, it cannot be said that there is complete agreement among biologists as to the effect of war on the race. Thus we find a distinguished American zoologist, Chancellor Starr Jordan, constantly proclaiming that the effect of war in reversing selection is a great overshadowing truth of history; warlike nations, he declares, become effeminate, while peaceful nations generate a fiercely militant spirit.[1] Another distinguished American scientist, Professor Ripley, in his great work, *The Races of Europe*, likewise concludes that "standing armies tend to overload succeeding generations with inferior types of men." A cautious English biologist, Professor J. Arthur Thomson, is equally decided in this opinion, and in his recent Galton Lecture[2] sets forth the view that the influence of war on the race, both directly and indirectly, is injurious; he admits that there may be beneficial as well as deteriorative influences, but the former merely affect the moral atmosphere, not the hereditary germ plasm; biologically, war means wastage and a reversal of rational selection, since it prunes off a disproportionally large number of those whom the race can least afford to lose. On the

[1] D. S. Jordan, *War and the Breed*, 1915; also articles on "War and Manhood" in the *Eugenics Review*, July, 1910, and on "The Eugenics of War" in the same Review for Oct., 1913.

[2] J. Arthur Thomson, "Eugenics and War," *Eugenics Review*, April, 1915. Major Leonard Darwin (*Journal Royal Statistical Society*, March, 1916) sets forth a similar view.

other hand, another biologist, Dr. Chalmers Mitchell, equally opposed to war, cannot feel certain that the total effect of even a great modern war is to deteriorate the stock, while in Germany, as we know, it is the generally current opinion, scientific and unscientific, equally among philosophers, militarists, and journalists, that not only is war "a biological necessity," but that it is peace, and not war, which effeminates and degenerates a nation. In Germany, indeed, this doctrine is so generally accepted that it is not regarded as a scientific thesis to be proved, but as a religious dogma to be preached. It is evident that we cannot decide this question, so vital to human progress, except on a foundation of cold and hard fact.

Whatever may be the result of war on the quality of the breed, there can be little doubt of its temporary effect on the quantity. The reaction after war may create a stimulating influence on the birth-rate, leading to a more or less satisfactory recovery, but it seems clear that the drafting away of a large proportion of the manhood of a nation necessarily diminishes births. At the present time English Schools are sending out an unusually small number of pupils into life, and this is directly due to the South-African War fifteen years ago. Still more obvious is the direct effect of war, apart from diminishing the number of births, in actually pouring out the blood of the young manhood of the race. In the very earliest stage of primitive humanity it seems probable that man was as untouched by warfare as his animal ancestors, and it is satisfactory to think that war had no part in the

first birth of man into the world. Even the long Early Stone Age has left no distinguishable sign of the existence of warfare.[1] It was not until the transition to the Late Stone Age, the age of polished flint implements, that we discern evidences of the homicidal attacks of man on man. Even then we are concerned more with quarrels than with battles, for one of the earliest cases of wounding known in human records, is that of a pregnant young woman found in the Cro-magnon Cave whose skull had been cut open by a flint several weeks before death, an indication that she had been cared for and nursed. But, again at the beginning of the New Stone Age, in the caverns of the Beaumes-Chaudes people, who still used implements of the Old Stone type, we find skulls in which are weapons of the New Stone type. Evidently these people had come in contact with a more "civilised" race which had discovered war. Yet the old pacific race still lingered on, as in the Belgian people of the Furfooz type who occupied themselves mainly with hunting and fishing, and have their modern representatives, if not their actual descendants, in the peaceful Lapps and Eskimo.[2]

It was thus at a late stage of human history, though still so primitive as to be prehistoric, that organised

[1] It is true that in the Gourdon cavern, in the Pyrenees, representing a very late and highly developed stage of Magdalenian culture, there are indications that human brains were eaten (Zaborowski, *L'Homme Préhistorique*, p. 86). It is surmised that they were the brains of enemies killed in battle, but this remains a surmise.

[2] Zaborowski, *L'Homme Préhistorique*, pp. 121, 139; Lapouge, *Les Sélections Sociales*, p. 209.

warfare developed. At the dawn of history war abounded. The earliest literature of the Aryans—whether Greeks, Germans, or Hindus—is nothing but a record of systematic massacres, and the early history of the Hebrews, leaders in the world's religion and morality, is complacently bloodthirsty. Lapouge considers that in modern times, though wars are fewer in number, the total number of victims is still about the same, so that the stream of bloodshed throughout the ages remains unaffected. He attempted to estimate the victims of war for each civilised country during half a century, and found that the total amounted to nine and a half millions, while, by including the Napoleonic and other wars of the beginning of the nineteenth century, he considered that that total would be doubled. Put in another form, Lapouge says, the wars of a century spill 120,000,000 gallons of blood, enough to fill three million forty-gallon casks, or to create a perpetual fountain sending up a jet of 150 gallons per hour, a fountain which has been flowing unceasingly ever since the dawn of history. It is to be noted, also, that those slain on the battlefield by no means represent the total victims of a war, but only about half of them ; more than half of those who, from one cause or another, perished in the Franco-Prussian war, it is said, were not belligerents. Lapouge wrote some ten years ago and considered that the victims of war, though remaining about absolutely the same in number through the ages, were becoming relatively fewer. The Great War of to-day would perhaps have disturbed his calculations, unless

we may assume that it will be followed by a tremendous reaction against war. For when the war had lasted only nine months, it was estimated that if it should continue at the present rate (and as a matter of fact its scale has been much enlarged) for another twelve months, the total loss to Europe in lives destroyed or maimed would be ten millions, about equal to five-sixths of the whole young manhood of the German Empire, and nearly the same number of victims as Lapouge reckoned as the normal war toll of a whole half-century of European "civilisation." It is scarcely necessary to add that all these bald estimates of the number of direct victims to war give no clue to the moral and material damage—apart from all question of injury to the race—done by the sudden or slow destruction of so large a proportion of the young manhood of the world, the ever widening circles of anguish and misery and destitution which every fatal bullet imposes on humanity, for it is probable that for every ten million soldiers who fall on the field, fifty million other persons at home are plunged into grief or poverty, or some form of life-diminishing trouble.

The foregoing considerations have not, however, brought us strictly within the field of eugenics. They indicate the great extent to which war affects the human breed, but they do not show that war affects the quality of the breed, and until that is shown the eugenist remains undisturbed.

There are various circumstances which, at the outset, and even in the absence of experimental verification,

make it difficult, or impossible, that even the bare mortality of war (for the eugenical bearings of war are not confined to its mortality) should leave the eugenist indifferent. For war never hits men at random. It only hits a carefully selected percentage of "fit" men. It tends, in other words, to strike out, temporarily, or in a fatal event, permanently, from the class of fathers, precisely that percentage of the population which the eugenist wishes to see in that class. This is equally the case in countries with some form of compulsory service, and in countries which rely on a voluntary military system. For, however an army is recruited, it is only those men reaching a fairly high standard of fitness who are accepted, and these, even in times of peace, are hampered in the task of carrying on the race, which the less fit and the unfit are free to do at their own good pleasure. Nearly all the ways in which war and armies disturb the normal course of affairs seem likely to interfere with eugenical breeding, and none to favour it. Thus at one time, in the Napoleonic wars, the French age of conscription fell to eighteen, while marriage was a cause of exemption, with the result of a vast increase of hasty and ill-advised marriages among boys, certainly injurious to the race. Armies, again, are highly favourable to the spread of racial poisons, especially of syphilis, the most dangerous of all, and this cannot fail to be, in a marked manner, dysgenic rather than eugenic.

The Napoleonic wars furnished the first opportunity of testing the truth of Franklin's assertion concerning

the disastrous effect of armies on the race, by the collection of actual and precise data. But the significance of the data proved unexpectedly difficult to unravel, and most writers on the subject have been largely occupied in correcting the mistakes of their predecessors. Villermé in 1829 remarked that the long series of French wars up to 1815 must probably reduce the height of the French people, though he was unable to prove that this was so. Dufau in 1840 was in a better position to judge, and he pointed out in his *Traité de Statistique* that, comparing 1816 and 1835, the number of young men exempted from the army had doubled in the interval, even though the regulation height had been lowered. This result, however, he held, was not so alarming as it might appear, and probably only temporary, for it was seemingly due to the fact that, in 1806 and the following years, the male population was called to arms in masses, even youths being accepted, so that a vast number of precocious marriages of often defective men took place. The result would only be terrible, Dufau believed, if prolonged; his results, however, were not altogether reliable, for he failed to note the proportion of men exempted to those examined. The question was investigated more thoroughly by Tschuriloff in 1876.[1] He came to the conclusion that the Napoleonic wars had no great influence on stature, since the regulation height was lowered in 1805, and abolished altogether for healthy men in 1811, and any defect of height in the next generation is speedily

[1] *Revue d'Anthropologie*, 1876, pp. 608 and 655.

repaired. Tschuriloff agreed, however, that, though the influence of war in diminishing the height of the race is unimportant, the influence of war in increasing physical defects and infirmities in subsequent generations is a very different matter. He found that the physical deterioration of war manifested itself chiefly in the children born eight years afterwards, and therefore in the recruits twenty-eight years after the war. He regarded it as an undoubted fact that the French army of half a million men in 1809 increased by 3 per cent. the proportion of hereditarily infirm persons. He found, moreover, that the new-born of 1814, that is to say the military class of 1834, showed that infirmities had risen from 30 per cent. to 45·8 per cent., an increase of 50 per cent. Nor is the *status quo* entirely brought back later on, for the bad heredity of the increased number of defectives tends to be still further propagated, even though in an attenuated form. As a matter of fact, Tschuriloff found that the proportion of exemptions from the army for infirmity increased enormously from 26 per cent. in 1816–17, to 38 per cent. in 1826–27, declining later to 34 per cent. in 1860–64, though he is careful to point out that this result must not be entirely ascribed to the reversed selection of wars. There could, however, be no doubt that most kinds of infirmities became more frequent as a result of military selection. Lapouge's more recent investigation into the results of the Franco-Prussian war of 1870 were of similar character; when examining the recruits of 1892–93 he found that these " children of the

war " were inferior to those born earlier, and that there was probably an undue proportion of defective individuals among their fathers. It cannot be said that these investigations finally demonstrate the evil results of war on the race. The subject is complicated, and some authorities, like Collignon in France and Ammon in Germany,—both, it may be well to note, army surgeons,—have sought to smooth down and explain away the dysgenic effects of war. But, on the whole, the facts seem to support those probabilities which the insight of Franklin first clearly set forth.

It is interesting in the light of these considerations on the eugenic bearings of warfare to turn for a moment to those who proclaim the high moral virtues of war as a national regenerator.

It is chiefly in Germany that, for more than a century past, this doctrine has been preached.[1] " War invigorates humanity," said Hegel, " as storms preserve the sea from putrescence." " War is an integral part of God's Universe," said Moltke, " developing man's noblest attributes." " The condemnation of war," said Treitschke, " is not only absurd, it is immoral."[2] These brave say-

[1] In France it is almost unknown except as preached by the Syndicalist philosopher, Georges Sorel, who insists, quite in the German manner, on the purifying and invigorating effects of " a great foreign war," although, very unlike the German professors, he holds that " a great extension of proletarian violence " will do just as well as war.

[2] The recent expressions of the same doctrine in Germany are far too numerous to deal with. I may, however, refer to Professor Fritz Wilke's *Ist der Krieg sittlich berechtigt?* (1915) as being the work of a theologian and Biblical scholar of Vienna who has written a book on

ings scarcely bear calm and searching examination at the best, but, putting aside all loftier appeals to humanity or civilisation, a "national regenerator" which we have good reason to suppose enfeebles and deteriorates the race, cannot plausibly be put before us as a method of ennobling humanity or as a part of God's Universe, only to be condemned on pain of seeing a company of German professors pointing the finger to our appalling "Immorality," on their drill-sergeant's word of command.

At the same time, this glorification of the regenerating powers of war quite overlooks the consideration that the fighting spirit tends to destroy itself, so that the best way to breed good fighters is not to preach war, but to cultivate peace, which is what the Germans have, in actual practice, done for over forty years past. France, the most military, and the most gloriously military, nation of the Napoleonic era, is now the leader in anti-militarism, altogether indifferent to the lure of military glory, though behind no nation in courage or skill. Belgium has not fought for generations, and had only just introduced compulsory military service, yet the Belgians, from their King and

the politics of Isaiah and discussed the germs of historical veridity in the history of Abraham. "A world-history without war," he declares, "would be a history of materialism and degeneration"; and again: "The solution is not 'Weapons down!' but 'Weapons up!' With pure hands and calm conscience let us grasp the sword." He dwells, of course, on the supposed purifying and ennobling effects of war and insists that, in spite of its horrors, and when necessary, "War is a divine institution and a work of love." The leaders of the world's peace movement are, thank God! not Germans, but merely English and Americans, and he sums up, with Moltke, that war is a part of the moral order of the world.

their Cardinal-Archbishop downwards, threw themselves into the war with a high spirit scarcely paralleled in the world's history, and Belgian commercial travellers developed a rare military skill and audacity. All the world admires the bravery with which the Germans face death and the elaborate detail with which they organise battle, yet for all their perpetual glorification of war there is no sign that they fight with any more spirit than their enemies. Even if we were to feel ourselves bound to accept war as "an integral part of God's Universe," we need not trouble ourselves to glorify war, for, when once war presents itself as a terrible necessity, even the most peaceable of men are equal to the task.

This consideration brings us to those "moral equivalents of war" which William James was once concerned over, when he advocated, in place of military conscription, "a conscription of the whole youthful population to form for a certain number of years a part of the army enlisted against *Nature*."[1] Such a method of formally organising in the cause of civilisation, instead of in the cause of savagery, the old military traditions of hardihood and discipline may well have its value. But the present war has shown us that in no case need we fear that these high qualities will perish in any vitally progressive civilisation. For they are qualities that lie in the heart of humanity itself. They are not created by the drill-sergeant; he merely utilises them for his own, as we may perhaps think, disastrous ends. This present war has shown

[1] William James, *Popular Science Monthly*, Oct., 1910.

us that on every hand, even in the unlikeliest places, all the virtues of war have been fostered by the cultivation of the arts and sciences of peace, ready to be transformed to warlike ends by men who never dreamed of war. In France we find many of the most promising young scientists, poets, and novelists cheerfully going forth to meet their death. On the other side, we find a Kreisler, created to be the joy of the world, ready to be trampled to death beneath the hoofs of Cossack horses. The friends of Gordon Mathison, the best student ever turned out from the Medical Faculty of the Melbourne University and a distinguished young physiologist who seemed to be destined to become one of the first physicians of his time, viewed with foreboding his resolve to go to the front, for " Wherever he was he had to be in the game," they said; and a few weeks later he was killed at Gallipoli on the threshold of his career. The qualities that count in peace are the qualities that count in war, and the high-spirited man who throws himself bravely into the dangerous adventures of peace is fully the equal of the hero of the battlefield, and himself prepared to become that hero.[1]

[1] We still often fall into the fallacy of over-estimating the advantages of military training—with its fine air of set-up manliness and restrained yet vitalised discipline—because we are mostly compelled to compare such training with the lack of training fostered by that tame, dull sedentary routine of which there is far too much in our present phase of civilisation. The remedy lies in stimulating the heroic and strenuous sides of civilisation rather than in letting loose the ravages of war. As Nietzsche long since pointed out (*Human, All-too-Human*, section 442), the vaunted national armies of modern times are merely a method of

It would seem, therefore, on the whole, that when the eugenist takes a wide survey of this question, he need not qualify his disapproval of war by any regrets over the loss of such virtues as warfare fosters. In every progressive civilisation the moral equivalents of war are already in full play. Peace, as well as war, "develops the noblest attributes of man"; peace, rather than war, preserves the human sea from putrescence; it is the condemnation of peace, rather than the condemnation of war, which is not only absurd but immoral. We are not called upon to choose between the manly virtues of war and the effeminate degeneracy of peace. The Great War of to-day may perhaps help us to realise that the choice placed before us is of another sort. The virtues of daring and endurance will never fail in any vitally progressive community of men, alike in the causes of war and of peace.[1] But on the one hand we find those virtues at work in the service of humanity, creating ever new marvels of science and of art, adding to the store of the

squandering the most highly civilised men, whose delicately organised brains have been slowly produced through long generations; "in our day greater and higher tasks are assigned to men than *patria* and *honor*, and the rough old Roman patriotism has become dishonourable, at the best behind the times."

[1] The Border of Scotland and England was in ancient times, it has been said, "a very Paradise for murderers and robbers." The war-like spirit was there very keen and deeds of daring were not too scrupulously effected, for the culprit knew that nothing was easier and safer than to become an outlaw on the other side of the Border. Yet these were the conditions that eventually made the Border one of the great British centres of genius (the Welsh Border was another) and the home of a peculiarly capable and vigorous race.

precious heirlooms of the race which are a joy to all mankind. On the other hand, we see these same virtues in the service of savagery, extinguishing those marvels, killing their creators, and destroying every precious treasure of mankind within reach. That—it seems to be one of the chief lessons of this war—is the choice placed before us who are to-day called upon to build the world of the future on a firmer foundation than our own world has been set.

IV

MORALITY IN WARFARE

THERE are some idealistic persons who believe that morality and war are incompatible. War is bestial, they hold, war is devilish ; in its presence it is absurd, almost farcical, to talk about morality. That would be so if morality meant the code, for ever unattained, of the Sermon on the Mount. But there is not only the morality of Jesus, there is the morality of Mumbo Jumbo. In other words, and limiting ourselves to the narrower range of the civilised world, there is the morality of Machiavelli and Bismarck, and the morality of St. Francis and Tolstoy.

The fact is, as we so often forget, and sometimes do not even know, morality is fundamentally custom, the *mores*, as it has been called, of a people. It is a body of conduct which is in constant motion, with an exalted advance-guard, which few can keep up with, and a debased rearguard, once called the black-guard, a name that has since acquired an appropriate significance. But in the

substantial and central sense morality means the conduct of the main body of the community. Thus understood, it is clear that in our time war still comes into contact with morality. The pioneers may be ahead; the main body is in the thick of it.

That there really is a morality of war, and that the majority of civilised people have more or less in common a certain conventional code concerning the things which may or may not be done in war, has been very clearly seen during the present conflict. This moral code is often said to be based on international regulations and understandings. It certainly on the whole coincides with them. But it is the popular moral code which is fundamental, and international law is merely an attempt to enforce that morality.

The use of expanding bullets and poison gases, the poisoning of wells, the abuse of the Red Cross and the White Flag, the destruction of churches and works of art, the infliction of cruel penalties on civilians who have not taken up arms—all such methods of warfare as these shock popular morality. They are on each side usually attributed to the enemy, they are seldom avowed, and only adopted in imitation of the enemy, with hesitation and some offence to the popular conscience, as we see in the case of poison gas, which was only used by the English after long delay, while the French still hesitated. The general feeling about such methods, even when involving scientific skill, is that they are "barbarous."

As a matter of fact, this charge of "barbarism"

against those methods of warfare which shock our moral sense must not be taken too literally. The methods of real barbarians in war are not especially "barbarous." They have sometimes committed acts of cruelty which are revolting to us to-day, but for the most part the excesses of barbarous warfare have been looting and burning, together with more or less raping of women, and these excesses have been so frequent within the last century, and still to-day, that they may as well be called "civilised" as "barbarous." The sack of Rome by the Goths at the beginning of the fifth century made an immense impression on the ancient world, as an unparalleled outrage. St. Augustine in his *City of God*, written shortly afterwards, eloquently described the horrors of that time. Yet to-day, in the new light of our own knowledge of what war may involve, the ways of the ancient Goths seem very innocent. We are expressly told that they spared the sacred Christian places, and the chief offences brought against them seem to be looting and burning; yet the treasure they left untouched was vast and incalculable and we should be thankful indeed if any belligerent in the war of to-day inflicted as little injury on a conquered city as the Goths on Rome. The vague rhetoric which this invasion inspired scarcely seems to be supported by definitely recorded facts, and there can be very little doubt that the devastation wrought in many old wars exists chiefly in the writings of rhetorical chroniclers whose imaginations were excited, as we may so often see among the journalists of to-day, by the rumour of atrocities which have never been committed.

This is not to say that no devastation and cruelty have been perpetrated in ancient wars. It seems to be generally agreed that in the famous Thirty Years' War, which the Germans fought against each other, atrocities were the order of the day. We are constantly being told, in respect of some episode or other of the war of to-day, that "nothing like it has been seen since the Thirty Years' War." But the writers who make this statement, with an off-hand air of familiar scholarship, never by any chance bring forward the evidence for this greater atrociousness of the Thirty Years' War,[1] and one is inclined to suspect that this oft-repeated allusion to the Thirty Years' War as the acme of military atrocity is merely a rhetorical flourish.

In any case we know that, not so many years after the Thirty Years' War, Frederick the Great, who combined supreme military gifts with freedom from scruple in policy, and was at the same time a great representative German, declared that the ordinary citizen ought never to be aware that his country is at war.[2] Nothing could show more clearly the military ideal, however imperfectly it may sometimes have been attained, of the old European world. Atrocities, whether regarded as permissible or as inevitable, certainly occurred. But for the most part wars were the concern of the privileged upper class; they were rendered necessary by the dynastic quarrels of

[1] In so far as it may have been so, that seems merely due to its great length, to the fact that the absence of commissariat arrangements involved a more thorough method of pillage, and to epidemics.

[2] Treitschke, *History of Germany* (English translation by E. and C. Paul), Vol. I., p. 87.

monarchs and were carried out by a professional class with aristocratic traditions and a more or less scrupulous regard to ancient military etiquette. There are many stories of the sufferings of the soldiery in old times, in the midst of abundance, on account of military respect for civilian property. Von der Goltz remarks that " there was a time when the troops camped in the cornfields and yet starved," and states that in 1806 the Prussian main army camped close to huge piles of wood and yet had no fires to warm themselves or cook their food.[1]

The legend, if legend it is, of the French officer who politely requested the English officer opposite him to " fire first " shows how something of the ancient spirit of chivalry was still regarded as the accompaniment of warfare. It was an occupation which only incidentally concerned the ordinary citizen. The English, especially, protected by the sea and always living in open undefended cities, have usually been able to preserve this indifference to the continental wars in which their kings have constantly been engaged, and, as we see, even in the most unprotected European countries, and the most profoundly warlike, the Great Frederick set forth precisely the same ideal of war.

[1] Von der Goltz, *The Nation in Arms*, pp. 14 *et seq.* This attitude was a final echo of the ancient Truce of God. That institution, which was first definitely formulated in the early eleventh century in Roussillon and was soon confirmed by the Pope in agreement with nobles and barons, was extended to the whole of Christendom before the end of the century. It ordained peace for several days a week and on many festivals, and it uaranteed the rights and liberties of all those following peaceful avocations, at the same time protecting crops, live-stock, and farm implements.

The fact seems to be that while war is nowadays less chronic than of old, less prolonged, and less easily provoked, it is a serious fallacy to suppose that it is also less barbarous. We imagine that it must be so simply because we believe, on more or less plausible grounds, that our life generally is growing less barbarous and more civilised. But war, by its very nature, always means a relapse from civilisation into barbarism, if not savagery.[1] We may sympathise with the endeavour of the European soldiers of old to civilise warfare, and we may admire the remarkable extent to which they succeeded in doing so. But we cannot help feeling that their romantic and chivalrous notions of warfare were absurdly incongruous.

The world in general might have been content with that incongruity. But Germany, or more precisely Prussia, with its ancient genius for warfare, has in the present war taken the decisive step in initiating the abolition of that incongruity by placing warfare definitely on the basis of scientific barbarism. To do this is, in a sense, we must remember, not a step backwards, but a step forward. It involved the recognition of the fact that war is not a game to be played for its own sake, by a professional caste, in accordance with fixed rules which it would be dishonourable to break, but a method, carried out by the whole organised manhood of the nation, of

[1] It is interesting to observe how St. Augustine, who was as familiar with classic as with Christian life and thought, perpetually dwells on the boundless misery of war and the supreme desirability of peace as a point at which pagan and Christian are at one; "Nihil gratius soleat audiri, nihil desiderabilius concupisci, nihil postremo possit melius inveniri. . . . Sicut nemo est qui gaudere nolit, ita nemo est qui pacem habere nolit" (*City of God*, Bk. XIX., Chs. 11–12).

effectively attaining an end desired by the State, in accordance with the famous statement of Clausewitz that war is State policy continued by a different method. If by the chivalrous method of old, which was indeed in large part still their own method in the previous Franco-German war, the Germans had resisted the temptation to violate the neutrality of Luxemburg and Belgium in order to rush behind the French defences, and had battered instead at the Gap of Belfort, they would have won the sympathy of the world, but they certainly would not have won the possession of the greater part of Belgium and a third part of France. It has not alone been military instinct which has impelled Germany on the new course thus inaugurated. We see here the final outcome of a reaction against ancient Teutonic sentimentality which the insight of Goldwin Smith clearly discerned forty years ago.[1] Humane sentiments and civilised traditions, under the moulding hand of Prussian leaders of Kultur, have been slowly but firmly subordinated to a political realism which, in the military sphere, means a masterly efficiency in the aim of crushing the foe by overwhelming force combined with panic-striking "frightfulness." In this conception, that only is moral which served these ends. The horror which this "frightfulness" may be expected to arouse, even among neutral nations, is from the German point of view a tribute of homage.

The military reputation of Germany is so great in the world, and likely to remain so, whatever the issue of the present war, that we are here faced by a grave critical

[1] *Contemporary Review*, 1878.

issue which concerns the future of the whole world. The conduct of wars has been transformed before our eyes. In any future war the example of Germany will be held to consecrate the new methods, and the belligerents who are not inclined to accept the supreme authority of Germany may yet be forced in their own interests to act in accordance with it. The mitigating influence of religion over warfare has long ceased to be exercised, for the international Catholic Church no longer possesses the power to exert such influence, while the national Protestant churches are just as bellicose as their flocks. Now we see the influence of morality over warfare similarly tending to disappear. Henceforth, it seems, we have to reckon with a conception of war which accounts it a function of the supreme State, standing above morality and therefore able to wage war independently of morality. Necessity—the necessity of scientific effectiveness—becomes the sole criterion of right and wrong.

When we look back from the standpoint of knowledge which we have reached in the present war to the notions which prevailed in the past, they seem to us hollow and even childish. Seventy years ago, Buckle, in his *History of Civilisation*, stated complacently that only ignorant and unintellectual nations any longer cherished ideals of war. His statement was part of the truth. It is true, for instance, that France is now the most anti-military of nations, though once the most military of all. But, we see, it is only part of the truth. The very fact, which Buckle himself pointed out, that efficiency has in modern times taken the place of morality in the conduct of affairs,

offers a new foundation for war when war is urged on scientific principle for the purpose of rendering effective the claims of State policy. To-day we see that it is not sufficient for a nation to cultivate knowledge and become intellectual, in the expectation that war will automatically go out of fashion. It is quite possible to become very scientific, most relentlessly intellectual, and on that foundation to build up ideals of warfare much more barbarous than those of Assyria.

The conclusion seems to be that we are to-day entering on an era in which war will not only flourish as vigorously as in the past, although not in so chronic a form, but with an altogether new ferocity and ruthlessness, with a vastly increased power of destruction, and on a scale of extent and intensity involving an injury to civilisation and humanity which no wars of the past ever perpetrated. Moreover, this state of things imposes on the nations which have hitherto, by their temper, their position, or their small size, regarded themselves as nationally neutral, a new burden of armament in order to ensure that neutrality. It has been proclaimed on both sides that this war is a war to destroy militarism. But the disappearance of a militarism that is only destroyed by a greater militarism offers no guarantee at all for any triumph of Civilisation or Humanity.

What then are we to do? It seems clear that we have to recognise that our intellectual leaders of old who declared that to ensure the disappearance of war we have but to sit still and fold our hands while we watch the beneficent growth of science and intellect were grievously

mistaken. War is still one of the active factors of modern life, though by no means the only factor which it is in our power to grasp and direct. By our energetic effort the world can be moulded. It is the concern of all of us, and especially of those nations which are strong enough and enlightened enough to take a leading part in human affairs, to work towards the initiation and the organisation of this immense effort. In so far as the Great War of to-day acts as a spur to such effort it will not have been an unmixed calamity.

V

IS WAR DIMINISHING?

THE cheerful optimism of those pacifists who looked for the speedy extinction of war has lately aroused much scorn. There really seem to have been people who believed that new virtues of loving-kindness are springing up in the human breast to bring about the universal reign of peace spontaneously, while we all still continued to cultivate our old vices of international greed, suspicion, and jealousy. Dr. Frederick Adams Woods, in the challenging and stimulating study of the prevalence of war in Europe from 1450 to the present day which he has lately written in conjunction with Mr. Alexander Baltzly, easily throws contempt upon such pacifists. All their beautiful arguments, he tells us in effect, count for nothing. War is to-day raging more furiously than ever in the world, and it is even doubtful whether it is diminishing. That is the subject of the book Dr. Woods and Mr. Baltzly have written: *Is War Diminishing?*

The method adopted by these authors is to count up

the years of war since 1450 for each of the eleven chief nations of Europe possessing an ancient history, and to represent the results by the aid of charts. These charts show that certainly there has been a great falling off in war during the period in question. Wars, as there presented to us, seem to have risen to a climax in the century 1550–1650 and to have been declining ever since. The authors, themselves, however, are not quite in sympathy with their own conclusion. "There is only," Dr. Woods declares, "a moderate amount of probability in favour of declining war." He insists on the fact that the period under investigation represents but a very small fraction of the life of man. He finds that if we take England several centuries further back, and compare its number of war-years during the last four centuries with those during the preceding four centuries, the first period shows 212 years of war, the second shows 207 years, a negligible difference, while for France the corresponding number of war-years are 181 and 192, an actual and rather considerable increase. There is the further consideration that if we regard not frequency but intensity of war—if we could, for instance, measure a war by its total number of casualties—we should doubtless find that wars are showing a tendency to ever-increasing gravity. On the whole, Dr. Woods is clearly rather discontented with the tendency of his own and his collaborator's work to show a diminution of war, and modestly casts doubt on all those who believe that the tendency of the world's history is in the direction of such a diminution.

An honest and careful record of facts, however, is

always valuable. Dr. Woods' investigation will be found useful even by those who are by no means anxious to throw cold water over the too facile optimism of some pacifists, and this little book suggests lines of thought which may prove fruitful in various directions, not always foreseen by the authors.

Dr. Woods emphasises the long period in the history of the human race during which war has flourished. He seems to suggest that war, after all, may be an essential and beneficial element in human affairs, destined to endure to the end, just as it has been present from the beginning. But has it been present from the beginning? Even though war may have flourished for many thousands of years—and it was certainly flourishing at the dawn of history—we are still very far indeed from the dawn of human life or even of human civilisation, for the more our knowledge of the past grows the more remote that dawn is seen to be. It is not only seen to be very remote, it is seen to be very important. Darwin said that it was during the first three years of life that a man learnt most. That saying is equally true of humanity as a whole, though here one must translate years into hundreds of thousands of years. But neither infant man nor infant mankind could establish themselves firmly on the path that leads so far if they had at the very outset, in accordance with Dr. Woods' formula for more recent ages, "fought about half the time." An activity of this kind which may be harmless, or even in some degree beneficial at a later stage, would be fatally disastrous at an early stage. War, as Mankind understands war, seems to

have no place among animals living in Nature. It seems equally to have had no place, so far as investigation has yet been able to reveal, in the life of early man. Men were far too busy in the great fight against Nature to fight against each other, far too absorbed in the task of inventing methods of self-preservation to have much energy left for inventing methods of self-destruction. It was once supposed that the Homeric stories of war presented a picture of life near the beginning of the world. The Homeric picture in fact corresponds to a stage in human barbarism, certainly in its European manifestation, a stage also passed through in Northern Europe, where, nearly fifteen hundred years ago, the Greek traveller, Posidonius, found the Celtic chieftains in Britain living much like the people in Homer. But we now know that Homer, so far from bringing before us a primitive age, really represents the end of a long stage of human development, marked by a slow and steady growth in civilisation and a vast accumulation of luxury. War is a luxury, in other words a manifestation of superfluous energy, not possible in those early stages when all the energies of men are taken up in the primary business of preserving and maintaining life. So it was that war had a beginning in human history. Is it unreasonable to suppose that it will also have an end?

There is another way, besides that of counting the world's war-years, to determine the probability of the diminution and eventual disappearance of war. We may consider the causes of war, and the extent to which these causes are, or are not, ceasing to operate. Dr. Woods

passingly realises the importance of this test and even enumerates what he considers to be the causes of war, without, however, following up his clue. As he reckons them, they are four in number : racial, economic, religious, and personal. There is frequently a considerable amount of doubt concerning the cause of a particular war, and no doubt the causes are usually mixed and slowly accumulative, just as in disease a number of factors may have gradually combined to bring on the sudden overthrow of health. There can be no doubt that the four causes enumerated have been very influential in producing war. There can, however, be equally little doubt that nearly all of them are diminishing in their war-producing power. Religion, which after the Reformation seemed to foment so many wars, is now practically almost extinct as a cause of war in Europe. Economic causes which were once regarded as good and sound motives for war have been discredited, though they cannot be said to be abolished ; in the Middle Ages fighting was undoubtedly a most profitable business, not only by the booty which might thus be obtained, but by the high ransoms which even down to the seventeenth century might be legitimately demanded for prisoners. So that war with France was regarded as an English gentleman's best method of growing rich. Later it was believed that a country could capture the " wealth " of another country by destroying that country's commerce, and in the eighteenth century that doctrine was openly asserted even by responsible statesmen ; later, the growth of political economy made clear that every nation flourishes by the prosperity of

other nations, and that by impoverishing the nation with which it traded a nation impoverishes itself, for a tradesman cannot grow rich by killing his customers. So it came about that, as Mill put it, the commercial spirit, which during one period of European history was the principal cause of war, became one of its strongest obstacles, though, since Mill wrote, the old fallacy that it is a legitimate and advantageous method to fight for markets, has frequently reappeared.[1] Again, the personal causes of war, although in a large measure incalculable, have much smaller scope under modern conditions than formerly. Under ancient conditions, with power centred in despotic monarchs or autocratic ministers, the personal causes of war counted for much. In more recent times it has been said, truly or falsely, that the Crimean War was due to the wounded feelings of a diplomatist. Under modern conditions, however, the checks on individual initiative are so many that personal causes must play an ever-diminishing part in war.

The same can scarcely be said as regards Dr. Woods' remaining cause of war. If by racialism we are to understand nationalism, this has of late been a serious and ever-growing provocative of war. Internationalism of feeling is much less marked now than it was four centuries ago. Nationalities have developed a new self-conscious-

[1] It has been argued (as by Filippi Carli, *La Ricchezza e la Guerra*, 1916) that the Germans are especially unable to understand that the prosperity of other countries is beneficial to them, whether or not under German control, and that they differ from the English and French in believing that economic conquests should involve political conquests.

ness, a new impulse to regain their old territories or to acquire new territories. Not only Pan-Germanism, Pan-Slavism, and British Imperialism, like all other imperialisms, but even the national ambitions of some smaller Powers have acquired a new and dangerous energy. They are not the less dangerous when, as is indeed most frequently the case, they merely represent the ambition, not of the people as a whole, but merely of a military or bureaucratic clique, of a small chauvinistic group, yet noisy and energetic enough to win over unscrupulous politicians. A German soldier, a young journalist of ability, recently wrote home from the trenches : " I have often dreamed of a new Europe in which all the nations would be fraternally united and live together as one people; it was an end which democratic feeling seemed to be slowly preparing. Now this terrible war has been unchained, fomented by a few men who are sending their subjects, their slaves rather, to the battlefield, to slay each other like wild beasts. I should like to go towards these men they call our enemies and say, ' Brothers, let us fight together. The enemy is behind us.' Yes, since I have been wearing this uniform I feel no hatred for those who are in front, but my hatred has grown for those in power who are behind." That is a sentiment which must grow mightily with the growth of democracy, and as it grows the danger of nationalism as a cause of war must necessarily decrease.

There is, however, one group of causes of war, of the first importance, which Dr. Woods has surprisingly omitted, and that is the group of political causes. It is

by overlooking the political aspects of war that Dr. Woods' discussion is most defective. Supposed political necessity has been in modern times perhaps the very chief cause of war. That is to say that wars are largely waged for what has been supposed to be the protection, or the furtherance, of the civilised organisation which orders the temporal benefits of a nation. This is admirably illustrated by all three of the great European wars in which England has taken part during the past four centuries: the war against Spain, the war against France, and the present war against Germany. The fundamental motive of England's participation in all these wars has been what was conceived to be the need of England's safety, it was essentially political. A small island Power, dependent on its fleet, and yet very closely adjoining the continental mainland, is vitally concerned in the naval developments of possibly hostile Powers and in the military movements which affect the opposite coast. Spain, France, and Germany all successively threatened England by a formidable fleet, and they all sought to gain possession of the coast opposite England. To England, therefore, it seemed a measure of political self-defence to strike a blow as each fresh menace arose. In every case Belgium has been the battlefield on land. The neutrality of Belgium is felt to be politically vital to England. Therefore, the invasion of Belgium by a Great Power is to England an immediate signal of war. It is not only England's wars that have been mainly political; the same is true of Germany's wars ever since Prussia has had the leadership of Germany. The political con-

dition of a country without natural frontiers and surrounded by powerful neighbours is a perpetual source of wars which, in Germany's case, have been, by deliberate policy, offensively defensive.

When we realise the fundamental importance of the political causation of warfare, the whole problem of the ultimate fate of war becomes at once more hopeful. The orderly growth and stability of nations has in the past seemed to demand war. But war is not the only method of securing these ends, and to most people nowadays it scarcely seems the best method. England and France have fought against each other for many centuries. They are now convinced that they really have nothing to fight about, and that the growth and stability of each country are better ensured by friendship than by enmity. There cannot be a doubt of it. But where is the limit to the extension of that same principle ? France and Germany, England and Germany, have just as much to lose by enmity, just as much to gain by friendship, and alike on both sides.

The history of Europe and the charts of Mr. Baltzly clearly show that this consideration has really been influential. We find that there is a progressive tendency for the nations of Europe to abandon warfare. Sweden, Denmark, and Holland, all vigorous and warlike peoples, have long ceased to fight. They have found their advantage in the abandonment of war, but that abandonment has been greatly stimulated by awe of their mightier neighbours. And therein, again, we have a clue to the probable course of the future.

For when we realise that the fundamental political need of self-preservation and good order has been a main cause of warfare, and when we further realise that the same ends may be more satisfactorily attained without war under the influence of a sufficiently firm external pressure working in harmony with the growth of internal civilisation, we see that the problem of fighting among nations is the same as that of fighting among individuals. Once upon a time good order and social stability were maintained in a community by the method of fighting among the individuals constituting the community. No doubt all sorts of precious virtues were thus generated, and no doubt in the general opinion no better method seemed possible or even conceivable. But, as we know, with the development of a strong central Power, and with the growth of enlightenment, it was realised that political stability and good order were more satisfactorily maintained by a tribunal, having a strong police force behind it, than by the method of allowing the individuals concerned to fight out their quarrels between themselves.

Fighting between national groups of individuals stands on precisely the same footing as fighting between individuals. The political stability and good order of nations, it is beginning to be seen, can be more satisfactorily maintained by a tribunal, having a strong police force behind it, than by the method of allowing the individual nations concerned to fight out quarrels between themselves. The stronger nations have for a large part imposed this peace upon the smaller nations of Europe to the great benefit of the latter. How can we impose a

similar peace upon the stronger nations, for their own benefit and for the benefit of the whole world? To that task all our energies must be directed.

A long series of eminent thinkers and investigators, from Comte and Buckle a century ago to Dr. Woods and Mr. Baltzly to-day, have assured us that war is diminishing and even that the war-like spirit is extinct. It is certainly not true that the war-like spirit is extinct, even in the most civilised and peaceful peoples, and we need not desire its extinction, for it is capable of transformation into shapes of the finest use for humanity. But the vast conflagration of to-day must not conceal from our eyes the great central fact that war is diminishing, and will one day disappear as completely as the mediæval scourge of the Black Death. To reach this consummation all the best humanising and civilising energies of mankind will be needed.

VI

WAR AND THE BIRTH-RATE

DURING recent years the faith had grown among progressive persons in various countries, not excluding Germany, that civilisation was building up almost impassable barriers against any great war. These barriers were thought to be of various kinds, even apart from the merely sentimental and humanitarian developments of pacific feeling. They were especially of an economic kind, and that on a double basis, that of Capital and that of Labour. It was believed, on the one hand, that the international ramifications of Capital, and the complicated commercial and financial webs which bind nations together, would cause so vivid a realisation of the disasters of war as to erect a wholesomely steadying effect whenever the danger of war loomed in sight. On the other hand, it was felt that the international unity of interest among the workers, the growth of Labour's favourite doctrine that there is no conflict between nations, but only between classes, and even the actual

international organisation and bonds of the workers' associations, would interpose a serious menace to the plans of war-makers. These influences were real and important. But, as we know, when the decisive moment came, the diplomatists and the militarists were found to be at the helm, to steer the ship of State in each country concerned, and those on board had no voice in determining the course. In England only can there be said to have been any show of consulting Parliament, but at that moment the situation had already so far developed that there was little left but to accept it. The Great War of to-day has shown that such barriers against war as we at present possess may crumble away in a moment at the shock of the war-making machine.

We are to-day forced to undertake a more searching inquiry into the forces which, in civilisation, operate against war. I wish to call attention here to one such influence of fundamental character, which has not been unrecognised, but possesses an importance we are often apt to overlook.

"A French gentleman, well acquainted with the constitution of his country," wrote Thicknesse in 1776,[1] "told me above eight years since that France increased so rapidly in peace that they must necessarily have a war every twelve or fourteen years to carry off the refuse of the people." Recently a well-known German Socialist, Dr. Eduard David, member of the Reichstag and a student of the population question, setting forth the same

[1] Ralph Thicknesse, *A Year's Journey Through France and Spain*, 1777, p. 298.

great truth (in *Die Neue Generation* for November, 1914) states that it would have been impossible for Germany to wage the present war if it had not been for the high German birth-rate during the past half-century. And the impossibility of this war would, for Dr. David, have been indeed tragic.

A more distinguished social hygienist, Professor Max Gruber, of Munich, who took a leading part in organising that marvellous Exposition of Hygiene at Dresden which has been Germany's greatest service to real civilisation in recent years, lately set forth an identical opinion. The war, he declares, was inevitable and unavoidable, and Germany was responsible for it, not, he hastens to add, in any moral sense, but in a biological sense, because in forty-four years Germans have increased in numbers from forty millions to eighty millions. The war was, therefore, a " biological necessity."

If we survey the belligerent nations in the war we may say that those which took the initiative in drawing it on, or at all events were most prepared to welcome it, were Russia, Austria, Germany, and Serbia. We may also note that these include nearly all the nations in Europe with a high birth-rate. We may further note that they are all nations which—putting aside their cultural summits and taking them in the mass—are among the most backward in Europe ; the fall in the birth-rate has not yet had time to permeate them. On the other hand, of the belligerent peoples of to-day, all indications point to the French as the people most intolerant, silently but deeply, of the war they are so

ably and heroically waging. Yet the France of the present, with the lowest birth-rate and the highest civilisation, was a century ago the France of a birth-rate higher than that of Germany to-day, the most militarist and aggressive of nations, a perpetual menace to Europe. For all those among us who have faith in civilisation and humanity, and are unable to believe that war can ever be a civilising or humanising method of progress, it must be a daily prayer that the fall of the birth-rate may be hastened.

It seems too elementary a point to insist on, yet the mists of ignorance and prejudice are so dense, the cataract of false patriotism is so thick, that for many even the most elementary truths cannot be discerned. In most of the smaller nations, indeed, an intelligent view prevails. Their smallness has, on the one hand, rendered them more open to international culture, and, on the other hand, enabled them to outgrow the illusions of militarism; there is a higher standard of education among them; their birth-rates are low and they accept that fact as a condition of progressive civilisation. That is the case in Switzerland, as in Norway, and notably in Holland. It is not so in the larger nations. Here we constantly find, even in those lands where the bulk of the population are civilised and reasonably level-headed, a small minority who publicly tear their hair and rage at the steady decline in the birth-rate. It is, of course, only the declining birth-rate of their own country that they have in view; for they are "patriots," which means that the fall of the birth-rate in all other

countries but their own is a source of much gratification. "Woe to us," they exclaim in effect, "if we follow the example of these wicked and degenerate peoples! *Our* nation needs men. We have to populate the earth and to carry the blessings of our civilised culture all over the world. In executing that high mission we cannot have too much cannon-fodder in defending ourselves against the jealousy and aggression of other nations. Let us promote parentage by law; let us repress by law every influence which may encourage a falling birth-rate; otherwise there is nothing left to us but speedy national disaster, complete and irremediable." This is not caricature,[1] though these apostles of "race-suicide" may easily arouse a smile by the verbal ardour of their procreative energy. But we have to recognise that in Germany for years past it has been difficult to take up a serious periodical without finding some anxiously statistical article about the falling birth-rate and some wild recommendations for its arrest, for it is the militaristic German who of all Europeans is most worried by this fall; indeed Germans often even refuse to recognise it. Thus to-day we find Professor Gruber declaring that if the population of the German Empire continues to grow at the rate of the first five years of the present century, at the end of the century it will have reached 250,000,000. By such a vast increase in population, the Professor com-

[1] The last twelve words quoted are by Miss Ethel Elderton in an otherwise sober memoir (*Report on the English Birth-rate*, 1914, p. 237), which shows that the birth control movement has begun, just where we should expect it to begin, among the better instructed classes.

placently concludes, "Germany will be rendered invulnerable." We know what that means. The presence of an "invulnerable" nation among nations that are "vulnerable" means inevitable aggression and war, a perpetual menace to civilisation and humanity. It is not along that line that hope can be found for the world's future, or even Germany's future, and Gruber conveniently neglects to estimate what, on his basis, the population of Russia will be at the end of the century. But Gruber's estimate is altogether fallacious. German births have fallen, roughly speaking, about one per thousand of the population, every year since the beginning of the century, and it would be equally reasonable to estimate that if they continue to fall at the present rate (which we cannot, of course, anticipate) births will altogether have ceased in Germany long before the end of the century. The German birth-rate reached its climax forty years ago (1871–1880) with 40·7 per 1,000; in 1906 it was 34 per 1,000; in 1909, 31 per 1,000; in 1912, 28 per 1,000; in an almost measurable period of time, in all probability long before the end of the century, it will have reached the same low level as that of France, when there will be little difference between the "invulnerability" of France and of Germany, a consummation which, for the world's sake, is far more devoutly to be wished than that anticipated by Gruber.

We have to remember, moreover, that this tendency is by no means, as we are sometimes tempted to suppose, a sign of degeneration or of decay; but, on the contrary, a sign of progress. When we survey broadly that course

of zoological evolution of which we are pleased to regard Man as the final outcome, we note that on the whole the mighty stream has become the less productive as it has advanced. We note the same of the various lines taken separately. We note, also, that intelligence and all the qualities we admire have usually been most marked in the less prolific species. Progress, roughly speaking, has proved incompatible with high fertility. And the reason is not far to seek. If the creature produced is more evolved, it is more complex and more highly organised, and that means the need for much time and much energy. To attain this, the offspring must be few and widely spaced; it cannot be attained at all under conditions that are highly destructive. The humble herring, which evokes the despairing envy of our human apostles of fertility, is largely composed of spawn, and produces a vast number of offspring, of which few reach maturity. The higher mammals spend their lives in the production of a small number of offspring, most of whom survive. Thus, even before Man began, we see a fundamental principle established, and the relationship between the birth-rate and the death-rate in working order. All progressive evolution may be regarded as a mechanism for concentrating an ever greater amount of energy in the production of ever fewer and ever more splendid individuals. Nature is perpetually striving to replace the crude ideal of quantity by the higher ideal of quality.

In human history these same tendencies have continually been illustrated. The Greeks, our pioneers in all

insight and knowledge, grappled (as Professor Myres has lately set forth[1]), and realised that they were grappling, with this same problem. Even in the Minoan Age their population would appear to have been full to overflowing; "there were too many people in the world," and to the old Greeks the Trojan War was the earliest divinely-appointed remedy. Wars, famines, pestilences, colonisation, wide-spread infanticide were the methods, voluntary and involuntary, by which this excessive birth-rate was combated, while the greatest of Greek philosophers, a Plato or an Aristotle, clearly saw that a regulated and limited birth-rate, a eugenically improved race, is the road to higher civilisation. We may even see in Greek antiquity how a sudden rise in industrialism leads to a crowded and fertile urban population, the extension of slavery, and all the resultant evils. It was a foretaste of what was seen during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when a sudden industrial expansion led to an enormously high birth-rate, a servile urban proletariat (that very word indicates, as Roscher has pointed out, that a large family means inferiority), and a consequent outburst of misery and degradation from which we are only now emerging.

As we are now able to realise, the sudden expansion of the population accompanying the industrial revolution was an abnormal and, from the point of view of society, a morbid phenomenon. All the evidence goes to show that previously the population tended to increase very

[1] J. L. Myres, "The Causes of Rise and Fall in the Population of the Ancient World," *Eugenics Review*, April, 1915.

slowly, and social evolution was thus able to take place equably and harmoniously. It is only gradually that the birth-rate has begun to right itself again. The movement, as is well known, began in France, always the most advanced outpost of European civilisation. It has now spread to England, to Germany, to all Europe, to the whole world indeed, in so far as the world is in touch with European civilisation, and has long been well marked in the United States.

When we realise this we are also enabled to realise how futile, how misplaced, and how mischievous it is to raise the cry of "Race-suicide." It is futile because no outcry can affect a world-wide movement of civilisation. It is misplaced because the rise and fall of the population is not a matter of the birth-rate alone, but of the birth-rate combined with the death-rate, and while we cannot expect to touch the former we can influence the latter. It is mischievous because by fighting against a tendency which is not only inevitable but altogether beneficial, we blind ourselves to the advance of civilisation and risk the misdirection of all our energies. How far this blindness may be carried we see in the false patriotism of those who in the decline of the birth-rate fancy they see the ruin of their own particular country, oblivious of the fact that we are concerned with a phenomenon of world-wide extension.

The whole tendency of civilisation is to reduce the birth-rate, as Leroy-Beaulieu concludes in his comprehensive work on the population question. We may go further, and assert with the distinguished German

economist, Roscher, that the chief cause of the superiority of a highly civilised State over lower stages of civilisation is precisely a greater degree of forethought and self-control in marriage and child-bearing.[1] Instead of talking about race-suicide, we should do well to observe at what an appalling rate, even yet, the population is increasing, and we should note that it is everywhere the poorest and most primitive countries, and in every country (as in Germany) the poorest regions, which show the highest birth-rate. On every hand, however, are hopeful signs. Thus, in Russia, where a very high birth-rate is to some extent compensated by a very high death-rate—the highest infantile death-rate in Europe—the birth-rate is falling, and we may anticipate that it will fall very rapidly with the extension of education and social enlightenment among the masses. Driven out of Europe, the alarmist falls back on the " Yellow Peril." But in Japan we find amid confused variations of the birth-rate and the death-rate nothing to indicate any alarming expansion of the population, while as to China we are in the dark. We only know that in China there is a high birth-rate largely compensated by a very high death-rate. We also know, however, that as Lowes Dickinson has lately reminded us, " the fundamental attitude of the Chinese towards life is that of the most modern West,"[2] and we shall probably find that with the growth of enlightenment the Chinese will deal with their

[1] Roscher, *Grundlagen der Nationalökonomie*, 23rd ed., 1900, Bk. VI.

[2] G. Lowes Dickinson, *The Civilisation of India, China and Japan*, 1914, p. 47.

high birth-rate in a far more radical and thorough manner than we have ever ventured on.

One last resort the would-be patriotic alarmist seeks when all others fail. He is good enough to admit that a general decline in the birth-rate might be beneficial. But, he points out, it affects social classes unequally. It is initiated, not by the degenerate and the unfit, whom we could well dispense with, but by the very best classes in the community, the well-to-do and the educated. One is inclined to remark, at once, that a social change initiated by its best social classes is scarcely likely to be pernicious. Where, it may be asked, if not among the most educated classes, is any process of amelioration to be initiated? We cannot make the world topsy-turvy to suit the convenience of topsy-turvy minds. All social movements tend to begin at the top and to permeate downwards. This has been the case with the decline in the birth-rate, but it is already well marked among the working classes, and has only failed to touch the lowest social stratum of all, too weak-minded and too reckless to be amenable to ordinary social motives. The rational method of meeting this situation is not a propaganda in favour of procreation—a truly imbecile propaganda, since it is only carried out and only likely to be carried out, by the very class which we wish to sterilise—but by a wise policy of regulative eugenics. We have to create the motives, and it is not an impossible task, which will act even upon the weak-minded and reckless lowest social stratum.

These facts have a significance which many of us have

failed to realise. The Great War has brought home the gravity of that significance. It has been the perpetual refrain of the Pan-Germanists for many years that the vast and sudden expansion of the German peoples makes necessary a new movement of the German nations into the world and a new enlargement of frontiers, in other words, War. It is not only among the Germans, though among them it may have been more conscious, that a similar cause has led to the like result. It has ever been so. The expanding nation has always been a menace to the world and to itself. The arrest of the falling birth-rate, it cannot be too often repeated, would be the arrest of all civilisation and of all humanity.

VII

WAR AND DEMOCRACY

WHEN we read our newspapers to-day we are constantly met by ingenious plans for bringing to an end the activities of Germany after the War. German military activity, it is universally agreed, must be brought to an end; Germany will have no further need of a military system save on the most modest scale. Germany must also be deprived of any colonial empire and shut out from eastward expansion. That being the case, Germany no longer needs a fleet, and must be brought back to Bismarck's naval attitude. Moreover, the industrial activities of Germany must also be destroyed; the Allied opponents of Germany will henceforth manufacture for themselves or for one another the goods they have hitherto been so foolish as to obtain from Germany, and though this may mean cutting themselves aloof from the country which has hitherto been their own best customer, that is a sacrifice to be cheerfully borne for the sake of principle. It is further argued

that the world has no need of German activities in science ; they are, it appears, much less valuable than we had been led to believe, and in any case no self-respecting people would encourage a science tainted by Kultur. The puzzled reader of these arguments, overlooking the fallacies they contain, may perhaps sometimes be tempted to ask : But what are Germans to be allowed to do ? The implied answer is clear : Nothing.

The writers who urge these arguments with such conviction may be supposed to have an elementary knowledge of the history of the Germans. We are concerned, that is to say, with a people which has displayed an irrepressible energy, in one field or another, ever since the time, more than fifteen hundred years ago, when it excited the horror of the civilised world by sacking Rome. The same energy was manifested, a thousand years later, when the Germans again knocked at the door of Rome and drew away half the world from its allegiance to the Church. Still more recently, in yet other fields of industry and commerce and colonisation, these same Germans have displayed their energy by entering into more or less successful competition with that " Modern Rome," as some have termed it, which has its seat in the British Islands. Here is a people,—still youthful as we count age in our European world, for even the Celts had preceded them by nearly a thousand years,—which has successfully displayed its explosive or methodical force in the most diverse fields, military, religious, economic. From henceforth it is invited,

by an allied army of terrified journalists, to expend these stupendous and irresistible energies on just Nothing.

We know, of course, what would happen were it possible to subject Germany to any such process of attempted repression. Whenever an individual or a mass of individuals is bidden to do nothing, it merely comes about that the activities aimed at, far from being suppressed, are turned into precisely the direction most unpleasant for the would-be suppressors. When in 1870 the Germans tried to "crush" France, the result was the reverse of that intended. The effects of "crushing" had been even more startingly reverse, on the other side—and this may furnish us with a precedent—when Napoleon trampled down Germany. Two centuries ago, after the brilliant victories of Marlborough, it was proposed to crush permanently the Militarism of France. But, as Swift wrote to Archbishop King just before the Peace of Utrecht, "limiting France to a certain number of ships and troops was, I doubt, not to be compassed." In spite of the exhaustion of France it was not even attempted. In the present case, when the war is over it is probable that Germany will still hold sufficiently great pledges to bargain with in safeguarding her own vital interests. If it were not so, if it were possible to inflict permanent injury on Germany, that would be the greatest misfortune that could happen to us; for it is clear that we should then be faced by a yet more united and yet more aggressively military

Germany than the world has seen.[1] In Germany itself there is no doubt on this point. Germans are well aware that German activities cannot be brought to a sudden full stop, and they are also aware that even among Germany's present enemies there are those who after the War will be glad to become her friends. Any doubt or anxiety in the minds of thoughtful Germans is not concerning the continued existence of German energy in the world, but concerning the directions in which that energy will be exerted.

What is Germany's greatest danger? That is the subject of a pamphlet by Rudolf Goldscheid, of Vienna, now published in Switzerland, with a preface by Professor Forel, as originally written a year earlier, because it is believed that in the interval its conclusions have been confirmed by events.[2] Goldscheid is an independent and penetrating thinker in the economic field, and the author of a book on the principles of Social Biology (*Höherentwicklung und Menschenökonomie*) which has been described by an English critic as the ablest defence of Socialism yet written. By the nature of his studies he is concerned with problems of human rather than merely national development, but he ardently desires the welfare of Germany, and is anxious that that

[1] Treitschke in his *History* (Bk. I., Ch. III.) has well described "the elemental hatred which foreign injury pours into the veins of our good-natured people," for ever pursued by the question: "Art thou yet on thy feet, Germania? Is the day of thy revenge at hand!"

[2] Rudolf Goldscheid, *Deutschlands Grösste Gefahr*, Institut Orell Füssli, Zürich, 1916.

welfare shall be on the soundest and most democratic basis. After the War, he says, there must necessarily be a tendency to approximate between the Central Powers and one or other of their present foes. It is clear (though this point is not discussed) that Italy, whose presence in the Triple Alliance was artificial, will not return, while French resentment at German devastation is far too great to be appeased for a long period to come. There remain, therefore, Russia and England. After the War German interests and German sympathies must gravitate either eastwards towards Russia or westwards towards England. Which is it to be ?

There are many reasons why Germany should gravitate towards Russia. Such a movement was indeed already in active progress before the war, notwithstanding Russia's alliance with France, and may easily become yet more active after the war, when it is likely that the bonds between Russia and France may grow weaker, and when it is possible that the Germans, with their immense industry, economy and recuperative power, may prove to be in the best position—unless America cuts in—to finance Russia. Industrially Russia offers a vast field for German enterprise which no other country can well snatch away, and German is already to some extent the commercial language of Russia.[1] Politically,

[1] One may remark that up to the outbreak of war fifty per cent. of the import trade of Russia has been with Germany. To suppose that that immense volume of trade can suddenly be transferred after the war from a neighbouring country which has intelligently and

moreover, a close understanding between the two supreme autocratic and anti-democratic powers of Europe is of the greatest mutual benefit, for any democratic movement within the borders of either Power is highly inconvenient to the other, so that it is to the advantage of both to stimulate each other in the task of repression.[1] It is this aspect of the approximation which arouses Goldscheid's alarm. It is mainly on this ground that he advocates a counter-balancing approximation between Germany and England which would lay Germany open to the West and serve to develop her latent democratic tendencies. He admits that at some points the interests of Germany and England run counter to each other, but at yet a greater number of points their interests are common. It is only by the development of these common interests, and the consequent permeation of Germany by democratic English ideas, that Goldscheid sees any salvation from Czarism, for that is "Germany's greatest danger," and at the same time the greatest danger to Europe.

That is Goldscheid's point of view. Our English point of view is necessarily somewhat different. With

systematically adapted itself to its requirements to a remote country which has never shown the slightest aptitude to meet those requirements argues a simplicity of mind which in itself may be charming, but when translated into practical affairs it is stupendous folly.

[1] Sir Valentine Chirol remarks of Bismarck, in an Oxford Pamphlet on "Germany and the Fear of Russia":—"Friendship with Russia was one of the cardinal principles of his foreign policy, and one thing he always relied upon to make Russia amenable to German influence was that she should never succeed in healing the Polish sore."

our politically democratic tendencies we see very little difference between Russia and Prussia. As they are at present constituted, we have no wish to be in very close political intimacy with either. It so happens, indeed, that, for the moment, the chances of fellowship in War have brought us into a condition of almost sentimental sympathy with the Russian people, such as has never existed among us before. But this sympathy, amply justified, as all who know Russia agree, is exclusively with the Russian people. It leaves the Russian Government, the Russian bureaucracy, the Russian political system, all that Goldscheid concentrates into the term "Czarism," severely alone. Our hostility to these may be for the moment latent, but it is as profound as it ever was. Czarism is even more remote from our sympathies than Kaiserism. All that has happened is that we cherish the pious hope that Russia is becoming converted to our own ideas on these points, although there is not the smallest item of solid fact to support that hope. Otherwise, Russian oppression of the Finns is just as odious to us as Prussian oppression of the Poles, and Russian persecution of Liberals as alien as German persecution of War-prisoners.[1] Our

[1] In making these observations on the Russians and the Prussians, I do not, of course, overlook the fact that all nations, like individuals,

> "Compound for sins they are inclined to
> By damning those they have no mind to,"

and the English treatment of the conscientious objector in the Great War has been just as odious as Russian treatment of the Finns or Prussian treatment of war prisoners, and even more foolish, since it strikes at our own most cherished principles.

future policy, in the opinion of many, should, however, be to isolate Germany as completely as possible from English influence and to cultivate closer relations with Russia.[1] Such a policy, Goldscheid argues, will defeat its own ends. The more stringently England holds aloof from Germany the more anxiously will Germany cultivate good relationships with Russia. Such relationships, as we know, are easy to cultivate, because they are much in the interests of both countries which possess so large an extent of common frontier and so admirably supply each other's needs; it may be added also that the Russian commercial world is showing no keen desire to enter into close relations with England. Moreover, after the War, we may expect a weakening of French influence in Russia, for that influence was largely based on French gold, and a France no longer able or willing to finance Russia would no longer possess a strong hold over Russia. A Russo-German understanding, difficult to prevent in any case, is inimical to the interests of England, but it would be rendered inevitable by an attempt on the part of England to isolate Germany.[2] Such an attempt could not be carried out completely and would break down on its weakest side, which is the

[1] There is, indeed, another school which would like to shut off all foreign countries by a tariff wall and make the British Empire mutually self-supporting, on the economic basis adopted by those three old ladies in decayed circumstances who subsisted by taking tea in one another's houses.

[2] Even if partially successful, as has lately been pointed out, the greater the financial depression of Germany the greater would be the advantage to Russia of doing business with Germany.

East. So that the way lies open to a League of the Three Kaisers, the Dreikaiserbündnis which would form a great island fortress of militarism and reaction amid the surrounding sea of democracy, able to repress those immense possibilities of progress within its own walls which would have been liberated by contact with the vital currents outside.

So long as the War lasts it is the interest of England to strike Germany and to strike hard. That is here assumed as certain. But when the War is over, it will no longer be in the interests of England, it will indeed be directly contrary to those interests, to continue cultivating hostility, provided, that is, that no rankling wounds are left. The fatal mistake of Bismarck in annexing Alsace-Lorraine introduced a poison into the European organism which is working still. But the Russo-Japanese War produced a more amicable understanding than had existed before, and the Boer War led to still more intimate relationships between the belligerents. It may be thought that the impression in England of German "frightfulness," and in Germany of English "treachery," may prove ineffaceable. But the Germans have been considered atrocious and the English perfidious for a long time past, yet that has not prevented English and Germans fighting side by side at Waterloo and on many another field; nor has it stood in the way of German worship of the quintessential Englishman, Shakespeare, nor English homage to the quintessential German Goethe.

The question of the future relations of England and Germany may, indeed, be said to lie on a higher plane than that of interest and policy, vitally urgent as their claims may be. It is the merit of Goldscheid's little book that—with faith in a future United States of Europe in which every country would develop its own peculiar aptitudes freely and harmoniously—he is able to look at the War from that European standpoint which is so rarely attained in England. He sees that more is at stake than a mere question of national rivalries; that democracy is at stake, and the whole future direction of civilisation. He looks beyond the enmities of the moment, and he knows that, unless we look beyond them, we not only condemn Europe to the prospect of unending war, we do more: we ensure the triumph of Reaction and the destruction of Democracy. "War and Reaction are brethren"; on that point Goldscheid is very sure, and he foretells and laments the temporary "demolition of Democracy" in England. We have only too much reason to believe his prophetic words, for since he wrote we have had a Coalition Government which is predominantly democratic, Liberal and Labour, and yet has been fatally impelled towards reaction and autocracy.[1]

[1] It may be proper to point out that I by no means wish to imply that democracy is necessarily the ultimate and most desirable form of political society, but merely that it is a necessary stage for those peoples that have not yet reached it. Even Treitschke in his famous *History*, while idealising the Prussian State, always assumes that movement towards democracy is beneficial progress. For the larger question of the comparative merits of the different forms of political society, see an admirable little book by C. Delisle Burns, *Political*

That the impulse is really fatal and inevitable we cannot doubt, for we see exactly the same movement in France, and even in Russia, where it might seem that reaction has so few triumphs to achieve. "The blood of the battlefield is the stream that drives the mills of Reaction." The elementary and fundamental fact that in Democracy the officers obey the men, while in Militarism the men obey the officers, is the key to the whole situation. We see at once why all reactionaries are on the side of war and a military basis of society. The fate of democracy in Europe hangs on this question of adequate pacification. "Democratisation and Pacification march side by side."[1] Unless we realise that fact we are not competent to decide on a sound European policy. For there is an intimate connection between a country's external policy and its internal policy. An internal reactionary policy means an external aggressive policy. To shut out English influence from Germany, to fortify German Junkerism and Militarism, to drive Germany into the arms of a

Ideals (1915). And see also the searching study, *Political Parties* (English translation, 1915), by Robert Michels, who, while accepting democracy as the highest political form, argues that practically it always works out as oligarchy.

[1] Professor D. S. Jordon has quoted the letter of a German officer to a friend in Roumania (published in the Bucharest *Adverul*, 21 Aug., 1915): "How difficult it was to convince our Emperor that the moment had arrived for letting loose the war, otherwise Pacifism, Internationalism, Anti-Militarism, and so many other noxious weeds would have infected our stupid people. That would have been the end of our dazzling nobility. We have everything to gain by the war, and all the chimeras and stupidities of democracy will be chased from the world for an infinite time."

yet more reactionary Russia, is to create a perpetual menace, alike to peace and to democracy, which involves the arrest of civilisation. However magnanimous the task may seem to some, it is not only the interest of England, but England's duty to Europe, to take the initiative in preparing the ground for a clear and good understanding with Germany. It is, moreover, only through England that France can be brought into harmonious relations with Germany, and when Russia then approaches her neighbour it will be in sympathy with her more progressive Western Allies and not in reactionary response to a reactionary Germany. It is along such lines as these that amid the confusion of the present we may catch a glimpse of the Europe of the future.

We have to remember that, as Goldscheid reminds us, this War is making all of us into citizens of the world. A world-wide outlook can no longer be reserved merely for philosophers. Some of the old bridges, it is true, have been washed away, but on every side walls are falling, and the petty fears and rivalries of European nations begin to look worse than trivial in the face of greater dangers. As our eyes begin to be opened we see Europe lying between the nether millstone of Asia and the upper millstone of America. It is not by constituting themselves a Mutual Suicide Club that the nations of Europe will avoid that peril.[1] A wise and far-seeing world-policy can alone avail, and the enemies

[1] "Let us be patient," a Japanese is reported to have said lately, "until Europe has completed her *hara-kiri*."

of to-day will see themselves compelled, even by the mere logic of events, to join hands to-morrow lest a worse fate befall them. In so doing they may not only escape possible destruction, but they will be taking the greatest step ever taken in the organisation of the world. Which nation is to assume the initiative in such combined organisation? That remains the fateful question for Democracy.

VIII

FEMINISM AND MASCULINISM

DURING more than a century we have seen the slow but steady growth of the great Women's movement, of the movement of Feminism in the wide sense of that term. The conquests of this movement have sometimes been described by rhetorical feminists as triumphs over "Man." That is scarcely true. The champions of Feminism have nearly as often been men as women, and the forces of Anti-feminism have been the vague massive inert forces of an order which had indeed made the world in an undue degree "a man's world," but unconsciously and involuntarily, and by an instrumentation which was feminine as well as masculine. The advocates of Woman's Rights have seldom been met by the charge that they were unjustly encroaching on the Rights of Man. Feminism has never encountered an aggressive and self-conscious Masculinism.

Now, however, when the claims of Feminism are becoming practically recognised in our social life, and some

of its largest demands are being granted, it is interesting to observe the appearance of a new attitude. We are, for the first time, beginning to hear of "Masculinism." Just as Feminism represents the affirmation of neglected rights and functions of Womanhood, so Masculinism represents the assertion of the rights and functions of Manhood which, it is supposed, the rising tide of Feminism threatens to submerge.

Those who proclaim the necessity of an assertion of the rights of Masculinism usually hold up America as an awful example of the triumph of Feminism. Thus Fritz Voechting in a book published in Germany, "On the American Cult of Woman," is appalled by what he sees in the United States. To him it is "the American danger," and he thinks it may be traced partly to the influence of the matriarchal system of the American Indians on the early European invaders and partly to the effects of co-education in undermining the fundamental conceptions of feminine subordination. This state of things is so terrible to the German mind, which has a constitutional bias to masculinism, that to Herr Voechting America seems a land where all the privileges have been captured by Woman and nothing is left to Man, but, like a good little boy, to be seen and not heard. That is a slight exaggeration, as other Germans, even since the War, have pointed out in German periodicals. Even if it were true, however, as a German Feminist has remarked, it would still be a pleasant variation from a rule we are so familiar with in the Old World. That it should be put forward at all indicates the growing

perception of a cleavage between the claims of Masculinism and the claims of Feminism.

It is not altogether easy at present to ascertain whom we are to recognise as the champions and representatives of Masculinism. Various notable figures are mentioned, from Nietzsche to Mr. Theodore Dreiser. Nietzsche, however, can scarcely be regarded as in all respects an opponent to Feminism, and some prominent feminists even count themselves his disciples. One may also feel doubtful whether Mr. Dreiser feels himself called upon to put on the armour of masculinism and play the part assigned to him. Another distinguished novelist, Mr. Robert Herrick, whose name has been mentioned in this connection, is probably too well-balanced, too comprehensive in his outlook, to be fairly claimed as a banner-bearer of masculinism. The name of Strindberg is most often mentioned, but surely very unfortunately. However great Strindberg's genius, and however acute and virulent his analysis of woman, Strindberg with his pronounced morbidity and sensitive fragility seems a very unhappy figure to put forward as the ideal representative of the virtues of masculinity. Much the same may be said of Weininger. The name of Mr. Belfort Bax, once associated with William Morris in the Socialistic campaign, may fairly be mentioned as a pioneer in this field. For many years he has protested vigorously against the encroachment of Feminism, and pointed out the various privileges, social and legal, which are possessed by women to the disadvantage of men. But although he is a distinguished student of philosophy, it can scarcely be

said that Mr. Bax has clearly presented in any wide philosophic manner the demands of the masculinistic spirit or definitely grasped the contest between Feminism and Masculinism. The name of William Morris would be an inspiring battle-cry if it could be fairly raised on the side of Masculinism. Unfortunately, however, the masculine figures scarcely seem eager to put on the armour of Masculinism. They are far too sensitive to the charm of Womanhood ever to rank themselves actively in any anti-feministic party. At the most they remain neutral.

Thus it is that the new movement cannot yet be regarded as organised. There is, however, a temptation for those among us who have all their lives been working in the cause of Feminism to belittle the future possibilities of Masculinism. There can be no doubt that all civilisation is now, and always has been to some extent, on the side of Feminism. Wherever a great development of civilisation has occurred—whether in ancient Egypt, or in later Rome, or in eighteenth-century France—there the influence of woman has prevailed, while laws and social institutions have taken on a character favourable to women. The whole current of civilisation tends to deprive men of the privileges which belong to brute force, and to confer on them the qualities which in ruder societies are especially associated with women. Whenever, as in the present great European War, brute force becomes temporarily predominant, the causes associated with Feminism are roughly pushed into the background. It is, indeed, the War which gives a new actuality to this question. War has always been regarded as the

special and peculiar province of Man, indeed, the sacred refuge of the masculine spirit and the ultimate appeal in human affairs. That is not the view of Feminism, nor yet the standpoint of Eugenics. Yet, to-day, in spite of all our homage to Feminism and Eugenics, we witness the greatest war of the world. It is an instructive spectacle from our present point of view. We realise, for one thing, how futile it is for Feminism to adopt the garb of masculine militancy. The militancy of the Suffragettes, which looked so brave and imposing in times of peace, disappeared like child's play at the first touch of real militancy. That was patriotic of the Suffragettes, no doubt ; but it was also a necessary measure of self-preservation, for non-combatants who carry bombs about in time of war, when armed sentries are swarming everywhere, are not likely to have much time for hunger-striking.

We witness another feature of war which has a bearing on Eugenics. It is sometimes said that war is necessary for the preservation of heroic and virile qualities which, without war and the cultivation of military ideals, would be lost to the race, and that so the race would degenerate. To-day France, which is the chief seat of anti-Militarism, and Belgium, a land of peaceful industrialism which had no military service until a few years ago, and England, which has always been content to possess a contemptible little army, and Russia whose popular ideals are humane and mystical, have sent to the front swarms of professional men and clerks and artisans and peasants

who had never occupied themselves with war at all. Yet these men have proved as heroic and even as skilful in the game of war as the men of Germany, where war is idolised and where the practice of military virtues and military exercises is regarded as the highest function alike of the individual and of the State. We see that we need not any longer worry over the possible extinction of these heroic qualities. What we may more profitably worry over is the question whether there is not some higher and nobler way of employing them than in the destruction of the finest fruits of civilisation and the slaughter of those very stocks on which Eugenics mainly relies for its materials.

We can also realise to-day that war is not only an opportunity for the exercise of virtues. It is also an opportunity for the exercise of vices. " War is Hell " said Sherman, and that is the opinion of most great reflective soldiers. We see that there is nothing too brutal, too cruel, too cowardly, too mean, and too filthy for some, at all events, of modern civilised troops to commit, whether by, or against, the orders of their officers. In France, a few months before the present War, I found myself in a railway train at Laon with two or three soldiers ; a young woman came to the carriage door, but, seeing the soldiers, she passed on ; they were decent, well-behaved men, and one of them remarked, with a smile, on the suspicion which the military costume arouses in women. Perhaps, however, it is a suspicion that is firmly based on ancient traditions. There is

the fatally seamy side of be-praised Militarism, and there Feminism has a triumphant argument.

In this connection I may allude in passing to a little conflict between Masculinism and Feminism which has lately taken place in Germany. Germany, as we know, is the country where the claims of Masculinism are most loudly asserted, and those of Feminism treated with most contempt. It is the country where the ideals of men and of women are in sharpest conflict. There has been a great outcry among men in Germany against the "treachery" and "unworthiness" of German women in bestowing chocolates and flowers on the prisoners, as well as doing other little services for them. The attitude towards prisoners approved by the men—one trusts it is not to be regarded as a characteristic outcome of Masculinism—is that of petty insults, of spiteful cruelty, and mean deprivations. Dr. Helene Stöcker, a prominent leader of the more advanced band of German Feminists, has lately published a protest against this treatment of enemies who are helpless, unarmed, and often wounded—based, not on sentiment, but on the highest and most rational grounds—which is an honour to German women and to their Feminist leaders.[1]

Taken altogether, it seems probable that when this most stupendous of wars is ended, it will be felt—not only from the side of Feminism, but even of Masculinism, —that War is merely an eruption of ancient barbarism

[1] "Würdelose Weiber," *Die Neue Generation*, Aug.–Sept., 1914.

which in its present virulent forms would not have been tolerated even by savages. Such methods are hopelessly out of date in days when wars may be engineered by a small clique of ambitious politicians and self-interested capitalists, while whole nations fight, with or without enthusiasm, merely because they have no choice in the matter. All the powers of civilisation are working towards the elimination of wars. In the future, it seems evident, militarism will not furnish the basis for the masculinistic spirit. It must seek other supports.

That is what will probably happen. We must expect that the increasing power of women and of the feminine influence will be met by a more emphatic and a more rational assertion of the qualities of men and the masculine spirit in life. It was unjust and unreasonable to subject women to conditions that were primarily made by men and for men. It would be equally unjust and unreasonable to expect men to confine their activities within limits which are more and more becoming adjusted to feminine preferences and feminine capacities. We are now learning to realise that the *tertiary* physical, and psychic sexual differences—those distinctions which are only found on the average, but on the average are constant[1] —are very profound and very subtle. A man is a man throughout, a woman is a woman throughout, and that difference is manifest in all the energies of body and soul. The modern doctrine of the internal secretions —the hormones which are the intimate stimulants to

[1] Havelock Ellis, *Man and Woman*, fifth ed., 1914, p. 21.

physical and psychic activity in the organism—makes clear to us one of the deepest and most all-pervading sources of this difference between men and women. The hormonic balance in men and women is unlike; the generative ferments of the ductless glands work to different ends.[1] Masculine qualities and feminine qualities are fundamentally and eternally distinct and incommensurate. Energy, struggle, daring, initiative, originality, and independence, even though sometimes combined with rashness, extravagance, and defect, seem likely to remain qualities in which men—*on the average*, it must be remembered—will be more conspicuous than women. Their manifestation will resist the efforts put forth to constrain them by the feminising influences of life.

Such considerations have a real bearing on the problem of Eugenics. As I view that problem, it is first of all concerned, in part with the acquisition of scientific knowledge concerning heredity and the influences which affect heredity; in part with the establishment of sound ideals of the types which the society of the future demands for its great tasks; and in part—perhaps even in chief part—with the acquisition of a sense of personal responsibility. Eugenic legislation is a secondary matter which cannot come at the beginning. It cannot come before our knowledge is firmly based and widely diffused;

[1] The conception of sexuality as dependent on the combined operation of various internal ductless glands, and not on the sexual glands proper alone, has been especially worked out by Professor W. Blair Bell, *The Sex Complex*, 1916.

it cannot come until we are clear as to the ideals which we wish to see embodied in human character and human action; it cannot come until the sense of personal responsibility towards the race is so widely spread throughout the community that its absence is universally felt to be either a crime or a disease.

I fear that point of view is not always accepted in England and still less in America. It is widely held throughout the world that America is not only the land of Feminism, but the land in which laws are passed on every possible subject, and with considerable indifference as to whether they are carried out, or even whether they could be carried out. This tendency is certainly well illustrated by eugenic legislation in the United States. In the single point of sterilisation for eugenic ends—and I select a point which is admirable in itself and for which legislation is perhaps desirable—at least twelve States have passed laws. Yet most of these laws are a dead letter; every one of them is by the best experts considered at some point unwise; and the remarkable fact remains that the total number of eugenical sterilising operations performed in the States *without any law at all* is greater than the total of those performed under the laws. So that the laws really seem to have themselves a sterilising effect on a most useful eugenic operation.[1]

I refrain from mentioning the muddles and undesigned

[1] H. H. Laughlin, *The Legal, Legislative, and Administrative Aspects of Sterilisation*, Eugenics Record Office Bulletin, No. 10B, 1914.

evils produced by other legislation of a much less admirable nature.[1] But I may perhaps be allowed to mention that it has seemed to some observers that there is a connection between the Feminism of America and the American mania for hasty laws which will not, and often cannot, be carried out in practice. Certainly there is no reason to suppose that women are firmly antagonistic to such legislation. Nice, pretty, virtuous little laws, complete in every detail, seem to appeal irresistibly to the feminine mind. (And, of course, many men have feminine minds.) It is true that such laws are only meant for show. But then women are so accustomed to things that are only meant for show, and are well aware that if one attempted to use such things they would fall to pieces at once.

However that may be, we shall probably find at last that we must fall back on the ancient truth that no external regulation, however pretty and plausible, will suffice to lead men and women to the goal of any higher social end. We must realise that there can be no sure guide to fine living save that which comes from within, and is supported by the firmly cultivated sense of personal responsibility. Our prayer must still be the simple, old-fashioned prayer of the Psalmist: "Create in me a clean heart, O God"—and to Hell with your laws!

In other words, our aim must be to evolve a social order in which the sense of freedom and the sense of

[1] I have discussed these already in a chapter of my book, *The Task of Social Hygiene*.

responsibility are both carried to the highest point, and that is impossible by the aid of measures which are only beneficial for the children of Perdition. That there are such beings, incapable alike either of freedom or of responsibility, we have to recognise. It is our business to care for them—until with the help of eugenics we can in some degree extinguish their stocks—in such refuges and reformatories as may be found desirable. But it is not our business to treat the whole world as a refuge and a reformatory. That is fatal to human freedom and fatal to human responsibility. By all means provide the halt and the lame with crutches. But do not insist that the sound and the robust shall never stir abroad without crutches. The result will only be that we shall all become more or less halt and lame.

It is only by such a method as this—by segregating the hopelessly feeble members of society and by allowing the others to take all the risks of their freedom and responsibility even though we strongly disapprove—that we can look for the coming of a better world. It is only by such a method as this that we can afford to give scope to all those varying and ever-contradictory activities which go to the making of any world worth living in. For Conflict, even the conflict of ideals, is a part of all vital progress, and each party to the conflict needs free play if that conflict is to yield us any profit. That is why Masculinists have no right to impede the play of Feminism, and Feminists no right to impede the play of Masculinism. The fundamental qualities of

Man, equally with the fundamental qualities of Woman, are for ever needed in any harmonious civilisation. There is a place for Masculinism as well as a place for Feminism. From the highest standpoint there is not really any conflict at all. They alike serve the large cause of Humanity, which equally includes them both.

IX

THE MENTAL DIFFERENCES OF MEN AND WOMEN

THE Great War, which has changed so many things, has nowhere effected a greater change than in the sphere of women's activities. In all the belligerent countries women have been called upon to undertake work which they had never been offered before. Europe has thus become a great experimental laboratory for testing the aptitudes of women. The results of these tests, as they are slowly realised, cannot fail to have permanent effects on the sexual division of labour. It is still too early to speak confidently as to what those effects will be. But we may be certain that, whatever they are, they can only spring from deep-lying natural distinctions.

The differences between the minds of men and the minds of women are, indeed, presented to all of us every day. It should, therefore, we might imagine, be one of the easiest of tasks to ascertain what they are. And yet there are few matters on which such contradictory

and often extravagant opinions are maintained. For many people the question has not arisen ; there are no mental differences, they seem to take for granted, between men and women. For others the mental superiority of man at every point is an unquestionable article of faith, though they may not always go so far as to agree with the German doctor, Möbius, who boldly wrote a book on " The Physiological Weak-mindedness of Women." For others, again, the predominance of men is an accident, due to the influences of brute force ; let the intelligence of women have freer play and the world generally will be straightened out.

In these conflicting attitudes we may trace not only the confidence we are all apt to feel in our intimate knowledge of a familiar subject we have never studied, but also the inevitable influence of sexual bias. Of such bias there is more than one kind. There is the egoistic bias by which we are led to regard our own sex as naturally better than any other could be, and there is the altruistic bias by which we are led to find a charming and mysterious superiority in the opposite sex. These different kinds of sexual bias act with varying force in particular cases ; it is usually necessary to allow for them.

Notwithstanding the fantastic divergencies of opinion on this matter, it seems not impossible to place the question on a fairly sound and rational base. In so complex a question there must always be room for some variations of individual opinion, for no two persons can approach the consideration of it with quite the same prepossessions, or with quite the same experience.

At the outset there is one great fundamental fact always to be borne in mind: the difference of the sexes in physical organisation. That we may term the *biological* factor in determining the sexual mental differences. A strong body does not involve a strong brain nor a weak body a weak brain; but there is still an intimate connection between the organisation of the body generally and the organisation of the brain, which may be regarded as an executive assemblage of delegates from all parts of the body. Fundamental differences in the organisation of the body cannot fail to involve differences in the nervous system generally, and especially in that supreme collection of nervous ganglia which we term the brain. In this way the special adaptation of woman's body to the exercise of maternity, with the presence of special organs and glands subservient to that object, and without any important equivalents in man's body, cannot fail to affect the brain. We now know that the organism is largely under the control of a number of internal secretions or hormones, which work together harmoniously in normal persons, influencing body and mind, but are liable to disturbance, and are differently balanced and with a different action in the two sexes.[1] It is not, we must remember, by any means altogether the exercise of the maternal function which causes the difference; the organs and aptitudes are equally present even if the function is not exercised, so that a woman cannot make herself a man by refraining from childbearing.

[1] See, for instance, Blair Bell's *The Sex Complex*, 1916, though the deductions drawn in this book must not always be accepted without qualifications.

In another way this biological factor makes itself felt, and that is in the differences in the muscular systems of men and women. These we must also consider fundamental. Although the extreme muscular weakness of average civilised women as compared to civilised men is certainly artificial and easily possible to remove by training, yet even in savages, among whom the women do most of the muscular work, they seldom equal or exceed the men in strength ; any superiority, when it exists, being mainly shown in such passive forms of exertion as bearing burdens. In civilisation, even under the influence of careful athletic training, women are unable to compete muscularly with men; and it is a significant fact that on the variety stage there are very few "strong women." It would seem that the difficulty in developing great muscular strength in women is connected with the special adaptation of woman's form and organisation to the maternal function. But whatever the cause may be, the resulting difference is one which has a very real bearing on the mental distinctions of men and women. It is well ascertained that what we call "mental" fatigue expresses itself physiologically in the same bodily manifestation as muscular fatigue. The avocations which we commonly consider mental are at the same time muscular; and even the sensory organs, like the eye, are largely muscular. It is commonly found in various great business departments where men and women may be said to work more or less side by side that the work of women is less valuable, largely because they are not able to bear additional strain ; under pressure of

extra work they give in before men do. It is noteworthy that the claims for sick benefit made by women under the National Insurance System in England have proved much greater (even three times greater) than the actuaries anticipated beforehand; while the Sick Insurance Societies of Germany, France, Austria, and Switzerland also report that women are ill oftener and for longer periods than men. Largely, no doubt, that is due to the special strain and the rigid monotony of our modern industrial system, but not entirely. Nearly two hundred years ago (in 1729) Swift wrote of women to Bolingbroke: "I protest I never knew a very deserving person of that sex who had not too much reason to complain of ill-health." The regulations of the world have been mainly made by men on the instinctive basis of their own needs, and until women have a large part in making them on the basis of their needs, women are not likely to be so healthy as men.

This by no means necessarily implies any mental inferiority; it is much more the result of muscular inferiority. Even in the arts muscular qualities count for much and are often essential, since a solid muscular system is needed even for very delicate actions; the arts of design demand muscular qualities; to play the violin is a muscular strain, and only a robust woman can become a famous singer.

The greater precocity of girls is another aspect of the biological factor in sexual mental differences. It is a psychic as well as a physical fact. This has been shown conclusively by careful investigation in many

parts of the civilised world and notably in America, where the school system renders such sexual comparison easy and reliable at all ages. There can now be no doubt that a girl at, let us say, the age of fourteen is on the average taller and heavier than a boy at the same age, though the degrees of this difference and the precise age at which it occurs vary with the individual and the race. Corresponding to this is a mental difference; in many branches of study, though not all, the girl of fourteen is superior to the boy, quicker, more intelligent, gifted with a better memory. Precocity, however, is a quality of dubious virtue. It is frequently found, indeed, in men of the highest genius; but, on the other hand, it is found among animals and among savages, and is here of no good augury. Many observers of the lower races have noted how the child is highly intelligent and well disposed, but seems to degenerate as he grows older. In the comparison of girls and boys, both as regards physical and mental qualities, it is constantly found that while the girls hold their own, and in many respects more than hold their own, with boys up to the age of fifteen or sixteen, after that the girls remain almost or quite stationary, while in the boys the curve of progress is continued without interruption. Some people have argued, hypothetically, that the greater precocity of girls is an artificial product of civilisation, due to the confined life of girls, produced, as it were, by the artificial overheating of the system in the hothouse of the home. This is a mistake. The same precocity of girls appears to exist even among the uncivilised, and independently

of the special circumstances of life. It is even found among animals also, and is said to be notably obvious in giraffes. It will hardly be argued that the female giraffe leads a more confined and domestic life than her brother.

Yet another aspect of the biological factor is to be found in the bearing of heredity on this question. To judge by the statements that one sometimes sees, men and women might be two distinct species, separately propagated. The conviction of some men that women are not fitted to exercise various social and political duties, and the conviction of some women that men are a morally inferior sex, are both alike absurd, for they both rest on the assumption that women do not inherit from their fathers, nor men from their mothers. Nothing is more certain than that—when, of course, we put aside the sexual characters and the special qualities associated with those characters—men and women, on the average, inherit equally from both of their parents, allowing for the fact that that heredity is controlled and modified by the special organisation of each sex. There are, indeed, various laws of heredity which qualify this statement, and notably the tendency whereby extremes of variation are more common in the male sex—so that genius and idiocy are alike more prevalent in men. But, on the whole, there can be no doubt that the qualities of a man or of a woman are a more or less varied mixture of those of both parents; and, even when there is no blending, both parents are almost equally likely to be influential in heredity. The good qualities of the one parent will

therefore benefit the child of the opposite sex, and the bad qualities will equally be transmitted to the offspring of opposite sex.

There is another element in the settlement of this question which may also be fairly called objective, and that is the *historical* factor. We are prone to believe that the particular status of the sexes that prevails among ourselves corresponds to a universal and unchangeable order of things. In reality this is far from being the case. It may, indeed, be truly said that there is no kind of social position, no sort of avocation, public or domestic, among ourselves exclusively appertaining to one sex, which has not at some time or in some part of the world belonged to the opposite sex, and with the most excellent results. We regard it as alone right and proper for a man to take the initiative in courtship, yet among the Papuans of New Guinea a man would think it indecorous and ridiculous to court a girl ; it was the girl's privilege to take the initiative in this matter, and she exercised it with delicacy and skill and the best moral results, until the shocked missionaries upset the native system and unintentionally introduced looser ways. There is, again, no implement which we regard as so peculiarly and exclusively feminine as the needle. Yet in some parts of Africa a woman never touches a needle ; that is man's work, and a wife who can show a neglected rent in her petticoat is even considered to have a fair claim for a divorce. Innumerable similar examples appear when we consider the human species in time and space. The

historical aspect of this matter may thus be said in some degree to counterbalance the biological aspect. If the fundamental constitution of the sexes renders their mental characters necessarily different, the difference is still not so pronounced as to prevent one sex sometimes playing effectively the parts which are generally played by the other sex.

It is not necessary to go outside the white European race to find evidences of the reality of this historical factor of the question before us. It would appear that at the dawn of European civilisation women were taking a leading part in the evolution of human progress. Various survivals which are enshrined in the myths and legends of classic antiquity show us the most ancient deities as goddesses; and, moreover, we encounter the significant fact that at the origin nearly all the arts and industries were presided over by female, not by male, deities. In Greece, as well as in Asia Minor, India, and Egypt, as Paul Lafargue has pointed out, woman seems to have taken divine rank before men; all the first inventions of the more useful arts and crafts, except in metals, are ascribed to goddesses; the Muses presided over poetry and music long before Apollo; Isis was "the lady of bread," and Demeter taught men to sow barley and corn instead of eating each other. Thus even among our own forefathers we may catch a glimpse of a state of things which, as various anthropologists have shown (notably Otis Mason in his *Woman's Share in Primitive Culture*), we may witness in the most widely

separated parts of the world. Thus among the Xosa Kaffirs, as well as other A-bantu stocks, Fritsch states that " the man claims for himself war, hunting, occupation with cattle ; all household cares, even the building of the house, as well as the cultivation of the ground, are woman's affair ; hardly in the most laborious work will a man lend a hand."[1] So that when to-day we see women entering the most various avocations, that is not a dangerous innovation, but perhaps merely a return to ancient and natural conditions.

It is not until specialisation becomes necessary and until men are relieved from the constant burden of battle and the chase that the frequent superiority of woman is lost. The modern industrial activities are dangerous, when they are dangerous, not because the work is too hard—for the work of primitive women is harder—but because it is an unnaturally and artificially dreary and monotonous work which stifles the mind, depresses the spirits, and injures the body, so that, it is said, 40 per cent. of married women who have been factory girls are treated for pelvic disorders before they are thirty. It is the conditions of women's work which need changing in order that they may become, like those of primitive women, so various that they develop the mind and fortify the body. This, however, is an evil which will be righted by the development of the mechanical side of industry, for machines tend constantly to become larger, heavier, speedier, more numerous and more automatic, requiring

[1] G. Fritsch, *Die Eingeborene Süd-Afrikas*, 1892, p. 79.

fewer workers to tend them, and these more frequently men.[1]

It may be added that the early predominance of woman in the work of civilisation is altogether independent of that conception of a primitive matriarchate, or government of women, which was set forth some fifty years ago by Bachofen, and has since caused so much controversy. Descent in the female line, not uncommonly found among primitive peoples, undoubtedly tended to place women in a position of great influence ; but it by no means necessarily involved any gynecocracy, or rule of women, and such rule is merely a hypothesis which by some enthusiasts has been carried to absurd lengths.

We see, therefore, that when we are approaching the question of the mental differences of the sexes among ourselves to-day, it is not impossible to find certain guiding clues which will save us from running into extravagance in either direction.

Without doubt the only way in which we can obtain a satisfactory answer to the numerous problems which meet us when we approach the question is by experiment. I have, indeed, insisted on the importance of these preliminary biological and historical considerations mainly because they indicate with what safety and freedom from risk we may trust to experiment. The sexes are far too securely poised by organic constitution and ancient tradition for any permanently injurious results to occur from the attempt to attain a better social readjustment

[1] D. R. Malcolm Keir, "Women in Industry," *Popular Science Monthly*, October, 1913.

in this matter. When the experiment fails, individuals may to some extent suffer, but social equilibrium swiftly and automatically rights itself. Practically, however, nearly every social experiment of this kind means that certain restrictions limiting the duties or privileges of women are removed, and when artificial coercions are thus taken away it can merely happen, as Mary Wollstonecraft long ago put it, that by the common law of gravity the sexes fall into their proper places. That, we may be sure, will be the final result of the interesting experiments for which the laboratory to-day is furnished by all the belligerent countries.

Definitely formulated statistical data of these results are scarcely yet available. But we may study the action of this natural process on one great practical experiment in mental sexual differences which has been going on for some time past. At one time in the various administrations of the International Postal Union there was a sudden resolve to introduce female labour to a very large extent; it was thought that this would be cheaper than male labour and equally efficient. There was consequently a great outcry at the ousting of male labour, the introduction of the thin end of a wedge which would break up society. We can now see that that outcry was foolish. Within recent years nearly all the countries which previously introduced women freely into their postal and telegraph services are now doing so only under certain conditions, and some are ceasing to admit them at all. This great practical experiment, carried out on an immense scale in thirty-five different

countries, has, on the whole, shown that while women are not inferior to men, at all events within the ordinary range of work, the substitution of a female for a male staff always means a considerable increase of numbers, that women are less rapid than men, less able to undertake the higher grade work, less able to exert authority over others, more lacking both in initiative and in endurance, while they require more sick leave and lose interest and energy on marriage. The advantages of female labour are thus to some extent neutralised, and in the opinions of the administrations of some countries more than neutralised, by certain disadvantages. The general result is that men are found more fitted for some branches of work and women more fitted for other branches; the result is compensation without any tendency for one sex to oust the other.

It may, indeed, be objected that in practical life no perfectly satisfactory experiments exist as to the respective mental qualities of men and women, since men and women are never found working under conditions that are exactly the same for both sexes. If, however, we turn to the psychological laboratory, where it is possible to carry on experiments under precisely identical conditions, the results are still the same. There are nearly always differences between men and women, but these differences are complex and manifold; they do not always agree; they never show any general piling up of the advantages on the side of one sex or of the other. In reaction-time, in delicacy of sensory perception, in accuracy of estimation and precision of movement,

there are nearly always sexual differences, a few that are fairly constant, many that differ at different ages, in various countries, or even in different groups of individuals. We cannot usually explain these differences or attach any precise significance to them, any more than we can say why it is that (at all events in America) blue is most often the favourite colour of men and red of women. We may be sure that these things have a meaning, and often a really fundamental significance, but at present, for the most part, they remain mysterious to us.

When we attempt to survey and sum up all the variegated facts which science and practical life are slowly accumulating with reference to the mental differences between men and women[1] we reach two main conclusions. On the one hand there is a fundamental equality of the sexes. It would certainly appear that women vary within a narrower range than men—that is to say, that the two extremes of genius and of idiocy are both more likely to show themselves in men. This implies that the pioneers in progress are most likely to be men. That, indeed, may be said to be a biological fact. "In all that concerns the evolution of ornamental characters the male leads; in him we see the trend which evolution is taking; the female and young afford us the measure of their advance along the new line which has to be taken."[2] In the human sphere of the arts and sciences, similarly, men, not women, take the lead. That men were the first

[1] See, for many of the chief of these, Havelock Ellis, *Man and Woman*, 5th Edition, 1914.

[2] W. P. Pycraft, *The Courtship of Animals*, p. 9.

decorative artists, rather than women, is indicated by the fact that the natural objects designed by early prehistoric artists were mainly women and wild beasts, that is to say, they were the work of masculine hunters, executed in idle intervals of the chase. But within the range in which nearly all of us move, there are always many men who in mental respects can do what most women can do, many women who can do what most men can do. We are not justified in excluding a whole sex absolutely from any field. In so doing we should certainly be depriving the world of some portion of its executive ability. The sexes may always safely be left to find their own levels.

On the other hand, the mental diversity of men and women is equally fundamental. It is rooted in organisation. The well-intentioned efforts of many pioneers in women's movements to treat men and women as identical, and, as it were, to force women into masculine moulds, were both mischievous and useless. Women will always be different from men, mentally as well as physically. It is well for both sexes that it should be so. It is owing to these differences that each sex can bring to the world's work various aptitudes that the other lacks. It is owing to these differences also that men and women have their undying charm for each other. We cannot change them, and we need not wish to.

X

THE WHITE SLAVE CRUSADE

DURING recent years we have witnessed a remarkable attempt—more popular and more international in character than any before—to deal with that ancient sexual evil which has for some time been picturesquely described as the White Slave Traffic. Less than forty years ago Professor Sheldon Amos wrote that this subject can scarcely be touched upon by journalists, and "can never form a topic of common conversation." Nowadays Churches, societies, journalists, legislators have all joined the ranks of the agitators. Not only has there been no voice on the opposite side, which was scarcely to be expected—for there has never been any anxiety to cry aloud the defence of "White Slavery" from the housetops—but there has been a new and noteworthy conquest over indifference and over that sacred silence which was supposed to encompass all sexual topics with suitable darkness. The banishment of that silence in the cause

of social hygiene is, indeed, not the least significant feature of this agitation.

It is inevitable, however, that these periodical fits of virtuous indignation by which Society is overtaken should speedily be spent. The victim of the moral fever finds himself exhausted by the struggle, scarcely able to cope with the complications of the disease, and, at the best, only too anxious to forget what he has passed through. He has an uneasy feeling that in the course of his delirium he has said and done many foolish things which it would now be unpleasant to recall too precisely.

There is no use in attempting to disguise the fact that this is what happened in the White Slave Traffic agitation. It became clear that we had been largely misled in regard to the evils to be combated, and that we were seduced into sanctioning various remedies for these evils which in cold blood it is impossible to approve of, even if we could believe them to be effective.

It is not even clear that all those who have talked about the "White Slave Traffic" have been quite sure what they meant by the term. Some people, indeed, have seemed to think that it meant prostitution in general. That is, of course, an absurd misapprehension. We are concerned with a trade which flourishes on prostitution, but that trade is not itself the trade or (as some prefer to call it) the profession of prostitutes. Indeed, the prostitute, under ordinary conditions and unharassed by persecution, is in many respects anything but a slave. She is much less a slave than the ordinary married woman. She is not fettered in humble dependence on the will

of a husband from whom it is the most difficult thing in the world to escape ; she is bound to no man and free to make her own terms in life ; while if she should have a child, that child is absolutely her own, and she is not liable to have it torn from her arms by the hands of the law. Apart from arbitrary and accidental circumstances, due to the condition of social feeling, the prostitute enjoys a position of independence which the married woman is still struggling to obtain.

The White Slave Traffic, therefore, is not prostitution ; it is *the commercialised exploitation of prostitutes.* The independent prostitute, living alone, scarcely lends herself to the White Slave trader. It is on houses of prostitution, where the less independent and usually weaker-minded prostitutes are segregated, that the traffic is based. Such houses cannot even exist without such traffic. There is little inducement for a girl to enter such a house, in full knowledge of what it involves, on her own initiative. The proprietors of such houses must therefore give orders for the " goods " they desire, and it is the business of procurers, by persuasion, misrepresentation, deceit, intoxication, to supply them. " The White Slave Traffic," as Kneeland states, " is thus not only a hideous reality, but a reality almost wholly dependent on the existence of houses of prostitution," and as the authors of *The Social Evil* state, it is " the most shameful species of business enterprise in modern times."[1]

[1] The nature of prostitution and of the White Slave Traffic and their relation to each other may clearly be studied in such valuable first-

In this intimate dependence of the White Slave Traffic on houses of prostitution, there lies, it may be pointed out, a hope for the future. We are concerned, for the most part, with the more coarse-grained part of the masculine population and with the more ignorant, degraded, and weak-minded part of the army of prostitutes. Although much has been said of the enormous extension of the White Slave Traffic during recent years, it is important to remember that that extension is chiefly marked in connection with the great new centres of population in the younger countries. It is fostered by the conditions prevailing in crude, youthful, prosperous, but incompletely blended, communities, which have too swiftly attained luxury, but have not yet attained the more humane and refined developments of civilisation, and among whom women are often scarce.[1] Although there are not yet any very clear signs of the decay of

hand investigations of the subject as *The Social Evil: With Special Reference to Conditions Existing in the City of New York*, 2nd edition, edited by E. R. A. Seligman, Putnam's, 1912; *Commercialised Prostitution in New York City*, by G. J. Kneeland, New York Century Co., 1913; *Prostitution in Europe*, by Abraham Flexner, New York Century Co., 1914; *The Social Evil in Chicago*. by the Vice-Commission of Chicago, 1911. As regards prostitution in England and its causes I should like to call attention to an admirable little book, *Downward Paths*, published by Bell & Sons, 1916. The literature of the subject is, however, extensive, and a useful bibliography will be found in the first-named volume.

[1] This is especially true of many regions in America, both North and South, where a hideous mixture of disparate nationalities furnishes conditions peculiarly favourable to the "White Slave Traffic," when prosperity increases. See, for instance, the well-informed and temperately written book by Miss Jane Addams, *A New Conscience and an Ancient Evil*, 1912.

prostitution in civilisation, there can hardly be a doubt that civilisation is unfavourable to houses of prostitution. They offer no inducements to the more intelligent and independent prostitutes, and their inmates usually present little attraction to any men save those whose demands are of the humblest character. There is, therefore, a tendency to the natural and spontaneous decay of organised houses of prostitution under modern civilised conditions; the prostitute and her clients alike shun such houses. Along this line we may foresee the disappearance of the White Slave Traffic, apart altogether from any social or legal attempts at its direct suppression.[1]

It is sometimes said that the relation of the isolated prostitute to her *souteneur* constitutes a form of "white slavery." Undoubtedly that may sometimes be the case. We are here in a confused field where the facts are complicated by a number of considerations, and where circumstances may very widely differ, for the "fancy boy"—selected from affection by the prostitute herself—may easily become the *souteneur*, or "cadet" as he is termed in New York, who seduces and trains to prostitution a large number of girls. The prostitute is so often a little weak in character and a little defective in intelligence; she is so often regarded as a legitimate prey by the world in which she moves, and a legitimate object of contempt and oppression by the social world above her and its legal officers, that she easily becomes abjectly dependent on the man who in some degree

[1] See Havelock Ellis: *Sex in Relation to Society* (*Studies in the Psychology of Sex*), Vol. VI., Ch. VII.

protects her from this extortion, contempt, and oppression, even though he sometimes trains her to his own ends and exploits her professional activities for his own advantage. These circumstances so often occur that some investigators consider that they represent the general rule. No doubt they are the most conspicuous cases. But they can scarcely be regarded as representing the normal relations of the prostitute to the man she is attracted to. She is earning her own living, and if she possesses a little modicum of character and intelligence, she knows that she can choose her own lover and dismiss him when she so pleases. He may beat her occasionally, but all over the world this is not always displeasing to the primitively feminine woman. "It is indeed true," as Kneeland remarks, "that many prostitutes do not believe their lovers care for them unless they 'beat them up' occasionally." The woman in this position is not more of a "white slave" than many wives, and some husbands, who submit to the whims and tyrannies of their conjugal partners, with, indeed, the additional hardship and misfortune that they are legally bound to them. And the *souteneur*, although from the respectable point of view he has put himself into a low-down moral position, is, after all, not so very unlike those parasitic wives who, on a higher social level, live lazily on their husbands' professional earnings, and sometimes give much less than the *souteneur* in return.

When, however, we put aside the complicated question of the prostitute's relationship to the man who is her lover, protector, and "bully," we have to recognise

that there really is a "White Slave Traffic," carried on in a ruthlessly business-like manner and on an international scale, with watchful agents, men and women, ever ready to detect and lure the victims. But even this too amply demonstrated fact was not found sufficiently highly spiced by the White Slave Traffic agitators. It was necessary to excite the public mind by sensational incidents. Everyone was told stories, as of incidents that had lately occurred in the next street, of innocent, refined, and well-bred girls who were snatched away by infamous brigands beneath the eyes of their friends, to be immured in dungeons of vice and never more heard of. Such incidents, if they ever occurred, would be too bizarre to be justifiably taken into account in great social movements. But it is even doubtful whether they ever occur. The White Slave traders are not heroes of romance, even of infamous romance; less so, indeed, than many more ordinary criminals; they are engaged in a very definite and very profitable business. They have no need to run serious risks. The world is full of girls who are over-worked, ill-paid, ignorant, weak, vain, greedy, lazy, or even only afflicted with a little innocent love of adventure, and it is among these that White Slave traders may easily find what their business demands, while experience enables them to detect the most likely subjects.

Careful inquiry, even among those who have made it their special business to collect all the evidence that can be brought together to prove the infamous character

of the White Slave Traffic, has apparently failed to furnish any reliable evidence of these sensational stories. It is easy to find prostitutes who are often dissatisfied with the life (in what occupation is it not easy?), but it is not easy to find prostitutes who cannot escape from that life when they sufficiently wish to do so, and are willing to face the difficulty of finding some other occupation. The very fact that the whole object of their exploitation is to bring them in contact with men belonging to the outside world is itself a guarantee that they are kept in touch with that world. Mrs. Billington-Grieg, a well-known pioneer in social movements, has carefully investigated the alleged cases of forcible abduction which were so freely talked about when the White Slave Bill was passed into law in England, but even the Vigilance Societies actively engaged in advocating the bill could not enable her to discover a single case in which a girl had been entrapped against her will.[1] No other result could reasonably have been expected. When so many girls are willing, and even eager, to be persuaded, there is little need for the risky adventure of capturing

[1] "The White Slave Traffic," *English Review*, June, 1913. It is just the same in America. Mr. Brand-Whitlock, when Mayor of Toledo, thoroughly investigated a sensational story of this kind brought to him in great detail by a social worker and found that it possessed not the slightest basis of truth. "It was," he remarks in an able paper on "The White Slave" (*Forum*, Feb., 1914), "simply another variant of the story that had gone the rounds of the continents, a story which had been somehow psychologically timed to meet the hysteria which the pulpit, the Press, and the legislature had displayed."

the unwilling. The uneasy realisation of these facts cannot fail to leave many honest Vice-Crusaders with unpleasant memories of their past.

It is not only in regard to alleged facts, but also in regard to proposed remedies, that the White Slave Agitation may properly be criticised. In England it distinguished itself by the ferocity with which the lash was advocated, and finally legalised. Benevolent bishops joined with genteel old maids in calling loudly for whips, and even in desiring to lay them personally on the backs of the offenders, notwithstanding that these Crusaders were nominally Christians, the followers of a Master who conspicuously reserved His indignation, not for sinners and law-breakers, but for self-satisfied saints and scrupulous law-keepers—just the same kind of excellent people, in fact, who are most prone to become Vice-Crusaders. Here again, it is probable, many unpleasant memories have been stored up.

It is well recognised by criminologists that the lash is both a barbarous and an ineffective method of punishment. "The history of flagellation," as Collas states in his great work on this subject, "is the history of a moral bankruptcy."[1] The survival of barbarous punishments from barbarous days, when ferocious punishments were a matter of course and the death penalty was inflicted for horse-stealing without in the least diminishing that offence, may be intelligible. But the re-enactment of such measures in so-called civilised days is an everlasting discredit to those who advocate it, and a disgrace to the

[1] G. F. Collas, *Geschichte des Flagellantismus*, 1913, Vol. I., p. 16.

community which permits it. This was pointed out at the time by a large body of social reformers, and will no doubt be realised at leisure by the persons concerned in the agitation.

Apart altogether from its barbarity, the lash is peculiarly unsuited for use in the White Slave trade, because it will never descend on the back of the real trader. The whip has no terrors for those engaged in illegitimate financial transactions, for in such transactions the principal can always afford to arrange that it shall fall on a subordinate who finds it worth while to run the risks. This method has long been practised by those who exploit prostitution for profit. To increase the risks merely means that the subordinate must be more heavily paid. That means that the whole business must be carried on more actively to cover the increased risks and expenses. It is a very ancient fact that moral legislation increases the evil it is designed to combat.[1]

It is necessary to point out some of the unhappy features of this agitation, not in order to minimise the evils it was directed against, nor to insinuate that they cannot be lessened, but as a warning against the reaction which follows such ill-considered efforts. The fiery zealot in a fury of blind rage strikes wildly at the evil he has just discovered, and then flings down his weapon, glad to forget all about his momentary rage and the errors it led him into. It is not so that ancient evils

[1] I have brought together some of the evidence on this point in the chapter on " Immorality and the Law " in my book, *The Task of Social Hygiene*.

are destroyed, evils, it must be remembered, that derive their vitality in part from human nature and in part from the structure of our society. By ensuring that our workers, and especially our women workers, are decently paid, so that they can live comfortably on their wages, we shall not indeed have abolished prostitution, which is more than an economic phenomenon,[1] but we shall more effectually check the White Slave trader than by the most draconic legislation the most imaginative Vice-Crusader ever devised. And when we ensure that these same workers have ample time and opportunity for free and joyous recreation, we shall have done more to kill the fascination of the White Slave Traffic than by endless police regulations for the moral supervision of the young.

No doubt the element of human nature in the manifestations we are concerned with will still be at work, an obscure instinct often acting differently in each sex, but tending to drive both into the same risks. Here we need even more fundamental social changes. It is

[1] The idea is cherished by many, especially among socialists, that prostitution is mainly an economic question, and that to raise wages is to dry up the stream of prostitution. That is certainly a fallacy, unsupported by careful investigators, though all are agreed that the economic condition of the wage-earner is one factor in the problem. Thus Commissioner Adelaide Cox, at the head of the Women's Social Wing of the Salvation Army, speaking from a very long and extensive acquaintance with prostitutes, while not denying that women are often "wickedly underpaid," finds that the cause of prostitution is "essentially a moral one, and cannot be successfully fought by other than moral weapons."—(*Westminster Gazette*, Dec. 2nd, 1912). In a yet wider sense, it may be said that the question of the causes of prostitution is essentially social.

sheer foolishness to suppose that when we raise our little dams in the path of a great stream of human impulse that stream will forthwith flow calmly back to its source. We must make our new channels concurrently with our dams. If we wish to influence prostitution we must re-make our marriage laws and modify our whole conception of the sexual relationships. In the meanwhile, we can at least begin to-day a task of education which must slowly though surely undermine the White Slave trader's stronghold. Such an education needs to be not merely instruction in the facts of sex and wise guidance concerning all the dangers and risks of the sexual life; it must also involve a training of the will, a development of the sense of responsibility, such as can never be secured by shutting our young people up in a hot-house, sheltered from every fortifying breath of the outside world. Certainly there are many among us—and precisely the most hopeless persons from our present point of view—who can never grow into really responsible persons.[1] Neither should they ever have been born. It is our business to see that they are not born; and that, if they

[1] This is a very important clue indeed in dealing with the problem of prostitution. "It is the weak-minded, unintelligent girl," Goddard states in his valuable work on *Feeblemindedness*, "who makes the White Slave Traffic possible." Dr. Hickson found that over 85 per cent. of the women brought before the Morals Court in Chicago were distinctly feeble-minded, and Dr. Olga Bridgeman states that among the girls committed for sexual delinquency to the Training School of Geneva, Illinois, 97 per cent. were feeble-minded by the Binet tests, and to be regarded as "helpless victims." (Walter Clarke, *Social Hygiene*, June, 1915, and *Journal of Mental Science*, Jan., 1916, p. 222.) There are fallacies in these figures, but it would appear that about half of the prostitutes in institutions are to be regarded as mentally defective.

are, they are at least placed under due social guardianship, so that we may not be tempted to make laws for society in general which are only needed by this feeble and infirm folk. Thus it is that when we seek to deal with the White Slave Trader and his victims and his patrons we have to realise that they are all very much as we have made them, moulded by their parents before birth, nourished on their mothers' knees. The task of making them over again next time, and making them better, is a revolutionary task, but it begins at home, and there is no home in which some part of the task cannot be carried out.

It is possible that at some period in the world's history, not only will the White Slave Traffic disappear, but even prostitution itself, and it is for us to work towards that day. But we may be quite sure that the social state which sees the last of the "social evil" will be a social state very unlike ours.

XI

THE CONQUEST OF VENEREAL DISEASE

THE final Report of the Royal Commission on Venereal Diseases has brought to an end an important and laborious investigation at what many may regard as an unfavourable moment. Perhaps, however, the moment is not so unfavourable as it seems. There is no period when venereal diseases flourish so exuberantly as in war time, and we shall have a sad harvest to gather here when the War is over.[1] Moreover, the War is teaching us to face the real facts of life more frankly and more courageously than ever before, and there is no field, scarcely even a battlefield, where a training in frankness and courage

[1] The increase of venereal disease during the Great War has been noted alike in Germany, France, and England. Thus, as regards France, Gaucher has stated at the Paris Academy of Medicine (*Journal de Médicine*, May 10th, 1916) that since mobilisation syphilis had increased by nearly one half, alike among soldiers and civilians; it had much increased in quite young people and in elderly men. In Germany, Neisser, a leading authority, states (*Deutsche Medizinische Wochenschrift*, 14th Jan., 1915) that the prevalence of venereal disease is much greater than in the war of 1870, and that "every day many thousands, not to say tens of thousands, of otherwise able-bodied men are withdrawn from the service on this account."

is so necessary as in this of Venereal Disease. It is difficult even to say that there is any larger field, for it has been found possible to doubt whether the great War of to-day, when all is summed up, will have produced more death, disease, and misery than is produced in the ordinary course of events, during a single generation, by venereal disease.

There are, as every man and woman ought to know, two main and quite distinct diseases (any other being unimportant) poetically termed "Venereal" because chiefly, though not by any means only, propagated in the intercourse over which the Roman goddess Venus once presided. These two diseases are syphilis and gonorrhœa. Both these diseases are very serious, often terrible, in their effects on the individual attacked, and both liable to be poisonous to the race. There has long been a popular notion that, while syphilis is indeed an awful disease, gonorrhœa may be accepted with a light heart. That, we now know, is a grave mistake. Gonorrhœa may seem trivial at the outset, but its results, especially for a woman and her children (when it allows her to have any), are anything but trivial; while its greater frequency, and the indifference with which it is regarded, still further increase its dangers.

About the serious nature of syphilis there is no doubt. It is a comparatively modern disease, not clearly known in Europe before the discovery of America at the end of the fifteenth century, and by some authorities[1] to-day

[1] The chief is Iwan Bloch who, in his elaborate work, *Der Ursprung der Syphilis* (2 vols., 1901, 1911), has fully investigated the evidence.

supposed to have been imported from America. But it soon ravaged the whole of our world, and has continued to do so ever since. During recent years it has perhaps shown a slight tendency to decrease, though nothing to what could be achieved by systematic methods; but its evils are still sufficiently alarming. Exactly how common it is cannot be ascertained with certainty. At least 10 per cent., probably more, of the population in our large cities have been infected by syphilis, some before birth. In 1912 for an average strength of 120,000 men in the English Navy, nearly 300,000 days were lost as a result of venereal disease, while among 100,000 soldiers in the Home Army for the same year, an average of nearly 600 men were constantly sick from the same cause. We may estimate from this small example how vast must be the total loss of working power due to venereal disease. Moreover, in Sir William Osler's words, "of the killing diseases syphilis comes third or fourth." Its prevalence varies in different regions and different social classes. The mortality rate from syphilis for males above fifteen is highest for unskilled labour, then for the group intermediate between unskilled and skilled labour, then for the upper and middle class, followed by the group intermediate between this class and skilled labour, while skilled labour, textile workers, and miners follow, and agricultural labourers come out most favourably of all. These differences do not represent any ascending grade in virtue or sexual abstinence, but are dependent upon differences in social condition; thus syphilis is comparatively rare among agricultural labourers because

they associate only with women they know and are not exposed to the temptation of strange women, while it is high among the upper class because they are shut out from sexual intimacy with women of their own class and so resort to prostitutes. On the whole, however, it will be seen, the poison of syphilis is fairly diffused among all classes. This poison may work through many years or even the whole of life, and its early manifestations are the least important. It may begin before birth : thus, one recent investigation shows that in 150 syphilitic families there were only 390 seemingly healthy children to 401 infant deaths, stillbirths, and miscarriages (as against 172 in 180 healthy families), the great majority of these failures being infant deaths and thus representing a large amount of wasted energy and expense.[1] Syphilis is, again, the most serious single cause of the most severe forms of brain disease and insanity, this often coming on many years after the infection, and when the early symptoms were but slight. Blindness and deafness from the beginning of life are in a large proportion of cases due to syphilis. There is, indeed, no organ of the body which is not liable to break down, often with fatal results, through syphilis, so that it has been well said that a doctor who knows syphilis thoroughly is familiar with every branch of his profession.

Gonorrhœa is a still commoner disease than syphilis, how common it is very difficult to say. It is also an older disease, for the ancient Egyptians knew it, and the

[1] N. Bishop Harman, " The Influence of Syphilis on the Chances of Progeny," *British Medical Journal*, Feb. 5th, 1916.

Biblical King Esarhaddon of Assyria, as the records of his court show, once caught it. It seems to some people no more serious than a common cold, yet it is able to inflict much prolonged misery on its victims, while on the race its influence in the long run is even more deadly than that of syphilis, for gonorrhœa is the chief cause of sterility in women, that is to say, in from 30 to 50 per cent. of such cases, while of cases of sterility in men (which form a quarter to a third of the whole) gonorrhœa is the cause in from 70 to 90 per cent. The inflammation of the eyes of the new-born leading to blindness is also in 70 per cent. cases due to gonorrhœa in the mother, and this occurs in over six per 1,000 births.

Three years ago a Royal Commission was appointed to investigate the best methods of controlling venereal disease, as small-pox, typhus, and to a large extent typhoid, have already been controlled. The Commission was well composed, not merely of officials and doctors, but of experienced men and women in various fields, and the final Report is signed by all the members, any difference of opinion being confined to minor points (which it is unnecessary to touch on here) and to two members only. The recommendations are conceived in the most practical and broad-minded spirit. They are neither faddy nor goody-goody. Some indeed may wish that they had gone further. The Commission leave over for later consideration the question of notifying venereal disease as other infectious diseases are notified, and there is no recommendation for the provision of preventive methods against infection for use before

intercourse, such as are officially favoured in Germany. But at both these points the Commissioners have been wise, for they are points to which sections of public opinion are still strongly hostile.[1] As they stand, the recommendations should carry conviction to all serious and reasonable persons. Already, indeed, the Government, without opposition, has expressed its willingness to undertake the financial burden which the Commission would impose on it.

The main Recommendations made by the Commission, if we put aside the suggestions for obtaining a more exact statistical knowledge, may be placed under the heads of Treatment and Prevention. As regards the first, it is insisted that measures should be taken to render the best modern treatment, which should be free to all, readily available for the whole community, in such a way that those affected will have no hesitation in taking advantage of the facilities thus offered. The means of treatment should be organised by County Councils and Boroughs, under the Local Government Board, which should have power to make independent arrangements when the local authorities fail in their duties. Institutional treatment should be provided at all general hospitals, special

[1] It is true that in my book, *Sex in Relation to Society* (Ch. VIII.) I have stated my belief that notification, as in the case of other serious infectious diseases, is the first step in the conquest of venereal disease. I still think it ought to be so. But a yet more preliminary step is popular enlightenment as to the need for such notification. The recommendations seem to me to go as far as it is possible to go at the moment in English-speaking countries without producing friction and opposition. In so far as they are carried out the recommendations will ensure the necessary popular enlightenment.

arrangements made for the treatment of out-patients in the evenings, and no objection offered to patients seeking treatment outside their own neighbourhoods. The expenditure should be assisted by grants from Imperial Funds to the extent of 75 per cent. It may be added that, however heavy such expenditure may be, an economy can scarcely fail to be effected. The financial cost of venereal disease to-day is so vast as to be beyond calculation. It enters into every field of life. It is enough merely to consider the significant little fact that the cost of educating a deaf child is ten times as great as that of educating an ordinary child.

Under the head of Prevention we may place such a suggestion as that the existence of infective venereal disease should constitute legal incapacity for marriage, even when unknown, and be a sufficient cause for annulling the marriage at the discretion of the court. But by far the chief importance under this head is assigned by the Commission to education and instruction. We see here the vindication of those who for years have been teaching that the first essential in dealing with venereal disease is popular enlightenment. There must be more careful instruction—" through all types and grades of education " —on the sexual relations in regard to conduct, while further instruction should be provided in evening continuation schools, as well as factories and works, with the aid of properly constituted voluntary associations.

These are sound and practical recommendations which, as the Government has realised, can be put in action at once. A few years ago any attempt to control venereal

disease was considered by many to be almost impious. Such disease was held to be the just visitation of God upon sin and to interfere would be wicked. We know better now. A large proportion of those who are most severely struck by venereal disease are new-born children and trustful wives, while a simple kiss or the use of towels and cups in common has constantly served to spread venereal disease in a family. Even when we turn to the commonest method of infection, we have still to remember that we are dealing largely with inexperienced youths, with loving and trustful girls, who have yielded to the deepest and most volcanic impulse of their natures, and have not yet learnt that that impulse is a thing to be held sacred for their own sakes and the sake of the race. In so far as there is sin, it is sin which must be shared by those who have failed to train and enlighten the young. A Pharisaic attitude is not only highly mischievous in its results, but is here altogether out of place. Much harm has been done in the past by the action of Benefit Societies in withholding recognition and treatment from venereal disease.

It is evident that this thought was at the back of the minds of those who framed these wise recommendations. We cannot expect to do away all at once with the feeling that venereal disease is "shameful." It may not even be desirable. But we can at least make clear that, in so far as there is any shame, it must be a question between the individual and his own conscience. From the point of view of science, syphilis and gonorrhœa are just diseases, like cancer and consumption, the only

diseases with which they can be compared in the magnitude and extent of their results, and therefore it is best to speak of them by their scientific names, instead of trying to invent vague and awkward circumlocutions. From the point of view of society, any attitude of shame is unfortunate, because it is absolutely essential that these diseases should be met in the open and grappled with methodically and thoroughly. Otherwise, as the Commission recognises, the sufferer is apt to become the prey of ignorant quacks whose inefficient treatment is largely responsible for the development of the latest and worst afflictions these diseases produce when not effectually nipped in the bud. That they can be thus cut short—far more easily than consumption, to say nothing of cancer—is the fact which makes it possible to hope for a conquest over venereal disease. It is a conquest that would make the whole world more beautiful and deliver love from its ugliest shadow. But the victory cannot be won by science alone, not even in alliance with officialdom. It can only be won through the enlightened co-operation of the whole nation.

XII

THE NATIONALISATION OF HEALTH

It was inevitable that we should some day have to face the problem of medical reorganisation on a social basis. Along many lines social progress has led to the initiation of movements for the improvement of public health. But they are still incomplete and imperfectly co-ordinated. We have never realised that the great questions of health cannot safely be left to municipal tinkering and the patronage of Bumbledom. The result is chaos and a terrible waste, not only of what we call "hard cash," but also of sensitive flesh and blood. Health, there cannot be the slightest doubt, is a vastly more fundamental and important matter than education, to say nothing of such minor matters as the post office or the telephone system. Yet we have nationalised these before even giving a thought to the Nationalisation of Health.

At the present day medicine is mainly in the hands, as it was two thousand years ago, of the "private

practitioner." His mental status has, indeed, changed. To-day he is submitted to a long and arduous training in magnificently equipped institutions ; all the laboriously acquired processes and results of modern medicine and hygiene are brought within the student's reach. And when he leaves the hospital, often with the largest and noblest conception of the physician's place in life, what do we do with him ? He becomes a "private practitioner," which means, as Duclaux, the late distinguished Director of the Pasteur Institute, put it, that we place him on the level of a retail grocer who must patiently stand behind his counter (without the privilege of advertising himself) until the public are pleased to come and buy advice or drugs which are usually applied for too late to be of much use, and may be thrown away at the buyer's good pleasure, without the possibility of any protest by the seller. It is little wonder that in many cases the doctor's work and aims suffer under such conditions ; his nature is subdued to what it works in ; he clings convulsively to his counter and its retail methods.

The fact is—and it is a fact that is slowly becoming apparent to all—that the private practice of medicine is out of date. It fails to answer the needs of our time. There are various reasons why this should be the case, but two are fundamental. In the first place, medicine has outgrown the capacity of any individual doctor ; the only adequate private practitioner must have a sound general knowledge of medicine with an expert knowledge of a dozen specialties ; that is to say, he

must give place to a staff of doctors acting co-ordinately, for the present system, or lack of system, by which a patient wanders at random from private practitioner to specialist, from specialist to specialist *ad infinitum*, is altogether mischievous. Moreover, not only is it impossible for the private practitioner to possess the knowledge required to treat his patients adequately: he cannot possess the scientific mechanical equipment nowadays required alike for diagnosis and treatment, and every day becoming more elaborate, more expensive, more difficult to manipulate. It is installed in our great hospitals for the benefit of the poorest patient; it could, perhaps, be set up in a millionaire's palace, but it is hopelessly beyond the private practitioner, though without it his work must remain unsatisfactory and inadequate.[1] In the second place, the whole direction of modern medicine is being changed and to an end away from private practice; our thoughts are not now mainly bent on the cure of disease but on its prevention. Medicine is becoming more and more transformed into hygiene, and in this transformation, though the tasks presented are larger and more systematic, they are also easier and more economical. These two fundamental tendencies of modern medicine—greater complexity of its methods and the predominantly preventive character of its aims—alone suffice to render the position of the private practitioner untenable. He cannot cope with the com-

[1] The result sometimes is that the ambitious doctor seeks to become a specialist in at least one subject, and instals a single expensive method of treatment to which he enthusiastically subjects all his patients. This would be comic if it were not sometimes rather tragic.

plexity of modern medicine; he has no authority to enforce its hygiene.

The medical system of the future must be a national system co-ordinating all the conditions of health. At the centre we should expect to find a Minister of Health, and every doctor of the State would give his whole time to his work and be paid by salary which in the case of the higher posts would be equal to that now fixed for the higher legal offices, for the chief doctor in the State ought to be at least as important an official as the Lord Chancellor. Hospitals and infirmaries would be alike nationalised, and, in place of the present antagonism between hospitals and the bulk of the medical profession, every doctor would be in touch with a hospital, thus having behind him a fully equipped and staffed institution for all purposes of diagnosis, consultation, treatment, and research, also serving for a centre of notification, registration, preventive and hygienic measures. In every district the citizen would have a certain amount of choice as regards the medical man to whom he may go for advice, but no one would be allowed to escape the medical supervision and registration of his district, for it is essential that the central Health Authority of every district should know the health conditions of all the inhabitants of the district. Only by some such organised and co-ordinated system as this can the primary conditions of Health, and preventive measures against disease, be genuinely socialised.

These views were put forward by the present writer twenty years ago in a little book on *The Nationalisation*

of Health, which, though it met with wide approval, was probably regarded by most people as Utopian. Since then the times have moved, a new generation has sprung up, and ideas which, twenty years ago, were brooded over by isolated thinkers are now seen to be in the direct line of progress; they have become the property of parties and matters of active propaganda. Even before the introduction of State Insurance Professor Benjamin Moore, in his able book, *The Dawn of the Health Age*, anticipating the actual march of events, formulated a State Insurance Scheme which would lead on, as he pointed out, to a genuinely National Medical Service, and later, Dr. Macilwaine, in a little book entitled *Medical Revolution*, again advocated the same changes: the establishment of a Ministry of Health, a medical service on a preventive basis, and the reform of the hospitals which must constitute the nucleus of such a service. It may be said that for medical men no longer engaged in private practice it is easy to view the disappearance of private practice with serenity; but it must be added that it is precisely that disinterested serenity which makes possible also a clear insight into the problems and a wider view of the new horizons of medicine. Thus it is that to-day the dreamers of yesterday are justified.

The great scheme of State Insurance was certainly an important step towards the socialisation of medicine. It came short, indeed, of the complete Nationalisation of Health as an affair of State. But that could not possibly be introduced at one move. Apart even from the difficulty of complete reorganisation, the two great

vested interests of private medical practice on the one hand and Friendly Societies on the other would stand in the way. A complicated transitional period is necessary, during which those two interests are conciliated and gradually absorbed. It is this transitional period which State Insurance has inaugurated. To compare small things to great—as we may, for the same laws run all through Nature and Society—this scheme corresponds to the ancient Ptolomæan system of astronomy, with its painfully elaborate epicycles, which preceded and led on to the sublime simplicity of the Copernican system. We need not anticipate that the transitional stage of national insurance will endure as long as the ancient astronomy. Professor Moore estimated that it would lead to a completely national medical service in twenty-five years, and since the introduction of that method he has, too optimistically, reduced the period to ten years. We cannot reach simplicity at a bound; we must first attempt to systematise the recognised and established activities and adjust them harmoniously.

The organised refusal of the medical profession at the outset to carry on, under the conditions offered, the part assigned to it in the great National Insurance scheme opened out prospects not clearly realised by the organisers. No doubt its immediate aspects were unfortunate. It not only threatened to impede the working of a very complex machine, but it dismayed many who were not prepared to see doctors apparently taking up the position of the syndicalists, and arguing that a profession which is essential to the national welfare need not

be carried out on national lines, but can be run exclusively by itself in its own interests. Such an attitude, however, usefully served to make clear how necessary it is becoming that the extension of medicine and hygiene in the national life should be accompanied by a corresponding extension in the national government. If we had had a Council of National Health, as well as of National Defence, or a Board of Health as well as a Board of Trade, a Minister of Health with a seat in the Cabinet, any scheme of Insurance would have been framed from the outset in close consultation with the profession which would have the duty of carrying it out. No subsequent friction would have been possible.

Had the Insurance scheme been so framed, it is perhaps doubtful whether it would have been so largely based on the old contract system. Club medical practice has long been in discredit, alike from the point of view of patient and doctor. It furnishes the least satisfactory form of medical relief for the patient, less adequate than that he could obtain either as a private patient or as a hospital patient. The doctor, on his side, though he may find it a very welcome addition to his income, regards Club practice as semi-charitable, and, moreover, a form of charity in which he is often imposed on; he seldom views his club patients with much satisfaction, and unless he is a self-sacrificing enthusiast, it is not to them that his best attention, his best time, his most expensive drugs, are devoted. To perpetuate and enlarge the club system of practice and to glorify it by affixing to it a national seal of approval, was, therefore, a

somewhat risky experiment, not wisely to be attempted without careful consultation with those most concerned.

Another point might then also have become clear: the whole tendency of medicine is towards a recognition of the predominance of Hygiene. The modern aim is to prevent disease. The whole national system of medicine is being slowly though steadily built up in recognition of the great fact that the interests of Health come before the interests of Disease. It has been an unfortunate flaw in the magnificent scheme of Insurance that this vital fact was not allowed for, that the old-fashioned notion that treatment rather than prevention is the object of medicine was still perpetuated, and that nothing was done to co-ordinate the Insurance scheme with the existing Health Services.

It seems probable that in a Service of State medical officers the solution may ultimately be found. Such a solution would, indeed, immensely increase the value of the Insurance scheme, and, in the end, confer far greater benefits than at present on the millions of people who would come under its operation. For there can be no doubt the Club system is not only unscientific; it is also undemocratic. It perpetuates what was originally a semi-charitable and second-rate method of treatment of the poorer classes. A State medical officer, devoting his whole time and attention to his State patients, has no occasion to make invidious distinctions between public and private patients.

A further advantage of a State Medical Service is that it will facilitate the inevitable task of nationalising

the hospitals, whether charitable or Poor-law. The Insurance Act, as it stands, opens no definite path in this direction. But nowadays, so vast and complicated has medicine become, even the most skilful doctor cannot adequately treat his patient unless he has a great hospital at his back, with a vast army of specialists and research-workers, and a manifold instrumental instalment.

A third, and even more fundamental, advantage of a State Medical Service is that it would help to bring Treatment into touch with Prevention. The private practitioner, as such, inside or outside the Insurance scheme, cannot conveniently go behind his patient's illness. But the State doctor would be entitled to ask: *Why* has this man broken down? The State's guardianship of the health of its citizens now begins at birth (is tending to be carried back before birth) and covers the school life. If a man falls ill, it is, nowadays, legitimate to inquire where the responsibility lies. It is all very well to patch up the diseased man with drugs or what not. But at best that is a makeshift method. The Consumptive Sanatoriums have aroused enthusiasm, and they also are all very well. But the Charity Organisation Society has shown that only about 50 per cent. of those who pass through such institutions become fit for work. It is not more treatment of disease that we want, it is less need for treatment. And a State Medical Service is the only method by which Medicine can be brought into close touch with Hygiene.

The present attitude of the medical profession sometimes strikes people as narrow, unpatriotic, and merely

self-interested. But the Insurance Act has brought a powerful ferment of intellectual activity into the medical profession which in the end will work to finer issues. A significant sign of the times is the establishment of the State Medical Service Association, having for its aim the organisation of the medical profession as a State Service, the nationalisation of hospitals, and the unification of preventive and curative medicine. To many in the medical profession such schemes still seem "Utopian"; they are blind to a process which has been in ever increasing action for more than half a century and which they are themselves taking part in every day.

XIII

EUGENICS AND GENIUS

THE cry is often heard to-day from those who watch with disapproval the efforts made to discourage the reckless procreation of the degenerate and the unfit: You are stamping out the germs of genius! It is widely held that genius is a kind of flower, unknown to the horticulturist, which only springs from diseased roots; make the plant healthily sound and your hope of blossoms is gone, you will see nothing but leaves. Or, according to the happier metaphor of Lombroso, the work of genius is an exquisite pearl, and pearls are the product of an obscure disease. To the medical mind, especially, it has sometimes been, naturally and properly no doubt, a source of satisfaction to imagine that the loveliest creations of human intellect may perhaps be employed to shed radiance on the shelves of the pathological museum. Thus we find eminent physicians warning us against any effort to decrease the vigour of pathological processes, and influential medical journals making solemn state-

ments in the same sense. "Already," I read in a recent able and interesting editorial article in the *British Medical Journal*, "eugenists in their kind enthusiasm are threatening to stamp out the germs of possible genius."

Now it is quite easy to maintain that the health, happiness, and sanity of the whole community are more precious even than genius. It is so easy, indeed, that if the question of eugenics were submitted to the Referendum on this sole ground there can be little doubt what the result would be. There are not many people, even in the most highly educated communities, who value the possibility of a new poem, symphony, or mathematical law so highly that they would sacrifice their own health, happiness, and sanity to retain that possibility for their offspring. Of course we may declare that a majority which made such a decision must be composed of very low-minded uncultured people, altogether lacking in appreciation of pathology, and reflecting no credit on the eugenic cause they supported; but there can be little doubt that we should have to admit their existence.

We need not hasten, however, to place the question on this ground. It is first necessary to ascertain what reason there is to suppose that a regard for eugenic considerations in mating would tend to stamp out the germs of genius. Is there any reason at all? That is the question I am here concerned with.

The anti-eugenic argument on this point, whenever any argument is brought forward, consists in pointing to all sorts of men of genius and of talent who, it is alleged, were poor citizens, physical degenerates the prey of

all manner of constitutional diseases, sometimes candidates for the lunatic asylum which they occasionally reached. The miscellaneous data which may thus be piled up are seldom critically sifted, and often very questionable, for it is difficult enough to obtain any positive biological knowledge concerning great men who died yesterday, and practically impossible in most cases to reach an unquestionable conclusion as regards those who died a century or more ago. Many of the most positive statements commonly made concerning the diseases even of modern genius are without any sure basis. The case of Nietzsche, who was seen by some of the chief specialists of the day, is still really quite obscure. So is that of Guy de Maupassant. Rousseau wrote the fullest and frankest account of his ailments, and the doctors made a *post-mortem* examination. Yet nearly all the medical experts—and they are many—who have investigated Rousseau's case reach different conclusions. It would be easy to multiply indefinitely the instances of great men of the past concerning whose condition of health or disease we are in hopeless perplexity.

This fact is, however, one that, as an argument, works both ways, and the important point is to make clear that it cannot concern us. No eugenic considerations can annihilate the man of genius when he is once born and bred. If eugenics is to stamp out the man of genius it must do so before he is born, by acting on his parents.

Nor is it possible to assume that if the man of genius, apart from his genius, is an unfit person to procreate the race, therefore his parents, not possessing any genius,

were likewise unfit to propagate. It is easy to find persons of high ability who in other respects are unfit for the ends of life, ill-balanced in mental or physical development, neurasthenic, valetudinarian, the victims in varying degrees of all sorts of diseases. Yet their parents, without any high ability, were, to all appearance, robust, healthy, hard-working, commonplace people who would easily pass any ordinary eugenic tests. We know nothing as to the action of two seemingly ordinary persons on each other in constituting heredity, how hypertrophied intellectual aptitude comes about, what accidents, normal or pathological, may occur to the germ before birth, nor even how strenuous intellectual activity may affect the organism generally. We cannot argue that since these persons, apart from their genius, were not seemingly the best people to carry on the race, therefore a like judgment should be passed on their parents and the germs of genius thus be stamped out.

We only arrive at the crucial question when we ask: Have the characters of the parents of men of genius been of such an obviously unfavourable kind that eugenically they would nowadays be dissuaded from propagation, or under a severe *régime* of compulsory certificates (the desirability of which I am far indeed from assuming) be forbidden to marry? Have the parents of genius belonged to the "unfit"? That is a question which must be answered in the affirmative if this objection to eugenics has any weight. Yet so far as I know, none of those who have brought forward the objection have supported it by any evidence of the kind whatever.

Thirty years ago Dr. Maudsley dogmatically wrote: "There is hardly ever a man of genius who has not insanity or nervous disorder of some form in his family." But he never brought forward any evidence in support of that pronouncement. Nor has anyone else, if we put aside the efforts of more or less competent writers—like Lombroso in his *Man of Genius* and Nisbet in his *Insanity of Genius*—to rake in statements from all quarters regarding the morbidities of genius, often without any attempt to authenticate, criticise, or sift them, and never with any effort to place them in due perspective.[1]

It so happens that, some years ago, with no relation to eugenic considerations, I devoted a considerable amount of attention to the biological characters of British men of genius, considered, so far as possible, on an objective and impartial basis.[2] The selection, that is to say, was made, so far as possible, without regard to

[1] A Danish alienist, Lange, has, however, made an attempt on a statistical basis to show a connection between mental ability and mental degeneracy. (F. Lange, *Degeneration in Families*, translated from the Danish, 1907). He deals with 44 families which have provided 428 insane or neuropathic persons within a few generations, and during the same period a large number also of highly distinguished members, Cabinet ministers, bishops, artists, poets, etc. But Lange admits that the forms of insanity found in these families are of a slight and not severe character, while it is clear that the forms of ability are also in most cases equally slight; they are mostly "old" families, such as naturally produce highly-trained and highly-placed individuals. Moreover, Lange's methods and style of writing are not scientifically exact, and he fails to define precisely what he means by a "family." His investigation indicates that there is a frequent tendency for men of ability to belong to families which are not entirely sound, and that is a conclusion which is not seriously disputed.

[2] Havelock Ellis, *A Study of British Genius*, 1904.

personal predilections, in accordance with certain rules, from the *Dictionary of National Biography*. In this way one thousand and thirty names were obtained of men and women who represent the flower of British genius during historical times, only excluding those persons who were alive at the end of the last century. What proportion of these were the offspring of parents who were insane or mentally defective to a serious extent ?

If the view of Maudsley—that there is " hardly ever " a man of genius who is not the product of an insane or nervously-disordered stock—had a basis of truth, we should expect that in one or other parents of the man of genius actual insanity had occurred in a very large proportion of cases ; 25 per cent. would be a moderate estimate. But what do we find ? In not 1 per cent. can definite insanity be traced among the parents of British men and women of genius. No doubt this result is below the truth ; the insanity of the parents must sometimes have escaped the biographer's notice. But even if we double the percentage to escape this source of error, the proportion still remains insignificant.

There is more to be said. If the insanity of the parent occurred early in life, we should expect it to attract attention more easily than if it occurred late in life. Those parents of men of genius falling into insanity late in life, the critic may argue, escape notice. But it is precisely to this group to which all the ascertainably insane parents of British men of genius belong. There is not a single recorded instance, so far as I have been able to ascertain, in which the parent had been definitely

and recognisably insane before the birth of the distinguished child ; so that any prohibition of the marriage of persons who had previously been insane would have left British genius untouched. In all cases the insanity came on late in life, and it was usually, without doubt, of the kind known as senile dementia. This was so in the case of the mother of Bacon, the most distinguished person in the list of those with an insane parent. Charles Lamb's father, we are told, eventually became " imbecile." Turner's mother became insane. The same is recorded of Archbishop Tillotson's mother and of Archbishop Leighton's father. This brief list includes all the parents of British men of genius who are recorded (and not then always very definitely) as having finally died insane. In the description given of others of the parents of our men of genius it is not, however, difficult to detect that, though they were not recognised as insane, their mental condition was so highly abnormal as to be not far removed from insanity. This was the case with Gray's father and with the mothers of Arthur Young and Andrew Bell. Even when we allow for all the doubtful cases, the proportion of persons of genius with an insane parent remains very low, less than 2 per cent.

Senile dementia, though it is one of the least important and significant of the forms of insanity, and is entirely compatible with a long and useful life, must not, however, be regarded, when present in a marked degree, as the mere result of old age. Entirely normal people of sound heredity do not tend to manifest signs of pronounced mental weakness or abnormality even in extreme old

age. We are justified in suspecting a neurotic strain, though it may not be of severe degree. This is, indeed, illustrated by our records of British genius. Some of the eminent men of genius on my list (at least twelve) suffered before death from insanity which may probably be described as senile dementia. But several of these were somewhat abnormal during earlier life (like Swift) or had a child who became insane (like Bishop Marsh). In these and in other cases there has doubtless been some hereditary neurotic strain.

It is clearly, however, not due to any intensity of this strain that we find the incidence of insanity in men of genius, as illustrated, for example, by senile dementia, so much more marked than its incidence on their parents. There is another factor to be invoked here: convergent morbid heredity. If a man and a woman, each with a slight tendency to nervous abnormality, marry each other, there is a much greater chance of the offspring manifesting a severe degree of nervous abnormality than if they had married entirely sound partners. Now both among normal and abnormal people there is a tendency for like to mate with like. The attraction of the unlike for each other, which was once supposed to prevail, is not predominant, except within the sphere of the secondary sexual characters, where it clearly prevails, so that the ultra-masculine man is attracted to the ultra-feminine woman, and the feminine man to the boyish or mannish woman. Apart from this, people tend to marry those who are both psychically and physically of the same type as themselves. It thus happens that nervously abnormal

people become mated to the nervously abnormal. This is well illustrated by the British men of genius themselves. Although insanity is more prevalent among them than among their parents, the same can scarcely be said of them in regard to their wives. It is notable that the insane wives of these men of genius are almost as numerous as the insane men of genius, though it rarely happens (as in the case of Southey) that both husband and wife go out of their minds. But in all these cases there has probably been a mutual attraction of mentally abnormal people.

It is to this tendency in the parents of men of genius, leading to a convergent heredity, that we must probably attribute the undue tendency of the men of genius themselves to manifest insanity. Each of the parents separately may have displayed but a minor degree of neuropathic abnormality, but the two strains were fortified by union and the tendency to insanity became more manifest. This was, for instance, the case as regards Charles Lamb. The nervous abnormality of the parents in this case was less profound than that of the children, but it was present in both. Under such circumstances what is called the law of anticipation comes into play; the neurotic tendency of the parents, increased by union, is also antedated, so that definite insanity occurs earlier in the life of the child than, if it had appeared at all, it occurred in the life of the parent. Lamb's father only became weak-minded in old age, but since the mother also had a mentally abnormal strain, Lamb him-

self had an attack of insanity early in life, and his sister was liable to recurrent insanity during a great part of her life. Notwithstanding, however, the influence of this convergent heredity, it is found that the total insanity of British men and women of genius is not more, so far as can be ascertained—even when slight and dubious cases are included—than 4.2 per cent. That ascertainable proportion must be somewhat below the real proportion, but in any case it scarcely suggests that insanity is an essential factor of genius.

Let us, however, go beyond the limits of British genius, and consider the evidence more freely. There is, for instance, Tasso, who was undoubtedly insane for a good part of his life, and has been much studied by the pathologists. De-Gaudenzi, who has written one of the best psychopathological studies of Tasso, shows clearly that his father, Bernardo, was a man of high intelligence, of great emotional sensibility, with a tendency to melancholy as well as a mystical idealism, of somewhat weak character, and prone to invoke Divine aid in the slightest difficulty. It was a temperament that might be considered a little morbid, outside a monastery, but it was not insane, nor is there any known insanity among his near relations. This man's wife, Porzia, Tasso's mother, arouses the enthusiasm of all who ever mention her, as a creature of angelic perfection. No insanity here either, but something of the same undue sensitiveness and melancholy as in the father, the same absence of the coarser and more robust virtues. Moreover, she

belonged to a family by no means so angelic as herself, not insane, but abnormal—malevolent, cruel, avaricious, almost criminal. The most scrupulous modern alienist would hesitate to deprive either Bernardo or Porzia of the right to parenthood. Yet, as we know, the son born of this union was not only a world-famous poet, but an exceedingly unhappy, abnormal, and insane man.

Let us take the case of another still greater and more famous man, Rousseau. It cannot reasonably be doubted that, at some moments in his life at all events, and perhaps during a considerable period, Rousseau was definitely insane. We are intimately acquainted with the details of the life and character of his relations and of his ancestry. We not only possess the full account he set forth at the beginning of his *Confessions*, but we know very much more than Rousseau knew. Geneva was paternal—paternal in the most severe sense—in scrutinising every unusual act of its children, and castigating every slightest deviation from the straight path. The whole life of the citizens of old Geneva may be read in Genevan archives, and not a scrap of information concerning the conduct of Rousseau's ancestors and relatives as set down in these archives but has been brought to the light of day. If there is any great man of genius whom the activities of these fanatical eugenists would have rendered impossible, it must surely have been Rousseau. Let us briefly examine his parentage. Rousseau's father was the outcome of a fine stock which for two generations had been losing something of its fine

qualities, though without sinking anywhere near insanity, criminality, or pauperism. The Rousseaus still exercised their craft with success; they were on the whole esteemed; Jean-Jacques's father was generally liked, but he was somewhat unstable, romantic, with no strong sense of duty, hot-tempered, easily taking offence. The mother, from a modern standpoint, was an attractive, highly accomplished, and admirable woman. In her neighbours' eyes she was not quite Puritanical enough, high-spirited, independent, adventurous, fond of innocent gaiety, but a devoted wife when, at last, at the age of thirty, she married. More than once before marriage she was formally censured by the ecclesiastical authorities for her little insubordinations, and these may be seen to have a certain significance when we turn to her father; he was a thorough *mauvais sujet,* with an incorrigible love of pleasure, and constantly falling into well-deserved trouble for some escapade with the young women of Geneva. Thus on both sides there was a certain nervous instability, an uncontrollable wayward emotionality. But of actual insanity, of nervous disorder, of any decided abnormality or downright unfitness in either father or mother, not a sign. Isaac Rousseau and Susanne Bernard would have been passed by the most ferocious eugenist. It is again a case in which the chances of convergent heredity have produced a result which in its magnitude, in its heights and in its depths, none could foresee. It is one of the most famous and most accurately known examples of insane genius in history, and we see

what amount of support it offers to the ponderous dictum concerning the insane heredity of genius.

Let us turn from insanity to grave nervous disease. Epilepsy at once comes before us, all the more significantly since it has been considered, more especially by Lombroso, to be the special disease through which genius peculiarly manifests itself. It is true that much importance here is attached to those minor forms of epilepsy which involve no gross and obvious convulsive fit. The existence of these minor attacks is, in the case of men of genius, usually difficult to disprove and equally difficult to prove. It certainly should not be so as regards the major form of epilepsy. Yet among the thousand and thirty persons of British genius I was only able to find epilepsy mentioned twice, and in both cases incorrectly, for the National Biographer had attributed it to Lord Herbert of Cherbury through misreading a passage in Herbert's *Autobiography*, while the epileptic fits of Sir W. R. Hamilton in old age were most certainly not true epilepsy. Without doubt, no eugenist could recommend an epileptic to become a parent. But if epilepsy has no existence in British men of genius it is improbable that it has often occurred among their parents. The loss to British genius through eugenic activity in this sphere would probably, therefore, have been *nil*.

Putting aside British genius, however, one finds that it has been almost a commonplace of alienists and neurologists, even up to the present day, to present glibly a formidable list of mighty men of genius as victims

of epilepsy. Thus I find a well-known American alienist lately making the unqualified and positive statement that "Mahomet, Napoleon, Molière, Handel, Paganini, Mozart, Schiller, Richelieu, Newton and Flaubert" were epileptics, while still more recently a distinguished English neurologist, declaring that "the world's history has been made by men who were either epileptics, insane, or of neuropathic stock," brings forward a similar and still larger list to illustrate that statement, with Alexander the Great, Julius Cæsar, the Apostle Paul, Luther, Frederick the Great and many others thrown in, though unfortunately he fails to tell us which members of the group he desires us to regard as epileptic. Julius Cæsar was certainly one of them, but the statement of Suetonius (not an unimpeachable authority in any case) that Cæsar had epileptic fits towards the close of his life is disproof rather than proof of true epilepsy. Of Mahomet, and St. Paul also, epilepsy is alleged. As regards the first, the most competent authorities regard the convulsive seizures attributed to the Prophet as perhaps merely a legendary attempt to increase the awe he inspired by unmistakable evidence of divine authority. The narrative of St. Paul's experience on the road to Damascus is very unsatisfactory evidence on which to base a medical diagnosis, and it may be mentioned that, in the course of a discussion in the columns of the *British Medical Journal* during 1910, as many as six different views were put forward as to the nature of the Apostle's "thorn in the flesh." The evidence on which Richelieu, who

was undoubtedly a man of very fragile constitution, is declared to be epileptic, is of the very slenderest character. For the statement that Newton was epileptic there is absolutely no reliable evidence at all, and I am quite ignorant of the grounds on which Mozart, Handel and Schiller are declared epileptics. The evidence for epilepsy in Napoleon may seem to carry slightly more weight, for there is that in the moral character of Napoleon which we might very well associate with the epileptic temperament. It seems clear that Napoleon really had at times convulsive seizures which were at least epileptoid. Thus Talleyrand describes how one day, just after dinner (it may be recalled that Napoleon was a copious and exceedingly rapid eater), passing for a few minutes into Josephine's room, the Emperor came out, took Talleyrand into his own room, ordered the door to be closed, and then fell down in a fit. Bourrienne, however, who was Napoleon's private secretary for eleven years, knew nothing about any fits. It is not usual, in a true epileptic fit, to be able to control the circumstances of the seizure to this extent, and if Napoleon, who lived so public a life, furnished so little evidence of epilepsy to his environment, it may be regarded as very doubtful whether any true epilepsy existed, and on other grounds it seems highly improbable.[1]

[1] Dr. Cabanès (*Indiscrétions de l'Histoire*, 3rd series) similarly concludes that, while in temperament Napoleon may be said to belong to the epileptic class, he was by no means an epileptic in the ordinary sense. Kanngiesser (*Prager Medizinische Wochenschrift*, 1912, No. 27) suggests that from his slow pulse (40 to 60) Napoleon's attacks may have originated in the heart and vessels.

Of all these distinguished persons in the list of alleged epileptics, it is naturally most profitable to investigate the case of the latest, Flaubert, for here it is easiest to get at the facts. Maxime du Camp, a friend in early life, though later incompatibility of temperament led to estrangement, announced to the world in his *Souvenirs* that Flaubert was an epileptic, and Goncourt mentions in his *Journal* that he was in the habit of taking much bromide. But the "fits" never began until the age of twenty-eight, which alone should suggest to a neurologist that they are not likely to have been epileptic; they never occurred in public; he could feel the fit coming on and would go and lie down; he never lost consciousness; his intellect and moral character remained intact until death. It is quite clear that there was no true epilepsy here, nor anything like it.[1] Flaubert was of fairly sound nervous heredity on both sides, and his father, a distinguished surgeon, was a man of keen intellect and high character. The novelist, who was of robust physical and mental constitution, devoted himself

[1] Genuine epilepsy usually comes on before the age of twenty-five; it very rarely begins after twenty-five, and never after thirty. (L. W. Weber, *Münchener Medizinische Wochenschrift*, July 30th and Aug. 6th, 1912.) In genuine epilepsy, also, loss of consciousness accompanies the fits; the exceptions to this rule are rare, though Audenino, a pupil of Lombroso, who sought to extend the sphere of epilepsy, believes that the exceptions are not so rare as is commonly supposed (*Archivio di Psichiatria*, fasc. VI., 1906). Moreover, true epilepsy is accompanied by a progressive mental deterioration which terminates in dementia; in the Craig Colony for Epileptics of New York, among 3,000 epileptics this progressive deterioration is very rarely absent (*Lancet*, March 1st, 1913); but it is not found in the distinguished men of genius who are alleged to be epileptic. Epileptic deterioration has been elaborately studied by MacCurdie, *Psychiatric Bulletin*, New York, April, 1916.

strenuously and exclusively to intellectual work; it is not surprising that he was somewhat neurasthenic, if not hysterical, and Dumesnil, who discusses this question in his book on Flaubert, concludes that the "fits" may be called hysterical attacks of epileptoid form.

It may well be that we have in Flaubert's case a clue to the "epilepsy" of the other great men who in this matter are coupled with him. They were nearly all persons of immense intellectual force, highly charged with nervous energy; they passionately concentrated their energy on the achievement of life tasks of enormous magnitude, involving the highest tension of the organism. Under such conditions, even in the absence of all bad heredity or of actual disease, convulsive discharges may occur. We may see even in healthy and sound women that occasionally some physiological and unrelieved overcharging of the organism with nervous energy may result in what is closely like a hysterical fit, while even a violent fit of crying is a minor manifestation of the same tendency. The feminine element in genius has often been emphasised, and it may well be that under the conditions of the genius-life when working at high pressure we have somewhat similar states of nervous overcharging, and that from time to time the tension is relieved, naturally and spontaneously, by a convulsive discharge. This, at all events, seems a possible explanation.

It is rather strange that in these recklessly confident lists of eminent "epileptics" we fail to find the one man

of distinguished genius whom perhaps we are justified in regarding as a true epileptic. Dostoievsky appears to have been an epileptic from an early age ; he remained liable to epileptic fits throughout life, and they plunged him into mental dejection and confusion. In many of his novels we find pictures of the epileptic temperament, evidently based on personal experience, showing the most exact knowledge and insight into all the phases of the disease. Moreover, Dostoievsky in his own person appears to have displayed the perversions and the tendency to mental deterioration which we should expect to find in a true epileptic. So far as our knowledge goes, he really seems to stand alone as a manifestation of supreme genius combined with epilepsy. Yet, as Dr. Loygue remarks in his medico-psychological study of the great Russian novelist, epilepsy only accounts for half of the man, and leaves unexplained his passion for work ; " the dualism of epilepsy and genius is irreducible."

There is one other still more recent man of true genius, though not of the highest rank, who may possibly be counted as epileptic : Vincent van Gogh, the painter.[1] A brilliant and highly original artist, he was a definitely abnormal man who cannot be said to have escaped mental deterioration. Simple and humble and suffering, recklessly sacrificing himself to help others, always in

[1] See, *e.g.*, Elizabeth du Quesne van Gogh, *Personal Recollections of Vincent van Gogh*, p. 46. These epileptic attacks are, however, but vaguely mentioned, and it would seem that they only appeared during the last years of the artist's life.

trouble, van Gogh had many points of resemblance to Dostoievsky. He has, indeed, been compared to the "Idiot" immortalised by Dostoievsky, in some aspects an imbecile, in some aspects a saint. Yet epilepsy no more explains the genius of van Gogh than it explains the genius of Dostoievsky.

Thus the impression we gain when, laying aside prejudice, we take a fairly wide and impartial survey of the facts, or even when we investigate in detail the isolated facts to which significance is most often attached, by no means supports the notion that genius springs entirely, or even mainly, from insane and degenerate stocks, In some cases, undoubtedly, it is found in such stocks, but the ability displayed in these cases is rarely, perhaps never, of any degree near the highest. It is quite easy to point to persons of a certain significance, especially in literature and art, who, though themselves sane, possess many near relatives who are highly neurotic and sometimes insane. Such cases, however, are far from justifying any confident generalisations concerning the intimate dependence of genius on insanity.

We see, moreover, that to conclude that men of genius are rarely or never the offspring of a radically insane parentage is not to assume that the parents of men of genius are usually of average normal constitution. That would in any case be improbable. Apart from the tendency to convergent heredity already emphasised, there is a wider tendency to slight abnormality, a minor degree of inaptness for ordinary life in the parentage of genius.

I found that in 5 per cent. cases (certainly much below the real mark) of the British people of genius, one parent, generally the father, had shown abnormality from a social or parental point of view. He had been idle, or extravagant, or restless, or cruel, or intemperate, or unbusinesslike, in the great majority of these cases "unsuccessful." The father of Dickens (represented by his son in Micawber), who was always vainly expecting something to turn up, is a good type of these fathers of genius. Shakespeare's father may have been of much the same sort. George Meredith's father, again, who was too superior a person for the outfitting business he inherited, but never succeeded in being anything else, is another example of this group of fathers of genius. The father in these cases is a link of transition between the normal stock and its brilliantly abnormal offshoot. In this transitional stage we see, as it were, the stock *reculer pour mieux sauter*, but it is in the son that the great leap is made manifest.

This peculiarity will serve to indicate that in a large proportion of cases the parentage of genius is not entirely sound and normal. We must dismiss absolutely the notion that the parents of persons of genius tend to exhibit traits of a grossly insane or nervously degenerate character. The evidence for such a view is confined to a minute proportion of cases, and even then is usually doubtful. But it is another matter to assume that the parentage of genius is absolutely normal, and still less can we assert that genius always springs from entirely

sound stocks. The statement is sometimes made that all families contain an insane element. That statement cannot be accepted. There are many people, including people of a high degree of ability, who can trace no gross mental or nervous disease in their families, unless remote branches are taken into account. Not many statistics bearing on this point are yet available. But Jenny Koller, in a very thorough investigation, found at Zurich in 1895 that "healthy" people had in 28 per cent. cases directly, and in 59 per cent. cases indirectly and altogether, a neuropathic heredity, while Otto Diem in 1905 found that the corresponding percentages were still higher—33 and 69. It should not, therefore, be matter for surprise if careful investigation revealed a traceable neuropathic element at least as frequent as this in the families which produce a man of genius.

It may further, I believe, be argued that the presence of a neuropathic element of this kind in the ancestry of genius is frequently not without a real significance. Aristotle said in his *Poetics* that poetry demanded a man with "a touch of madness," though the ancients, who frequently made a similar statement to this, had not our modern ideas of neuropathic heredity in their minds, but merely meant that inspiration simulated insanity. Yet "a touch of madness," a slight morbid strain, usually neurotic or gouty, in a preponderantly robust and energetic stock, seems to be often of some significance in the evolution of genius; it appears to act, one is inclined to think, as a kind of ferment, leading to a process out of all relation to its own magnitude. In the sphere of

literary genius, Milton, Flaubert, and William Morris may help to illustrate this precious fermentative influence of a minor morbid element in vitally powerful stocks. Without some such ferment as this the energy of the stock, one may well suppose, might have been confined within normal limits; the rare and exquisite flower of genius, we know, required an abnormal stimulation; only in this sense is there any truth at all in Lombroso's statement that the pearl of genius develops around a germ of disease. But this is the utmost length to which the facts allow us to go in assuming the presence of a morbid element as a frequent constituent of genius. Even then we only have one of the factors of genius, to which, moreover, undue importance cannot be attached when we remember how often this ferment is present without any resultant process of genius. And we are in any case far removed from any of those gross nervous lesions which all careful guardianship of the race must tend to eliminate.

Thus we are brought back to the point from which we started. Would eugenics stamp out genius? There is no need to minimise the fact that a certain small proportion of men of genius have displayed highly morbid characters, nor to deny that in a large proportion of cases a slightly morbid strain may with care be detected in the ancestry of genius. But the influence of eugenic considerations can properly be brought to bear only in the case of grossly degenerate stocks. Here, so far as our knowledge extends, the parentage of genius nearly always escapes. The destruction of genius and its

creation alike elude the eugenist. If there is a tendency in modern civilisation towards a diminution in the manifestations of genius—which may admit of question—it can scarcely be due to any threatened elimination of corrupt stocks. It may perhaps more reasonably be sought in the haste and superficiality which our present phase of urbanisation fosters, and only the most robust genius can adequately withstand.

XIV

THE PRODUCTION OF ABILITY

THE growing interest in eugenics, and the world-wide decline in the birth-rate, have drawn attention to the study of the factors which determine the production of genius in particular and high ability in general. The interest in this question, thus freshly revived and made more acute by the results of the Great War, is not indeed new. It is nearly half a century since Galton wrote his famous book on the heredity of genius, or, as he might better have described the object of his investigation, the heredity of ability. At a later date my own *Study of British Genius* collectively summarised all the biological data available concerning the parentage and birth of the most notable persons born in England, while numerous other studies might also be named.

Such investigations are to-day acquiring a fresh importance, because, while it is becoming realised that we are gaining a new control over the conditions of birth, the production of children has itself gained in importance.

The world is no longer bombarded by an exuberant stream of babies, good, bad, and indifferent in quality, with Mankind to look on calmly at the struggle for existence among them. Whether we like it or not, the quantity is relatively diminishing, and the question of quality is beginning to assume a supreme significance. What are the conditions which assure the finest quality in our children ?

A German scientist, Dr. Vaerting, of Berlin, published on the eve of the War a little book on the most favourable age in parents for the production of children of ability (*Das günstigste elterliche Zeugungsalter*[1]). He approaches the question entirely in this new spirit, not as a merely academic topic of discussion, but as a practical matter of vital importance to the welfare of society. He starts with the assertion that " our century has been called the century of the child,"[2] and for the child all manner of rights are now being claimed. But the prime right of all, the right of the child to the best ability that his parents are able to transmit to him, is never even so much as considered. Yet this right is the root of all

[1] He has further discussed the subject in *Die Neue Generation*, Aug.–Nov., 1914, and in a more recent (1916) pamphlet which I have not seen.

[2] The reference is to *The Century of the Child*, by Ellen Key, who writes (English translation, p. 2) : " My conviction is that the transformation of human nature will take place, not when the whole of humanity becomes Christian, but when the whole of humanity awakens to the consciousness of the ' holiness of generation.' This consciousness will make the central work of Society the new race, its origin, its management, and its education ; about these all morals, all laws, all social arrangements will be grouped."

children's rights. And when the mysteries of procreation have been so far revealed as to enable this right to be won, we shall, at the same time, Dr. Vaerting adds, renew the spiritual aspect of the nations.

The most easily ascertainable and measurable factor in the production of ability, and certainly a factor which cannot be without significance, is the age of the parents at the child's birth. It is this factor with which Vaerting is mainly concerned, as illustrated by over one hundred German men of genius concerning whom he has been able to obtain the required data. Later on, he proposes to extend the inquiry to other nations.

Vaerting finds—and this is probably the most original, though, as we shall see, not the most unquestionable of his findings—that the fathers who are themselves of no notable intellectual distinction have a decidedly more prolonged power of procreating distinguished children than is possessed by distinguished fathers. The former, that is to say, may become the fathers of eminent children from the period of sexual maturity up to the age of forty-three or beyond. When, however, the father is himself of high intellectual distinction, Vaerting finds that he was nearly always under thirty, and usually under twenty-five years of age at his distinguished son's birth, although the proportion of youthful fathers in the general population is relatively small. The eleven youngest fathers on Vaerting's list, from twenty-one to twenty-five years of age, were (with one exception) themselves more or less distinguished, while the fifteen oldest, from thirty-nine to sixty years of age, were all without exception

undistinguished. Among these sons are to be found much greater names (Goethe, Bach, Kant, Bismarck, Wagner, etc.) than are to be found among the sons of young and more distinguished fathers, for here there is only one name (Frederick the Great) of the same calibre. The elderly fathers belonged to large cities and were mostly married to wives very much younger than themselves. Vaerting notes that the most eminent geniuses have most frequently been the sons of fathers who were not engaged in intellectual avocations at all, but earned their livings as simple craftsmen. He draws the conclusion from these data that strenuous intellectual energy is much more unfavourable than hard physical labour to the production of ability in the offspring. Intellectual workers, therefore, he argues, must have their children when young, and we must so modify our social ideals and economic conditions as to render this possible. That the mother should be equally young is not, he holds, necessary; he finds some superiority, indeed, provided the father is young, in somewhat elderly mothers, and there were no mothers under twenty-three. The rarity of genius among the offspring of distinguished parents is attributed to the unfortunate tendency to marry too late, and Vaerting finds that the distinguished men who marry late rarely have any children at all. Speaking generally, and apart from the production of genius, he holds that women have children too early, before their psychic development is completed, while men have children too late, when they have already

" in the years of their highest psychic generative fitness planted their most precious seed in the mud of the street."

The eldest child was found to have by far the best chance of turning out distinguished, and in this fact Vaerting finds further proof of his argument. The third son has the next best chance, and then the second, the comparatively bad position of the second being attributed to the too brief interval which often follows the birth of the first child. He also notes that of all the professions the clergy come beyond comparison first as the parents of distinguished sons (who are, however, rarely of the highest degree of eminence), lawyers following, while officers in the army and physicians scarcely figure at all. Vaerting is inclined to see in this order, especially in the predominance of the clergy, the favourable influence of an unexhausted reserve of energy and a habit of chastity on intellectual procreativeness. This is one of his main conclusions.

It so happens that in my own *Study of British Genius*, with which Dr. Vaerting was unacquainted when he made his first investigation, I dealt on a larger scale, and perhaps with somewhat more precise method, with many of these same questions as they are illustrated by English genius. Vaerting's results have induced me to re-examine and to some extent to manipulate afresh the English data. My results, like Dr. Vaerting's, showed a special tendency for genius to appear in the eldest child, though there was no indication of notably early marriage in the

parents.[1] I also found a similar predominance of the clergy among the fathers and a similar deficiency of army officers and physicians. The most frequent age of the father was thirty-two years, but the average age of the father at the distinguished child's birth was 36.6 years, and when the fathers were themselves distinguished their age was not, as Vaerting found in Germany, notably low at the birth of their distinguished sons, but higher than the general average, being 37.5 years. There have been fifteen distinguished English sons of distinguished fathers, but instead of being nearly always under thirty and usually under twenty-five, as Vaerting found in Germany, the English distinguished father has only five times been under thirty and among these five only twice under twenty-five. Moreover, precisely the most distinguished of the sons (Francis Bacon and William Pitt) had the oldest fathers and the least distinguished sons the youngest fathers.

I made some attempt to ascertain whether different kinds of genius tend to be produced by fathers who were at different periods of life. I refrained from publishing the results as I doubted whether the numbers dealt with were sufficiently large to carry any weight. It may, however, be worth while to record them, as possibly

[1] It is not only ability, but idiocy, criminality and many other abnormalities which specially tend to appear in the first-born. The eldest-born represents the point of greatest variation in the family, and the variation thus yielded may be in either direction, useful or useless, good or bad. See, *e.g.*, Havelock Ellis, *A Study of British Genius*, pp. 117–120. Sören Hansen, "The Inferior Quality of the First-born Children," *Eugenics Review*, Oct., 1913.

they are significant. I made four classes of men of genius : (1) Men of Religion, (2) Poets, (3) Practical Men, and (4) Scientific Men and Sceptics. (It must not, of course, be supposed that in this last group all the scientific men were sceptics, or all the sceptics scientific.) The average age of the fathers at the distinguished son's birth was, in the first group, 35 years, in the second and third groups 37 years, and in the last group 40 years. (It may be noted, however, that the youngest father of all in the history of British genius, aged sixteen, produced Napier, who introduced logarithms.) It is difficult not to believe that as regards, at all events, the two most discrepant groups, the first and last, we here come on a significant indication. It is not unreasonable to suppose that in the production of men of religion, in whose activity emotion is so potent a factor, the youthful age of the father should prove favourable, while for the production of genius of a more coldly intellectual and analytic type more elderly fathers are demanded. If that should prove to be so, it would become a source of happiness to religious parents to have their children early, while irreligious persons should be advised to delay parentage. It is scarcely necessary to remark that the age of the mothers is probably quite as influential as that of the fathers. Concerning the mothers, however, we always have less precise information. My records, so far as they go, agree with Vaerting's for German genius, in indicating that an elderly mother is more likely to produce a child of genius than a very youthful mother. There were only fifteen mothers recorded under twenty-

five years of age, while thirteen were over thirty-nine years ; the most frequent age of the mothers was twenty-seven. On all these points we certainly need controlling evidence from other countries. Thus, before we insist with Vaerting that an elderly mother is a factor in the production of genius, we may recall that even in Germany the mothers of Goethe and Nietzsche were both eighteen at their distinguished sons' birth. A rule which permits of such tremendous exceptions scarcely seems to bear the strain of emphasis.

It must always be remembered that while the study of genius is highly interesting, and even, it is probable, not without significance for the general laws of heredity, we must not too hastily draw conclusions from it to bear on practical questions of eugenics. Genius is rare and abnormal ; laws meant to apply to the general population must be based on a study of the general population. Vaerting, who is alive to the practical character which such problems are to-day assuming, realises how inadequate it is to confine our study to genius. Marro, in his valuable book on puberty, some years ago brought forward interesting data showing the result of the age of the parents on the moral and intellectual characters of school-children in North Italy. He found that children with fathers below twenty-six at their birth showed the maximum of bad conduct and the minimum of good ; they also yielded the greatest proportion of children of irregular, troublesome, or lazy character, but not of really perverse children who were equally distributed among fathers of all ages. The largest number of cheerful

children belonged to young fathers, while the children tended to become more melancholy with ascending age of the fathers. Young fathers produced the largest proportion of intelligent, as well as of troublesome children, but when the very exceptionally intelligent children were considered separately they were found to be more usually the offspring of elderly fathers. As regards the mothers, Marro found that the children of young mothers (under twenty-one) are superior, both as regards conduct and intelligence, though the more exceptionally intelligent children tended to belong to more mature mothers. When the parents were both in the same age-group the immature and the elderly groups tended to produce more children who were unsatisfactory, both as regards conduct and intelligence, than the intermediate group.[1]

But we need to have such inquiries made on a more wholesale and systematic scale. They are no longer of a merely speculative character. We no longer regard children as the "gifts of God," flung into our helpless hands; we are beginning to realise that the responsibility is ours to see that they come into the world under the best conditions, and at the moments when their parents are best fitted to produce them. Vaerting proposes that it should be the business of all school authorities to register the ages of the pupils' parents. This is scarcely a provision to which even the most susceptible parent could reasonably object, though there is no cause to make the declaration compulsory where a "conscientious"

[1] Marro, *La Pubertà* (French translation *La Puberté*), Ch. XI.

objection existed, and in any case the declaration would not be public. It would be an advantage—though this might be more difficult to obtain—to have the date of the parents' marriage, and of the birth of previous children, as well as some record of the father's standing in his occupation. But even the ages of the parents alone would teach us much when correlated with the school position of the pupil in intelligence and in conduct. It is quite true that there are unavoidable fallacies. We are not, as in the case of genius, dealing with people whose life-work is complete and open to the whole world's examination. The good and clever child is not necessarily the forerunner of the first-class man or woman; and many capable and successful men have been careless in attendance at lectures and rebellious to discipline. Moreover, the prejudice and limitations of the teachers have also to be recognised. Yet when we are dealing with millions most of these fallacies would be smoothed out. We should be, once for all, in a position to determine authoritatively the exact bearing of one of the simplest and most vital factors of the betterment of the race. We should be in possession of a new clue to guide us in the creation of the man of the coming world. Why not begin to-day?

XV

MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

We contemplate our marriage system with satisfaction. We remember the many unquestionable evidences in favour of it, and we marvel that it so often proves a failure. For while we remember the evidence in favour of it, we forget the evidence against it, and we overlook the important fact that our favourable evidence is largely based on the vision of an abstract or idealised monogamy which fails to correspond to the detailed and ever varying system which in practice we cherish. We point to the fact that monogamic marriage has probably flourished throughout the history of the world, that it exists among savages, even among animals, but we fail to observe how far that monogamy differs from ours, even assuming that our monogamy is a real monogamy and not a disguised polygamy, especially in the fact that it is a free union and only subject to the inherent penalties that follow its infraction, not to external penalties. Ours is not free ; our faith in its natural virtues is not quite

so firm as we assert; we are always meddling with it and worrying over its health and anxiously trying to bolster it up. We are not by any means willing to let it rest on the sanction of its own natural or divine laws. Our feeling is, as James Hinton used ironically to express it: "Poor God with no one to help Him!"

The fact is that when we compare our civilised marriage system with marriage as it exists in Nature, we fail to realise a fundamental distinction. Our marriage system is made up of two absolutely different elements which cannot blend. On the one hand, it is the manifestation of our deepest and most volcanic impulses. On the other hand, it is an elaborate web of regulations—legal, ecclesiastical, economic—which is to-day quite out of relation to our impulses. On the one hand, it is a force which springs from within; on the other hand, it is a force which presses on us from without.[1] One says broadly that these two elements of marriage, as we understand it, are out of relation to each other. But there is an important saving qualification to be made. The inner impulse is not without law, and the external pressure is not without an ultimate basis of nature. That is to say, that under free and natural conditions the inner impulse tends to develop itself, not licentiously but with

[1] It is this artificial and external pressure which often produces a revolt against marriage. The author of a remarkable paper entitled, "Our Incestuous Marriage," in the *Forum* (Dec., 1915), advocates a reform of social marriage customs "in conformance with the freedom-loving modern nature," and the introduction of "a fresh atmosphere for married life in which personality can be made to appear so sacred and free that marriage will be undertaken and borne as lightly and gracefully as a secret sin."

its own order and restraints, while, on the other hand, our inherited regulations are largely the tradition of ancient attempts to fix and register that natural order and restraint. The disharmony comes in with the fact that our regulations are traditional and ancient, not our own attempts to fix and register the natural order but inextricably mixed up with elements that are entirely alien to our civilised habits of life. Whatever our attitude towards mediæval Canon Law may be—whether reverence or indifference or disgust—it yet holds us and is ingrained into our marriage system to-day. Canon Law was a good and vital thing under the conditions which produced it. The survival of Canon Law to-day, with the antiquated and ascetic conception of the sub-ordination of women associated with it, is the chief reason why we in the twentieth century have not yet progressed so far towards a reasonable system of marriage as the Romans had reached on the basis of their law nearly two thousand years ago.[1] Marriage is conditioned both by inner impulse and outward pressure. But a healthy impulse bears within it an order and restraint of its own, while a truly moral outward pressure is based, not on the demands of mediæval days, but on the demands of our own day.

How far this is from being the case yet we find well

[1] See Sir James Donaldson, *Woman: Her Position and Influence in Ancient Greece and Rome*, 1907; also S. B. Kitchin's excellent *History of Divorce*, 1912; this author believes that the tendency in modern civilisation is to return to the simple principles of Roman law involving divorce by consent. See also Havelock Ellis, *Sex in Relation to Society*, Ch. X.

illustrated by our divorce methods. All our modern culture favour a sense of the sacredness of the sexual relations; we cherish a delicate reserve concerning all the intimacies of personal relationship. But when the magic word "Divorce" is uttered we fling all our civilisation to the winds, and in the desecrated name of Law we proceed to an inquisition which scarcely differs at all from those public tests of mediæval law-courts which now we dare not venture even to put into words.

It is true that we are not bound to be consistent when it is an advantage to be inconsistent. And if there were a method in our madness it would be justified. But there is no method. From first to last the history of divorce (read it, for instance, in Howard's *Matrimonial Institutions*) is an ever shifting record of cruel blunders and ridiculous absurdities. Divorce began in modern times in flagrant injustice to one of the two partners, the wife, and it has ended—if we may hope that the end is approaching—in imbecilities that to future ages will be incredible. For no legal jargon has ever been invented that will express the sympathies and the antipathies of human relationship; they even escape the subtlest expression. Law-makers have tortured their brains to devise formulas which will cover the legitimate grounds for divorce. How vain their efforts are is sufficiently shown by the fact that by no chance can they ever agree on their formulas, and that they are changing them constantly with feverish haste, dimly realising that they are but the antiquated representatives of mediævalism, and that soon their occupation will be gone for ever.

The reasons for the making or the breaking of human relationships can never be formulated. The only result of such legal formulas is that they bring law into contempt because they have to be ingeniously and methodically cheated in order to adapt them in any degree to civilised human needs. Thus such laws not only degrade the name of Law, but they degrade the whole community which tolerates them. There is only one ultimate reason for either marriage or divorce, and that is that the two persons concerned consent to the marriage or consent to the divorce. Why they consent is no concern of any third party, and, maybe, they cannot even put it into words.

At the same time, let us not forget, marriage and divorce are a very real concern of the State, and law cannot ignore either. It is the business of the State to see to it that no interests are injured. The contract of marriage and the contract of divorce are private matters, but it is necessary to guard that no injury is thereby done to either of the contracting persons, or to third parties, or to the community as a whole. The State may have a right to say what persons are unfit for marriage, or at all events for procreation; the State must take care that the weaker party is not injured; the State is especially bound to watch over the interests of children, and this involves, in the best issue, that each child shall have two effective parents, whether or not those parents are living together. A large scope—we are beginning to recognise—must be left alike to freedom of marriage and freedom of divorce, but the State

must mark out the limits within which that freedom is exercised.

The loosening hold of the State on marriage is by no means connected with any growing sense of the value of divorce. At the best, it is probable that divorce is merely a necessary evil. One of the chief reasons why we should seek to promote education in relation to sexual relationships and to inculcate the responsibilities of such relationships, so making the approach to marriage more circumspect, is in order to obviate the need for divorce. For divorce is always a confession of failure. Very often, indeed, it involves not only a confession of failure in one particular marriage but of failure for marriage generally. One notes how often the people who fail in a first marriage fail even more hopelessly in the second. They have chosen the wrong partners; but one suspects that for them all partners will prove the wrong partners. One sometimes hears nowadays that a succession of marriage relationships is desirable in order to develop character. But that depends on many things. It very much depends on what character there is to develop. A man may have relationships with a hundred women and develop much less character out of his experience, and even acquire a much less intimate knowledge of women, than the man who has spent his life in an endless series of adventures with one woman. It depends a good deal on the man and not a little on the woman.

Thus the work of marriage in the world must depend entirely on the nature of that world. A fine marriage system can only be produced by a fine civilisation of

which it is the exquisite flower. Laws cannot better marriage; even education, by itself, is powerless, necessary as it is in conjunction with other influences. The love-relationships of men and women must develop freely, and with due allowance for the variations which the complexities of civilisation demand. But these relationships touch the whole of life at so infinite a number of points that they cannot even develop at all save in a society that is itself developing graciously and harmoniously. Do not expect to pluck figs from thistles. As a society is, so will its marriages be.

XVI

THE MEANING OF THE BIRTH-RATE

The history of educated opinion concerning the birth-rate and its interpretation during the past seventy years is full of interest. The actual operative factors—natural, pathological, economic, social, and educational—in raising or lowering the birth-rate, are numerous and complicated, and it is difficult to determine exactly how large a part each factor plays. But without determining that at all, it is still very instructive to observe the evolution of popular intelligent opinion concerning the significance of a high and a low birth-rate.

Popular opinion on this matter may be said to have passed through three stages. I am referring to Western Europe and more particularly to England and Germany, for it must be remembered that, in this matter, England and Germany are running a parallel course. England happens to be, on the whole, a little ahead, having reached its period of full expansion at a somewhat earlier period

than Germany, but each people is pursuing the same course.

In the first stage—let us say about the middle of the last century and the succeeding thirty years—the popular attitude was one of jubilant satisfaction in a high and rising birth-rate. There had been an immense expansion of industry. The whole world seemed nothing but a great field for the energetic and industrial nations to exploit. Workers were needed to keep up with the expansion and to keep down wages to a rate which would make industrial expansion easy ; soldiers and armaments were needed to protect the movements of expansion. It seemed to the more exuberant spirits that a vast British Empire, or a mighty Pan-Germany, might be expected to cover the whole world. France, with its low and falling birth-rate, was looked down at with contempt as a decadent country inhabited by a degenerate population. No attempts to analyse the birth-rate, to ascertain what are really the biological, social, and economic accompaniments of a high birth-rate, made any impression on the popular mind. They were drowned in the general shout of exultation.

That era of optimism was followed by a swift reaction. Towards 1880 the upward movement of the birth-rate began to be arrested ; it soon began steadily to fall, as it is continuing to do to-day. In France it is falling slowly, in Italy more rapidly, in England and Prussia still more rapidly. As, however, the fall began earliest in France, the birth-rate is lower there than in the other

countries named; for the same reason it is lower in England than in Prussia, although England stands in this respect at almost exactly the same distance from Prussia to-day as thirty years ago, the fall having occurred at the same rate in both countries. It is quite possible that in the future it may become more rapid in Prussia than in England, for the birth-rate of Berlin is lower than the birth-rate of London, and urbanisation is proceeding at a more rapid rate in Germany than in England.

The realisation of such facts as these produced a period of pessimism which marks the second stage in this evolution. The great movement of expansion, which seemed to promise so much to ambitious nations anxious for world-power, was being arrested. Moreover, it began to be realised that the rapid growth of a community was accompanied by phenomena which had not been foreseen by the enthusiasts of the first period of optimism. They had argued—not indeed verbally but in effect—that the higher the birth-rate the cheaper labour and lives would become, and the cheaper labour and lives were, the easier it would be for a nation with its industrial armies and its military armies to get ahead of other rival nations. But they had not realised that, with the growth of popular education in modern democratic states, cheap labour is no longer willing to play without protest this humble and suffering part in national progress. The workers of the nations began to declare, clearly or obscurely, as they were able, that they no longer intended to sell their labour and their lives so cheaply. The rising birth-rate of the middle of the nineteenth century

coincided with, and to a large extent doubtless produced, the organisation of labour, trades unions, the political activity of the working classes, Socialism, as well as the extreme forms of Anarchism and Syndicalism. It was when these movements began to attain a high degree of organisation and power that the birth-rate began to decline. Thus the pessimists of the second period were faced by horrors on both sides. On the one hand, they saw that the ever-increasing rate of human production which seemed to them the essential condition of national, social, even moral progress, had not only stopped but was steadily diminishing. On the other hand, they saw that, even in so far as it was maintained, it involved, under modern conditions, nothing but social commotion and economic disturbance.

There are still many pessimists of this second period alive among us, and actively proclaiming their gospel of despair, alike in England and in Germany. But a new generation is growing up, and this question is now entering a third period. The new generation rejects alike the passive optimism of the first period and the passive pessimism of the second period. Its attitude is hopeful but it realises that mere hope is vain unless there is clear intellectual vision and unless there is individual and social action in accordance with that vision.

It is to-day beginning to be seen that the old notion of progress by means of reckless multiplication is vain. It can only be effected at a ruinous cost of death, disease, poverty, and misery. We see this in the past history of Western Europe, as we still see it in the history of Russia.

Any progress effected along that line—if "progress" it can be called—is now barred, for it is absolutely opposed to those democratic conceptions which are ever gaining greater influence among us.

Moreover, we are now better able to analyse demographic phenomena and we are no longer satisfied with any crude statements regarding the birth-rate. We realise that they need interpretation. They have to be considered in relation to the sex-constitution and the age-constitution of the population, and, above all, they must be viewed in relation to the infant mortality-rate. The bad aspect of the French birth-rate is not so much its lowness as that it is accompanied by a high infantile mortality. The fact that the German birth-rate is higher than the English ceases to be a matter of satisfaction when it is realised that German infantile mortality is vastly greater than English. A high birth-rate is no sign of a high civilisation. But we are beginning to feel that a high infantile death-rate is a sign of a very inferior civilisation. A low birth-rate with a low infant death-rate not only produces the same increase in the population as a high birth-rate with the high death-rate, which always accompanies it (for there are no examples of a high birth-rate with a low death-rate), but it produces it in a way which is far more worthy of our admiration in this matter than the way of Russia and China where opposite conditions prevail.[1]

[1] For a more detailed discussion of these points see the author's *Task of Social Hygiene*.

It used to be thought that small families were immoral. We now begin to see that it was the large families of old which were immoral. The excessive birth-rate of the early industrial period was directly stimulated by selfishness. There were no laws against child-labour; children were produced that they might be sent out, when little more than babies, to the factories and the mines to increase their parents' incomes. The diminished birth-rate has accompanied higher moral transformation. It has introduced a finer economy into life, diminished death, disease, and misery. It is indirectly, and even directly, improving the quality of the race. The very fact that children are born at longer intervals is not only beneficial to the mother's health, and therefore to the children's general welfare, but it has been proved to have a marked and prolonged influence on the physical development of children.

Social progress, and a higher civilisation, we thus see, involve a reduced birth-rate and a reduced death-rate; the fewer the children born, the fewer the risks of death, disease, and misery to the children that are born. The fact that civilisation involves small families is clearly shown by the tendency of the educated and upper social classes to have small families. As the proletariat class becomes educated and elevated, disciplined to refinement and to foresight—as it were aristocratised—it also has small families. Civilisational progress is here in a line with biological progress. The lower organisms spawn their progeny in thousands, the higher mammals

produce but one or two at a time. The higher the race the fewer the offspring.

Thus diminution in quantity is throughout associated with augmentation in quality. Quality rather than quantity is the racial ideal now set before us, and it is an ideal which, as we are beginning to learn, it is possible to cultivate, both individually and socially. The day is coming, as Engel remarks in his useful book on *The Elements of Child Protection*, when fatherhood and motherhood will only be permitted to the strong. That is why the new science of eugenics or racial hygiene is acquiring so immense an importance. In the past racial selection has been carried out crudely by the destructive, wasteful, and expensive method of elimination, through death. In the future it will be carried out far more effectively by conscious and deliberate selection, exercised not merely before birth, but before conception and even before mating. It is idle to suppose that such a change can be exerted by mere legislation, for which, besides, our scientific knowledge is still inadequate. We cannot, indeed, desire any compulsory elimination of the unfit or any regulated breeding of the fit. Such notions are idle. Man can only be bred from within, through the medium of his intelligence and will, working together under the control of a high sense of responsibility. Galton, who recognised the futility of mere legislation to elevate the race, believed that the hope of the future lay in eugenics becoming a part of religion. The good of the race lies, not in the production of a super-man, but of a

super-humanity. This can only be attained through personal individual development, the increase of knowledge, the sense of responsibility towards the race, enabling men to act in accordance with responsibility. The leadership in civilisation belongs not to the nation with the highest birth-rate but to the nation which has thus learnt to produce the finest men and women.

XVII

CIVILISATION AND THE BIRTH-RATE

It was inevitable that the Great War of to-day should lead to an outcry, in all the countries engaged, for more children and larger families. In Germany and in Austria, in France and in England, panic-stricken fanatics are found who preach to the people that the birth-rate is falling and the nation is decaying. No scheme is too wild for the supposed benefit of the country in a fierce coming fight for commercial supremacy, as well as with due regard to the requirements in cannon fodder of another Great War twenty years hence.

It may be well, however, to pause before we listen to these Quixotic plans.[1] We may then find reason to think, not only that any attempt to arrest the falling birth-rate is scarcely likely to be effective in view of

[1] Those who wish to study the latest restatements of opinions in England may be recommended to read the Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Great Britain's falling birth-rate, appointed in 1913 by the National Council of Public Morals, under the title of *The Declining Birth-rate: Its Causes and Effects*, 1916.

the fact that it affects not one country only but all the countries that count, but that even if it could be successful it would be mischievous. Whatever the results of the War may be, one result is fairly certain and that is that, under the most favourable circumstances, every country will emerge laden with misery and debt; whatever prosperity may follow, living will be expensive for a long time to come and the incomes of all classes heavily burdened. A Bounty on Babies would hardly make up for these difficulties. The happy family, under the conditions that seem to be immediately ahead of us, is likely to be the small family. The large family—as indeed has been the case in the past—is likely to be visited by disease and death.

But there is more to be said than this. We must dismiss altogether the statement so often made that a falling birth-rate means "an old and dying community." The Germans have for years been making this remark contemptuously regarding the French. But to-day they have to recognise a vitality in the French which they had not expected, while in recent years, also, their own birth-rate has been falling more rapidly than that of France. Nor is it true that a falling birth-rate means a falling population; the French birth-rate has long been steadily falling, yet the French population has been steadily increasing all the time, though less rapidly than it would had not the death-rate been abnormally high. It is not the number of babies born that counts, but the nett result in surviving children. An enormous number of babies are born in China; but an enormous number die

while still babies. So that it is better to have a few babies of good quality than a large number of indifferent quality, for the falling birth-rate is more than compensated by the falling death-rate. That is what we are attaining in England, and, as we know, our steadily falling birth-rate results in a steadily growing population.

There is still more to be said. Small families and a falling birth-rate are not merely no evil, they are a positive good. They are a gain for humanity. They represent an evolutionary rise in Nature and a higher stage in civilisation. We are here in the presence of great fundamental principles of progress which have been working through life from the beginning.

At the beginning of life on the earth reproduction ran riot. Of one minute organism it is estimated that, if its reproduction were not checked by death or destruction, in thirty days it would form a mass a million times larger than the sun. The conger-eel lays fifteen million eggs, and if they all grew up, and reproduced themselves on the same scale, in two years the whole sea would become a wriggling mass of fish. As we approach the higher forms of life reproduction gradually dies down. The animals nearest to man produce few offspring, but they surround them with parental care, until they are able to lead independent lives with a fair chance of surviving. The whole process may be regarded as a mechanism for slowly subordinating quantity to quality, and so promoting the evolution of life to ever higher stages.

This process, which is plain to see on the largest scale throughout living nature, may be more minutely studied,

as it acts within a narrower range, in the human species. Here we statistically formulate it in the terms of birth-rate and death-rate; by the mutual relationship of the two courses of the birth-rate and the death-rate we are able to estimate the evolutionary rank of a nation, and the degree in which it has succeeded in subordinating the primitive standard of quantity to the higher and later standard of quality.

It is especially in Europe that we can investigate this relationship by the help of statistics which in some cases extend for nearly a century back. We can trace the various phases through which each nation passes, the effects of prosperity, the influence of education and sanitary improvement, the general complex development of civilisation, in each case moving forward, though not regularly and steadily, to higher stages by means of a falling birth-rate, which is to some extent compensated by a falling death-rate, the two rates nearly always running parallel, so that a temporary rise in the birth-rate is usually accompanied by a rise in the death-rate, by a return, that is to say, towards the conditions which we find at the beginning of animal life, and a steady fall in the birth-rate is always accompanied by a fall in the death-rate.

The modern phase of this movement, soon after which our precise knowledge begins, may be said to date from the industrial expansion, due to the introduction of machinery, which Professor Marshall places in England about the year 1760. That represents the beginning of an era in which all civilised and semi-civilised countries

are still living. For the earlier centuries we lack precise data, but we are able to form certain probable conclusions. The population of a country in those ages seems to have grown very slowly and sometimes even to have retrograded. At the end of the sixteenth century the population of England and Wales is estimated at five millions and at the end of the seventeenth at six millions—only 20 per cent. increase during the century—although during the nineteenth century the population nearly quadrupled. This very gradual increase of the population seems to have been by no means due to a very low birth-rate, but to a very high death-rate. Throughout the Middle Ages a succession of virulent plagues and pestilences devastated Europe. Small-pox, which may be considered the latest of these, used to sweep off large masses of the youthful population in the eighteenth century. The result was a certain stability and a certain well-being in the population as a whole, these conditions being, however, maintained in a manner that was terribly wasteful and distressing.

The industrial revolution introduced a new era which began to show its features clearly in the early nineteenth century. On the one hand, a new motive had arisen to favour a more rapid increase of population. Small children could tend machinery and thereby earn wages to increase the family takings. This led to an immediate result in increased population and increased prosperity. But, on the other hand, the rapid increase of population always tended to outrun the rapid increase of prosperity, and the more so since the rise of sanitary science began

to drive back the invasions of the grosser and more destructive infectious diseases which had hitherto kept the population down. The result was that new forms of disease, distress, and destitution arose ; the old stability was lost, and the new prosperity produced unrest in place of well-being. The social consciousness was still too immature to deal collectively with the difficulties and frictions which the industrial era introduced, and the individualism which under former conditions had operated wholesomely now acted perniciously to crush the souls and bodies of the workers, whether men, women, or children.

As we know, the increase of knowledge and the growth of the social consciousness have slowly acted wholesomely during the past century to remedy the first evil results of the industrial revolution. The artificial and abnormal increase of the population has been checked because it is no longer permissible in most countries to stunt the minds and bodies of small children by placing them in factories. An elaborate system of factory legislation was devised, and is still ever drawing fresh groups of workers within its protective meshes. Sanitary science began to develop and to exert an enormous influence on the health of nations. At the same time the supreme importance of popular education was realised. The total result was that the nature of " prosperity " began to be transformed ; instead of being, as it had been at the beginning of the industrial era, a direct appeal to the gratification of gross appetites and reckless lusts, it became an indirect stimulus to higher gratifications and more remote aspirations. Foresight became a

dominating motive even in the general population, and a man's anxiety for the welfare of his family was no longer forgotten in the pleasure of the moment. The social state again became more stable, and mere " prosperity " was transformed into civilisation. This is the state of things now in progress in all industrial countries, though it has reached varying levels of development among different peoples.

It is thus clear that the birth-rate combined with the death-rate constitutes a delicate instrument for the measurement of civilisation, and that the record of their combined curves registers the upward or downward course of every nation. The curves, as we know, tend to be parallel, and when they are not parallel we are in the presence of a rare and abnormal state of things which is usually temporary or transitional.

It is instructive from this point of view to study the various nations of Europe, for here we find a large number of small nations, each with its own statistical system, confined within a small space and living under fairly uniform conditions. Let us take the latest official figures (which are usually for 1913) and attempt to measure the civilisation of European countries on this basis. Beginning with the lowest birth-rate, and therefore in gradually descending rank of superiority, we find that the European countries stand in the following order : France, Belgium, Ireland, Sweden, the United Kingdom, Switzerland, Norway, Scotland, Denmark, Holland, the German Empire, Prussia, Finland, Spain, Austria, Italy,

Hungary, Serbia, Bulgaria, Roumania, Russia. If we take the death-rate similarly, beginning with the lowest rate and gradually proceeding to the highest, we find the following order: Holland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, Belgium, Scotland, Prussia, the German Empire, Finland, Ireland, France, Italy, Austria, Serbia, Spain, Bulgaria, Hungary, Roumania, Russia.

Now we cannot accept the birth-rates and death-rates of the various countries exactly at their face value. Temporary conditions, as well as the special composition of a population, not to mention peculiarities of registration, exert a disturbing effect. Roughly and on the whole, however, the figures are acceptable. It is instructive to find how closely the two rates agree. The agreement is, indeed, greater at the bottom than at the top; the eight countries which constitute the lowest group as regards birth-rate are the identical eight countries which furnish the heaviest death-rates. That was to be expected; a very high birth-rate seems fatally to involve a very high death-rate. But a very low birth-rate (as we see in the cases of France and Ireland) is not invariably associated with a very low death-rate, though it is never associated with a high death-rate. This seems to indicate that those qualities in a highly civilised nation which restrain the production of offspring do not always or at once produce the eugenic racial qualities possessed by hardier peoples living under simpler conditions. But with these reservations it is not difficult

to combine the two lists in a fairly concordant order of descending rank. Most readers will agree, that taking the European populations in bulk, without regard to the production of genius (for men of genius are always a very minute fraction of a nation), the European populations which they are accustomed to regard as standing at the head in the general diffusion of character, intelligence, education, and well-being, are all included in the first twelve or thirteen nations, which are the same in both lists though they do not follow the same order. These peoples, as peoples—that is, without regard to their size, their political importance, or their production of genius—represent the highest level of democratic civilisation in Europe.

It is scarcely necessary to add that various countries outside Europe equal or excel them; the death-rate of the United States, so far as statistics show, is the same as that of Sweden; that of Ontario, still better, is the same as Denmark; while the death-rate of the Australian Commonwealth, with a medium birth-rate, is lower than that of any European country, and New Zealand holds the world's championship in this field with the lowest death-rate of all. On the other hand, some extra-European countries compare less favourably with Europe; Japan, with a rather high birth-rate, has the same high death-rate as Spain, and Chile, with a still higher birth-rate, has a higher death-rate than Russia. So it is that among human peoples we find the same laws prevailing as among animals, and the higher nations of

the world differ from those which are less highly evolved precisely as the elephant differs from the herring, though within a narrower range, that is to say, by producing fewer offspring and taking better care of them.

The whole of this evolutionary process, we have to remember, is a natural process. It has been going on from the beginning of the living world. But at a certain stage in the higher development of man, without ceasing to be natural, it becomes conscious and deliberate. It is then that we have what may properly be termed *Birth Control.* That is to say, that a process which had before been working slowly through the ages, attaining every new forward step with waste and pain, is henceforth carried out voluntarily, in the light of the high human qualities of reason and foresight and self-restraint. The rise of birth control may be said to correspond with the rise of social and sanitary science in the first half of the nineteenth century, and to be indeed an essential part of that movement. It is firmly established in all the most progressive and enlightened countries of Europe, notably in France and in England; in Germany, where formerly the birth-rate was very high, birth control has developed with extraordinary rapidity during the present century. In Holland its principle and practice are freely taught by physicians and nurses to the mothers of the people, with the result that there is in Holland no longer any necessity for unwanted babies, and this small country possesses the proud privilege of the lowest death-rate in Europe. In the free and enlightened democratic

communities on the other side of the globe, in Australia and New Zealand, the same principles and practice are generally accepted, with the same beneficent results. On the other hand, in the more backward and ignorant countries of Europe, birth control is still little known, and death and disease flourish. This is the case in those eight countries which come at the bottom of both our lists.

Even in the more progressive countries, however, birth control has not been established without a struggle, which has frequently ended in a hypocritical compromise, its principles being publicly ignored or denied and its practice privately accepted. For, at the great and vitally important point in human progress which birth control represents, we really see the conflict of two moralities. The morality of the ancient world is here confronted by the morality of the new world. The old morality, knowing nothing of science and the process of Nature as worked out in the evolution of life, based itself on the early chapters of Genesis, in which the children of Noah are represented as entering an empty earth which it is their business to populate diligently. So it came about that for this morality, still innocent of eugenics, recklessness was almost a virtue. Children were given by God; if they died or were afflicted by congenital disease, it was the dispensation of God, and, whatever imprudence the parents might commit, the pathetic faith still ruled that "God will provide." But in the new morality it is realised that in these matters Divine action can only

be made manifest in human action, that is to say through the operation of our own enlightened reason and resolved will. Prudence, foresight, self-restraint—virtues which the old morality looked down on with benevolent contempt—assume a position of the first importance. In the eyes of the new morality the ideal woman is no longer the meek drudge condemned to endless and often ineffectual child-bearing, but the free and instructed woman, able to look before and after, trained in a sense of responsibility alike to herself and to the race, and determined to have no children but the best. Such were the two moralities which came into conflict during the nineteenth century. They were irreconcilable and each firmly rooted, one in ancient religion and tradition, the other in progressive science and reason. Nothing was possible in such a clash of opposing ideas but a feeble and confused compromise such as we still find prevailing in various countries of Old Europe. It was not a satisfactory solution, however inevitable, and especially unsatisfactory by the consequent obscurantism which placed difficulties in the way of spreading a knowledge of the methods of birth control among the masses of the population. For the result has been that while the more enlightened and educated have exercised a control over the size of their families, the poorer and more ignorant—who should have been offered every facility and encouragement to follow in the same path—have been left, through a conspiracy of secrecy, to carry on helplessly the bad customs of their forefathers. This

social neglect has had the result that the superior family stocks have been hampered by the recklessness of the inferior stocks.

We may see these two moralities in conflict to-day in America. Up till recently America had meekly accepted at Old Europe's hands the traditional prescription of our Mediterranean book of Genesis, with its fascinating old-world fragrance of Mount Ararat. On the surface, the ancient morality had been complacently, almost unquestionably, accepted in America, even to the extent of permitting a vast extension of abortion—a criminal practice which ever flourishes where birth-control is neglected. But to-day we suddenly see a new movement in the United States. In a flash, America has awakened to the true significance of the issue. With that direct vision of hers, that swift practicality of action, and, above all, that sense of the democratic nature of all social progress, we see her resolutely beginning to face this great problem. In her own vigorous native tongue we hear her demanding: "What in the thunder is all the secrecy about, anyhow?" And we cannot doubt that America's own answer to that demand will be of immense significance to the whole world.

Thus it is that as we get to the root of the matter the whole question becomes clear. We see that there is really no standing ground in any country for the panic-monger who bemoans the fall of the birth-rate and storms against small families. The falling birth-rate is a world-wide phenomenon in all countries that are

striving toward a higher civilisation along lines which Nature laid down from the beginning. We cannot stop it if we would, and if we could we should merely be impeding civilisation. It is a movement that rights itself and tends to reach a just balance. It has not yet reached that balance with us in this country. That may be seen by anyone who has read the letters from mothers lately published under the title of *Maternity* by the Women's Co-operative Guild; there is still far more misery caused by having too many babies than by having too few; a bonus on babies would be a misfortune, alike for the parents and the State—whether bestowed at birth as proposed in New Zealand, or at the age of twelve months as proposed in France, or fourteen years as proposed in England—unless it were confined to children who were not merely alive at the appointed age, but able to pass examination as having reached a definitely high standard. The falling birth-rate, which, it must be remembered, is affecting all civilised countries, should be a matter for joy rather than for grief.

But we need not therefore fold our hands and do nothing. There is still much to be effected for the protection of Motherhood and the better care of children. We cannot, and should not, attempt to increase the number of children. But we may well attempt to work for their better quality. There we shall be on very safe ground. More knowledge is necessary so that all would-be parents may know how they may best become parents and how they may, if necessary, best avoid it. Pro-

creation by the unfit should be, if not prohibited by law, at all events so discouraged by public opinion that to attempt it would be counted disgraceful. Much greater public provision is necessary for the care of mothers during the months before, as well as during the period after, the child's birth. The system of Schools for Mothers needs to be universalised and systematically carried out. Along such lines as these we may hope to increase the happiness of the people and the strength of the State. We need not worry over the falling birth-rate.

XVIII

BIRTH CONTROL

I.

Reproduction and the Birth-rate

The study of the questions relating to sex, so actively carried on during recent years, has become more and more concentrated on to the practical problems of marriage and the family. That was inevitable. It is only reasonable that, with our growing scientific knowledge of the mysteries of sex, we should seek to apply that knowledge to those questions of life which we must ever regard as central. How can we add to the stability or to the flexibility of marriage? How can we most judiciously regulate the size of our families?

At the outset, however, we cannot too deeply impress upon our minds the fact that these questions are not new in the world. If we try to find an answer to them by confining our attention to the phenomena presented

by our own species, at our own particular moment of civilisation, it is very likely indeed that we may fall into crude, superficial, even mischievous conclusions.

The fact is that these questions, which are agitating us to-day, have agitated the world ever since it has been a world of life at all. The difference is that whereas we seek to deal with them consciously, voluntarily, and deliberately, throughout by far the greater part of the world's life they have been dealt with unconsciously, by methods of trial and error, of perpetual experiment, which has often proved costly, but has all the more clearly brought out the real course of natural progress. We cannot solve problems so ancient and deeply rooted as those of sex by merely rational methods which are only of yesterday. To be of value our rational methods must be the revelation in deliberate consciousness of unconscious methods which go far back into the remote past. Our conscious, deliberate, and purposive methods, carried out on the plane of reason, will not be sound unless they are a continuation of those methods which have already, in the slow evolution of life, been found sound and progressive on the plane of instinct. This must be borne in mind by those people—always to be found among us, though not always on the side of social advance—who desire their own line of conduct in matters of sex to be so closely in accord with natural and Divine law that to question it would be impious.

A medical friend of my own, when once in the dentist's chair under the influence of nitrous oxide anæsthesia (a condition, as William James showed, which frequently

leads us to believe we are solving the problems of the universe), imagined himself facing the Almighty and insistently demanding the real object of the existence of the world. And the Almighty's answer came in one word : " Reproduction." My friend is a man of philosophic mind, and the solution of the mystery of the world's purpose thus presented to him in vision may perhaps serve as a simple and ultimate statement of the object of life. From the very outset the great object of Nature to our human eyes seems to be primarily reproduction, in the long run, indeed, an effort after economy of method in the attainment of an ever greater perfection, but primarily reproduction. This tendency to reproduction is indeed so fundamental, it is impressed on vital organisation with so great a violence of emphasis, that we may regard the course of evolution as much more an effort to slow down reproduction than to furnish it with any new facilities.

We must remember that reproduction appears in the history of life before sex appears. The lower forms of animal and plant life often reproduce themselves without the aid of sex, and it has even been argued that reproduction and sex are directly antagonistic, that active propagation is always checked when sexual differentiation is established. " The impression one gains of sexuality," remarks Professor Coulter, foremost of American botanists, " is that it represents reproduction under peculiar difficulties.[1] Bacteria among primitive plants and protozoa

[1] J. M. Coulter, *The Evolution of Sex in Plants*, 1915; Geoffrey Smith, " The Biology of Sex," *Eugenics Review*, April, 1914.

among primitive animals are patterns of rapid and prolific reproduction, though sex begins to appear in a rudimentary form in very lowly forms of life, even among the protozoa, and is at first compatible with a high degree of reproduction. A single infusorian becomes in a week the ancestor of millions, that is to say, of far more individuals than could proceed under the most favourable conditions from a pair of elephants in five centuries, while Huxley calculated that the progeny of a single parthenogenetic aphis, under favouring circumstances, would in a few months outweigh the whole population of China.[1] That proviso—" under favouring conditions " —is of great importance, for it reveals the weak point in this early method of Nature's for conducting evolution by enormously rapid multiplication. Creatures so easily produced could be, and were, easily destroyed; no time had been spent on imparting to them the qualities that would enable them to lead, what we should call in our own case, long and useful lives.

Yet the method of rapid multiplication was not readily or speedily abandoned by Nature. Still speaking in our human way, we may say that she tried to give it every chance. Among insects that have advanced so far as the white ants, we find that the queen lays eggs at an enormous rate during the whole of her active life, according to some estimates at the rate of 80,000 a day. Even in the more primitive members of the great vertebrate group, to which we ourselves belong, reproduction is

[1] See, *e.g.*, Geddes and Thomson, *The Evolution of Sex*, Ch. XX.; and T. H. Morgan, *Heredity and Sex*, Ch. I.

sometimes still on almost as vast a scale as among lower organisms. Thus, among herrings, nearly 70,000 eggs have been found in a single female; but the herring, nevertheless, does not tend to increase in the seas, for it is everywhere preyed upon by whales and seals and sharks and birds, and, not least, by man. Thus early we see the connection between a high death-rate and a high birth-rate.

The evidence against reckless reproduction at last, however, proved overwhelming. With whatever hesitation, Nature finally decided, once and for all, that it was better, from every point of view, to produce a few superior beings than a vast number of inferior beings. For while the primary end of Nature may be said to be reproduction, there is a secondary end of scarcely less equal urgency, and that is evolution. In other words, while Nature seems to our human eyes to be seeking after quantity, she is also seeking, and with ever greater eagerness, after quality. Now the method of rapid and easy reproduction, it had become clear, not only failed of its own end, for the inferior creatures thus produced were unable to maintain their position in life, but it was distinctly unfavourable to any advance in quality. The method of sexual reproduction, which had existed in a germinal form more or less from the beginning, asserted itself ever more emphatically, and a method like that of parthenogenesis, or reproduction by the female unaided by the male (illustrated by the aphis), which had lingered on even beside sexual reproduction, absolutely died out in higher evolution. Now the fertilisation involved by

the existence of two sexes is, as Weismann insisted, simply an arrangement which renders possible the intermingling of two different hereditary tendencies. The object of sex, that is to say, is by no means to aid reproduction, but rather to subordinate and check reproduction in order to evolve higher and more complex beings. Here we come to the great principle, which Herbert Spencer developed at length in his *Principles of Biology*, that, as he put it, Individuation and Genesis vary inversely, whence it followed that advancing evolution must be accompanied by declining fertility. Individuation, which means complexity of structure, has advanced, as Genesis, the unrestricted tendency to mere multiplication, has receded. This involves a diminished number of offspring, but an increased amount of time and care in the creation and breeding of each; it involves also that the reproductive life of the organism is shortened and more or less confined to special periods; it begins much later, it usually ends earlier, and even in its period of activity it tends to fall into cycles. Nature, we see, who, at the outset, had endowed her children so lavishly with the aptitude for multiplication, grown wiser now, expends her fertile imagination in devising preventive checks on reproduction for her children's use.

The result is that, though reproduction is greatly slackened, evolution is greatly accelerated. The significance of sex, as Coulter puts it, "lies in the fact that it makes organic evolution more rapid and far more varied." It is scarcely necessary to emphasise that a highly important, and, indeed, essential aspect of this greater

individuation is a higher survival value. The more complex and better equipped creature can meet and subdue difficulties and dangers to which the more lowly organised creature that came before—produced wholesale in a way which Nature seems now to look back on as cheap and nasty—succumbed helplessly without an effort. The idea of economy begins to assert itself in the world. It became clear in the course of evolution that it is better to produce really good and highly efficient organisms, at whatever cost, than to be content with cheap production on a wholesale scale. They allowed greater developmental progress to be made, and they lasted better. Even before man began it was proved in the animal world that the death-rate falls as the birth-rate falls.

If we wish to realise the vast progress in method which has been made, even within the limits of the vertebrates to which we ourselves belong, we have but to compare with the lowly herring, already cited, the highly evolved elephant. The herring multiplies with enormous rapidity and on a vast scale, and it possesses a very small brain, and is almost totally unequipped to grapple with the special difficulties of its life, to which it succumbs on a wholesale scale. A single elephant is carried for about two years in his mother's womb, and is carefully guarded by her for many years after birth ; he possesses a large brain ; his muscular system is as remarkable for its delicacy as for its power and is guided by the most sensitive perceptions. He is fully equipped for all the dangers of his life, save for those

which have been introduced by the subtle devilry of modern man, and though a single pair of elephants produces so few offspring, yet their high cost is justified, for each of them has a reasonable chance of surviving to old age. The contrast from the point of view of reproduction of the herring and the elephant, the low vertebrate and the high vertebrate, well illustrates the tendency of evolution. It clearly brings before us the difference between Nature's earlier and later methods, the ever growing preference for quality of offspring over quantity.

It has been necessary to touch on the wider aspects of reproduction in Nature, even when our main concern is with particular aspects of reproduction in man, for unless we understand the progressive tendency of reproduction in Nature, we shall probably fail to understand it in man. With these preliminary observations, we may now take up the question as it affects man.

It is not easy to ascertain the exact tendencies of reproduction in our own historical past or among the lower races of to-day. On the whole, it seems fairly clear that, under ordinary savage and barbarous conditions, rather more children are produced and rather more children die than among ourselves ; there is, in other words, a higher birth-rate and a higher infantile death-rate.[1] A high

[1] To quote one of the most careful investigators of this point, Northcote Thomas, among the Edo-speaking people of Nigeria, found that the average number of living children per husband was 2.7 ; including all children, alive and dead, the average number was per husband 4.5, and per wife 2.7. " Infant mortality is heavy " (Northcote Thomas, *Anthropological Report of Edo-speaking People of Nigeria*, 1910, Part I., pp. 15, 63).

birth-rate with a low death-rate seems to have been even more exceptional than among ourselves, for under inelastic social conditions the community cannot adjust itself to the rapid expansion that would thus be rendered necessary. The community contracts, as it were, on this expanding portion and largely crushes it out of life by the forces of neglect, poverty, and disease.[1] The only part of Europe in which we can to-day see how this works out on a large scale is Russia, for here we find in an exaggerated form conditions, which once tended to rule all over Europe, side by side with the beginnings of better things, with scientific progress and statistical observation. Yet in Russia, up till recently, if not even still, there has only been about one doctor to every twelve thousand inhabitants, and the witch-doctor has flourished. Small-pox, scarlet fever, diphtheria, typhoid, and syphilis also flourish, and not only flourish, but show an enormously higher mortality than in other European countries. More significant still, famine and typhus, the special disease of filth and overcrowding and misery—both of them banished, save in the most abnormal times, from the rest of Europe—have in modern times ravaged Russia on a vast scale. Ignorance, superstition, insanitation, filth, bad food, impure water, lead to a vast mortality among children which has sometimes destroyed more

[1] The same end has been rather more mercifully achieved in earlier periods by infanticide (see Westermarck, *Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas*, Vol. I., Ch. 17). It must not be supposed that infanticide was opposed to tenderness to children. Thus the Australian Dieyerie, who practised infanticide, were kind to children, and a mother found beating her child was herself beaten by her husband.

than half of them before they reach the age of five; so that, enormously high as the Russian birth-rate is, the death-rate has sometimes exceeded it.[1] Nor is it found, as some would-be sagacious persons confidently assert, that the high birth-rate is justified by the better quality of the survivors. On the contrary, there is a very large proportion of chronic and incurable diseases among the survivors; blindness and other defects abound; and though there are many very large and fine people in Russia, the average stature of the Russians is lower than that of most European peoples.[2]

Russia is in the era of expanding industrialism—a fateful period for any people, as we shall see directly—and the results resemble those which followed, and to some extent exist still, further west. The workers, whose hours often extended to twelve or fourteen, frequently had no homes but slept in the factory itself, in the midst of the machinery, or in a sort of dormitory above it, with a minimum of space and fresh air, men and women promiscuously, on wooden shelves, one above the other, under the eye of Government inspectors whose protests were powerless to effect any change. This is, always and everywhere, even among so humane a people as the Russians, the natural and inevitable result of a high birth-rate in an era of expanding indus-

[1] See Havelock Ellis, *The Nationalisation of Health*.

[2] Similar results appear to follow in China where also the birth-rate is very high and the mortality very great. It is stated that physical development is much inferior and pathological defects more numerous among Chinese as compared with American students. (*New York Medical Journal*, Nov. 14th, 1914, p. 978.) The bad conditions which produce death in the weakest produce deterioration in the survivors.

trialism. Here is the goal of unrestricted reproduction, the same among men as among herrings. This is the ideal of those persons, whether they know it or not, who in their criminal rashness would dare to arrest that fall in the birth-rate which is now beginning to spread its beneficent influence in every civilised land.

We have no means of ascertaining precisely the birth-rate in Western Europe before the nineteenth century, but the estimates of the population which have been made by the help of various data indicate that the increase during a century was very moderate. In England, for instance, families scarcely seem to have been very large, and, even apart from wars, many plagues and pestilences, during the eighteenth century more especially small-pox, constantly devastated the population, so that, with these checks on the results of reproduction, the population was able to adjust itself to its very gradual expansion. The mortality fell heavily on young children, as we observe in old family records, where we frequently find two or even three children of the same Christian name, the first child having died and its name been given to a successor.

During the last quarter of the eighteenth century, a new phase of social life, profoundly affecting the reproductive habits of the community, made its appearance in Western Europe, at first in England. This was the new industrial era, due to the introduction of machinery. All the social methods of gradual though awkward adaptation to a slow expansion were dislocated. Easy expansion of population became a possibility, for factories were constantly springing up, and " hands " were always

in demand. Moreover, these " hands " could be children, for it was possible to tend machinery at a very early age. The richest family was the family with most children. The population began to expand rapidly.

It was an era of prosperity. But when it began to be realised what this meant it was seen that such " prosperity " was far from an enviable condition. A community cannot suddenly adjust itself to a sudden expansion, still less can it adjust itself to a continuous rapid expansion. Disease, misery, and poverty flourished in this prosperous new industrial era. Filth and insanitation, immorality and crime, were fostered by overcrowding in ill-built urban areas. Ignorance and stupidity abounded, for the child, placed in the monotonous routine of the factory when little more than an infant, was deprived alike of the education of the school and of the world. Higher wages brought no higher refinement and were squandered on food and drink, on the lowest vulgar tastes. Such " prosperity " was merely a brutalising influence; it meant nothing for the growth of civilisation and humanity.

Then a wholesome movement of reaction set in. The betterment of the environment—that was the great task that social pioneers and reformers saw before them. They courageously set about the herculean task of cleansing this Augean stable of " Prosperity." The era of sanitation began. The endless and highly beneficent course of factory legislature was inaugurated.[1]

[1] The law is thus laid down by P. Leroy-Beaulieu (*La Question de la Population*, 1913, p. 233) : " The first degree of prosperity in a rude

That is the era which, in every progressive country of the world, we are living in still. The final tendency of it, however, was not foreseen by its great pioneers, or even its humble day-labourers of the present time. For they were not attacking reproduction; they were fighting against bad conditions, and may even have thought that they were enabling reproduction to expand more freely. They had not realised that to improve the environment is to check reproduction, being indeed the one and only way in which undue reproduction can be checked. That may be said to be an aspect of the opposition between Genesis and Individuation, on which Herbert Spencer insisted, for by improving the environment we necessarily improve the individual who is rooted in that environment. It is not, we must remember, a matter of conscious and voluntary action. That is clearly manifest by the fact that it occurs even among the most primitive micro-organisms; when placed under unfavourable conditions as to food and environment they tend to pass into a reproductive phase and by sporulation or otherwise begin to produce new individuals rapidly. It is the same in Man. Improve the environment and reproduction is checked.[1] That is, as Professor

population with few needs develops prolificness; a later degree of prosperity, accompanied by all the feelings and ideas stimulated by the development of education and a democratic environment, leads to a gradual reduction of prolificness."

[1] This is too often forgotten. Birth control is a natural process, and though in civilised men, endowed with high intelligence, it necessarily works in some measure voluntarily and deliberately, it is probable that it still also works, as in the evolution of the lower animals, to some extent automatically. Sir Shirley Murphy (*Lancet*, Aug. 10th,

Benjamin Moore has said, "the simple biological reply to good economic conditions." It is only among the poor, the ignorant, and the wretched that reproduction flourishes. "The tendency of civilisation," as Leroy-Beaulieu concludes, "is to reduce the birth-rate." Those who desire a high birth-rate are desiring, whether they know it or not, the increase of poverty, ignorance, and wretchedness.

So far we have been dealing with fundamental laws and tendencies, which were established long before Man appeared on the earth, although Man has often illustrated, and still illustrates, their inevitable character. We have not been brought in contact with the influence of conscious design and deliberate intention. At this point we reach a totally new aspect of reproduction.

II.

The Origin and Results of Birth Control

In tracing the course of reproduction we have so far been concerned with what are commonly considered the blind operations of Nature in the absence of conscious and deliberate volition. We have seen that while at the

1912), while admitting that intentional restriction has been operative, remarks: "It does not appear to me that there is any more reason for ignoring the likelihood that Nature has been largely concerned in the reduction of births than for ignoring the effects of Nature in reducing the death-rate. The decline in both has points of resemblance. Both have been widely manifest over Europe, both have in the main declined in the period of 1871–1880, and indeed both appear to be behaving in like manner."

outset Nature seems to have impressed an immense reproductive impetus on her creatures, all her energy since has been directed to the imposition of preventive checks on that reproductive impetus. The end attained by these checks has been an extreme diminution in the number of offspring, a prolongation of the time devoted to the breeding and care of each new member of the family, in harmony with its greatly prolonged life, a spacing out of the intervals between the offspring, and, as a result, a vastly greater development of each individual and an ever better equipment for the task of living. All this was slowly attained automatically, without any conscious volition on the part of the individuals, even when they were human beings, who were the agents. Now occurred a change which we may regard as, in some respects, the most momentous sudden advance in the whole history of reproduction: the process of reproductive progress became conscious and deliberately volitional.

We often fancy that when natural progress becomes manifested in the mind and will of man it is somehow unnatural. It is one of the wisest of Shakespeare's utterances in one of the most mature of his plays that

> "Nature is made better by no mean
> But Nature makes that mean . . .
> This is an art
> Which does mend Nature, change it rather, but
> The art itself is Nature."

Birth control, when it ceases to be automatic and becomes conscious, is an art. But it is an art directed

precisely to the attainment of ends which Nature has been struggling after for millions of years, and, being consciously and deliberately an art, it is enabled to avoid many of the pitfalls which the unconscious method falls into. It is an art, but

"The art itself is Nature."

It is always possible for the narrow-eyed fanatic to object to the employment of birth control, precisely as he might object to the use of clothes, as "unnatural." But, if we look more deeply into the matter, we see that even clothes are not truly unnatural. A vast number of creatures may be said to be born in clothes, clothes so naturally such that, when stripped from the animals they belong to, we are proud to wear them ourselves. Even our own ancestors were born in clothes, which they lost by the combined or separate action of natural selection, sexual selection, and the environment, which action, however, has not sufficed to abolish the desirability of clothes.[1] So that the impulse by which we make for ourselves clothes is merely a conscious and volitional form of an impulse which, in the absence of consciousness and will, had acted automatically. It is just the same with the control and limitation of reproductive activity. It is an attempt by open-eyed intelligence and foresight

[1] I do not overlook the fact that the artificial clothing of primitive man is in its origin mainly ornament, having myself insisted on that fact in discussing this point in "The Evolution of Modesty" (*Studies in the Psychology of Sex*, Vol. I.). It has to be remembered that, in animals—and very conspicuously, for instance, in birds—natural clothing is also largely ornament of secondary sexual significance.

to attain those ends which Nature through untold generations has been painfully yet tirelessly struggling for. The deliberate co-operation of Man in the natural task of birth-control represents an identification of the human will with what we may, if we choose, regard as the divinely appointed law of the world. We can well believe that the great pioneers who, a century ago, acted in the spirit of this faith may have echoed the thought of Kepler when, on discovering his great planetary law, he exclaimed in rapture: "O God! I think Thy thoughts after Thee."

As a matter of fact, however, it was in no such spirit of ecstasy that the pioneers of the movement for birth control acted. The Divine command is less likely to be heard in the whirlwind than in the still small voice. These great pioneers were thoughtful, cautious, hard-headed men, who spoke scarcely above a whisper, and were far too modest to realise that a great forward movement in natural evolution had in them begun to be manifested. Early man could not have taken this step because it is even doubtful whether he knew that the conjunction of the sexes had anything to do with the production of offspring, which he was inclined to attribute to magical causes. Later, although intelligence grew, the uncontrolled rule of the sexual impulse obtained so firm a grip on men that they laughed at the idea that it was possible to exercise forethought and prudence in this sphere; at the same time religion and superstition came into action to preserve the established tradition and to persuade people that it would be wicked to do

anything different from what they had always done. But a saner feeling was awakening here and there, in various parts of the world. At last, under the stress of the devastation and misery caused by the reproductive relapse of the industrial era, this feeling, voiced by a few distinguished men, began to take shape in action.

The pioneers were English. Among them Malthus occupies the first place. That distinguished man, in his great and influential work, *The Principle of Population*, in 1798, emphasised the immense importance of foresight and self-control in procreation, and the profound significance of birth limitation for human welfare. Malthus relied, however, on ascetic self-restraint, a method which could only appeal to the few; he had nothing to say for the prevention of conception in intercourse. That was suggested, twenty years later, very cautiously by James Mill, the father of John Stuart Mill, in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Four years afterwards, Mill's friend, the Radical reformer, Francis Place, advocated this method more clearly. Finally, in 1831, Robert Dale Owen, the son of the great Robert Owen, published his *Moral Physiology*, in which he set forth the ways of preventing conception; while a little later the Drysdale brothers, ardent and unwearying philanthropists, devoted their energies to a propaganda which has been spreading ever since and has now conquered the whole civilised world.

It was not, however, in England but in France, so often at the head of an advance in civilisation, that birth control first became firmly established, and that the extravagantly high birth-rate of earlier times began

to fall; this happened in the first half of the nineteenth century, whether or not it was mainly due to voluntary control.[1] In England the movement came later, and the steady decline in the English birth-rate, which is still proceeding, began in 1877. In the previous year there had been a famous prosecution of Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant for disseminating pamphlets describing the methods of preventing conception; the charge was described by the Lord Chief Justice, who tried the case, as one of the most ill-advised and injudicious ever made in a court of justice. But it served an undesigned end by giving enormous publicity to the subject and advertising the methods it sought to suppress. There can be no doubt, however, that even apart from this trial the movement would have proceeded on the same lines. The times were ripe, the great industrial expansion had passed its first feverish phase, social conditions were improving, education was spreading. The inevitable character of the movement is indicated by the fact that at the very same time it began to be manifested all over Europe, indeed in every civilised country of the world. At the present time the birth-rate (as well as usually the death-rate) is falling in every country of the world sufficiently civilised to possess statistics of its own vital

[1] At the end of the eighteenth century there were in France four children on the average to a family; a movement of rapid increase in the population reached its climax in 1846; by 1860 the average number of children to a family had slowly fallen to but little over three. Broca, writing in 1867 ("Sur la Prétendue Dégénérescence de la Population Française"), mentioned that the slow fall in the birth-rate was only slightly due to prudent calculation and mainly to more general causes, such as delay in marriage.

movement. The fall varies in rapidity. It has been considerable in the more progressive countries; it has lingered in the more backward countries. If we examine the latest statistics for Europe (usually those for 1913) we find that every country, without exception, with a progressive and educated population, and a fairly high state of social well-being, presents a birth-rate below 30 per 1,000. We also find that every country in Europe in which the mass of the people are primitive, ignorant, or in a socially unsatisfactory condition (even although the governing classes may be progressive or ambitious) shows a birth-rate above 30 per 1,000. France, Great Britain, Belgium, Holland, the Scandinavian countries and Switzerland are in the first group. Russia, Austro-Hungary, Italy, Spain and the Balkan countries are in the second group. The German Empire was formerly in this second group but now comes within the first group, and has carried on the movement so energetically that the birth-rate of Berlin is already below that of London, and that at the present rate of decline the birth-rate of the German Empire will before long sink to that of France. Outside Europe, in the United States just as much as in Australia and New Zealand, the same great progressive movement is proceeding with equal activity.

The wide survey of the question of birth limitation here taken may seem to some readers unnecessary. Why not get at once to matters of practical detail? But, if we think of it, our wide survey has been of the greatest practical help to us. It has, for instance, settled the question of the desirability of the adoption of methods

of preventing conception and finally silenced those who would waste our time with their fears lest it is not right to control conception. We know now on whose side are the laws of God and Nature. We realise that in exercising control over the entrance gate of life we are not only performing, consciously and deliberately, a great human duty, but carrying on rationally a beneficial process which has, more blindly and wastefully, been carried on since the beginning of the world. There are still a few persons ignorant enough or foolish enough to fight against the advance of civilisation in this matter ; we can well afford to leave them severely alone, knowing that in a few years all of them will have passed away. It is not our business to defend the control of birth, but simply to discuss how we may most wisely exercise that control.

Many ways of preventing conception have been devised since the method which is still the commonest was first introduced, so far as our certainly imperfect knowledge extends, by a clever Jew, Onan (*Genesis*, Chap. XXXVIII), whose name has since been wrongly attached to another practice with which the Mosaic record in no way associates him. There are now many contraceptive methods, some dependent on precautions adopted by the man, others dependent on the woman, others again which take the form of an operation permanently preventing conception, and, therefore, not to be adopted save by couples who already have as many children as they desire, or else who ought never to have children at all and thus wisely adopt a method of sterilisation. It is unnecessary here,

even if it were otherwise desirable, to discuss these various methods in detail. It is even useless to do so, for we must bear in mind that no method can be absolutely approved or absolutely condemned. Each may be suitable under certain conditions and for certain couples, and it is not easy to recommend any method indiscriminately. We need to know the intimate circumstances of individual cases. For the most part, experience is the final test. Forel compared the use of contraceptive devices to the use of eyeglasses, and it is obvious that, without expert advice, the results in either case may sometimes be mischievous or at all events ineffective. Personal advice and instruction are always desirable. In Holland nurses are medically trained in a practical knowledge of contraceptive methods, and are thus enabled to enlighten the women of the community. This is an admirable plan. Considering that the use of contraceptive measures is now almost universal, it is astonishing that there are yet so many so-called "civilised" countries in which this method of enlightenment is not everywhere adopted. Until it is adopted, and a necessary knowledge of the most fundamental facts of the sexual life brought into every home, the physician must be regarded as the proper adviser. It is true that until recently he was generally in these matters a blind leader of the blind. Nowadays it is beginning to be recognised that the physician has no more serious and responsible duty than that of giving help in the difficult path of the sexual life. Very frequently, indeed, even yet, he has not risen to a sense of his responsibilities in this matter.

It is as well to remember, however, that a physician who is unable or unwilling to give frank and sound advice in this most important department of life, is unlikely to be reliable in any other department. If he is not up to date here he is probably not up to date anywhere.

Whatever the method adopted, there are certain conditions which it must fulfil, even apart from its effectiveness as a contraceptive, in order to be satisfactory. Most of these conditions may be summed up in one: the most satisfactory method is that which least interferes with the normal process of the act of intercourse. Every sexual act is, or should be, a miniature courtship, however long marriage may have lasted.[1] No outside mental tension or nervous apprehension must be allowed to intrude. Any contraceptive proceeding which hastily enters the atmosphere of love immediately before or immediately after the moment of union is unsatisfactory and may be injurious. It even risks the total loss of the contraceptive result, for at such moments the intended method may be ineffectively carried out, or neglected altogether. No method can be regarded as desirable which interferes with the sense of satisfaction and relief which should follow the supreme act of loving union. No method which produces a nervous jar in one of the parties, even though it may be satisfactory to the other, should be tolerated. Such considerations must for some couples rule out certain methods. We cannot, however, lay down absolute rules, because methods which some

[1] Havelock Ellis, *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*, Vol. VI., "Sex in Relation to Society," Ch. XI., The Art of Love.

couples may find satisfactory prove unsatisfactory in other cases. Experience, aided by expert advice, is the only final criterion.

When a contraceptive method is adopted under satisfactory conditions, with a due regard to the requirements of the individual couple, there is little room to fear that any injurious results will be occasioned. It is quite true that many physicians speak emphatically concerning the injurious results to husband or to wife of contraceptive devices. Although there has been exaggeration, and prejudice has often been imported into this question, and although most of the injurious results could have been avoided had trained medical help been at hand to advise better methods, there can be no doubt that much that has been said under this head is true. Considering how widespread is the use of these methods, and how ignorantly they have often been carried out, it would be surprising indeed if it were not true. But even supposing that the nervously injurious effects which have been traced to contraceptive practices were a thousandfold greater than they have been reported to be—instead of, as we are justified in believing, considerably less than they are reported—shall we therefore condemn contraceptive methods? To do so would be to ignore all the vastly greater evils which have followed in the past from unchecked reproduction. It would be a condemnation which, if we exercised it consistently, would destroy the whole of civilisation and place us back in savagery. For what device of man, since man had any history at all, has not proved sometimes injurious?

Every one of even the most useful and beneficent of human inventions has either exercised subtle injuries or produced appalling catastrophes. This is not only true of man's devices, it is true of Nature's in general. Let us take, for instance, the elevation of man's ancestors from the quadrupedal to the bipedal position. The experiment of making a series of four-footed animals walk on their hind-legs was very revolutionary and risky ; it was far, far more beset by dangers than is the introduction of contraceptives ; we are still suffering all sorts of serious evils in consequence of Nature's action in placing our remote ancestors in the erect position. Yet we feel that it was worth while ; even those physicians who most emphasise the evil results of the erect position do not advise that we should go on all-fours. It is just the same with a great human device, the introduction of clothes. They have led to all sorts of new susceptibilities to disease and even tendencies to direct injury of many kinds. Yet no one advocates the complete disuse of all clothing on the ground that corsets have sometimes proved harmful. It would be just as absurd to advocate the complete abandonment of contraceptives on the ground that some of them have sometimes been misused. If it were not, indeed, that we are familiar with the lengths to which ignorance and prejudice may go we should question the sanity of anyone who put forward so foolish a proposition. Every great step which Nature and man have taken in the path of progress has been beset by dangers which are gladly risked because of the advantages involved. We have still to enumerate

some of the immense advantages which Man has gained in acquiring a conscious and deliberate control of reproduction.

III.

Birth Control in Relation to Morality and Eugenics

Anyone who has followed this discussion so far will not easily believe that a tendency so deeply rooted in Nature as Birth Control can ever be in opposition to Morality. It can only seem to be so when we confuse the eternal principles of Morality, whatever they may be, with their temporary applications, which are always becoming modified in adaptation to changing circumstances.

We are often in danger of doing injustice to the morality of the past, and it is important, even in order to understand the morality of the present, that we should be able to put ourselves in the place of those for whom birth control was immoral. To speak of birth control as having been immoral in the past is, indeed, to underestimate the case; it was not only immoral, it was unnatural, it was even irreligious, it was almost criminal. We must remember that throughout the Christian world the Divine Command, "Increase and Multiply," has seemed to echo down the ages from the beginning of the world. It was the authoritative command of a tribal God who

was, according to the scriptural narrative, addressing a world inhabited by eight people. From such a point of view a world's population of several thousand persons would have seemed inconceivably vast, though to-day by even the most austere advocate of birth limitation it would be allowed with a smile. But the old religious command has become a tradition which has survived amid conditions totally unlike those under which it arose. In comparatively modern times it has been reinforced from unexpected quarters, on the one hand by all the forces that are opposed to democracy and on the other by all the forces of would-be patriotic militarism, both alike clamouring for plentiful and cheap men.

Even science, under primitive conditions, was opposed to Birth Control. Creation was regarded as a direct process in which man's will had no part, and knowledge of nature was still too imperfect for the recognition of the fact that the whole course of the world's natural history has been an erection of barriers against wholesale and indiscriminate reproduction. Thus it came about that under the old dispensation, which is now for ever passing away, to have as many children as possible and to have them as often as possible—provided certain ritual prescriptions were fulfilled—seemed to be a religious, moral, natural, scientific, and patriotic duty.

To-day the conditions have altogether altered, and even our own feelings have altered. We no longer feel with the ancient Hebrew who has bequeathed his ideals though not his practices to Christendom, that to have as many wives and concubines and as large a family as

possible is both natural and virtuous, as well as profitable. We realise, moreover, that the Divine Commands, so far as we recognise any such commands, are not external to us, but are manifested in our own deliberate reason and will. We know that to primitive men, who lacked foresight and lived mainly in the present, only that Divine Command could be recognisable which sanctified the impulse of the moment, while to us, who live largely in the future, and have learnt foresight, the Divine Command involves restraint on the impulse of the moment. We no longer believe that we are divinely ordered to be reckless or that God commands us to have children who, as we ourselves know, are fatally condemned to disease or premature death. Providence, which was once regarded as the attribute of God, we regard as the attribute of men; providence, prudence, self-restraint—these are to us the characteristics of moral men, and those persons who lack these characteristics are condemned by our social order to be reckoned among the dregs of mankind. It is a social order which in the sphere of procreation could not be reached or maintained except by the systematic control of offspring.

We may realise the difference between the morality of to-day and the morality of the past when we come to details. We may consider, for instance, the question of the chastity of women. According to the ideas of the old morality, which placed the whole question of procreation under the authority (after God) of men, women were in subjection to men, and had no right to freedom, no right to responsibility, no right to knowledge, for,

it was believed, if entrusted with any of these they would abuse them at once. That view prevails even to-day in some civilised countries, and middle-class Italian parents, for instance, will not allow their daughter to be conducted by a man even to Mass, for they believe that as soon as she is out of their sight she will be unchaste. That is their morality. Our morality to-day, however, is inspired by different ideas, and aims at a different practice. We are by no means disposed to rate highly the morality of a girl who is only chaste so long as she is under her parents' eyes ; for us, indeed, that is much more like immorality than morality. We are to-day vigorously pursuing a totally different line of action. We wish women to be reasonably free, we wish them to be trained in the sense of responsibility for their own actions, we wish them to possess knowledge, more especially in that sphere of sex, once theoretically closed to them, which we now recognise as peculiarly their own domain. Nowadays, moreover, we are sufficiently well acquainted with human nature to know, not only that at best the "chastity" merely due to compulsion or to ignorance is a poor thing, but that at worst it is really the most degraded and injurious form of unchastity. For there are many ways of avoiding pregnancy besides the use of contraceptives, and such ways can often only be called vicious, destructive to purity, and harmful to health. Our ideal woman to-day is not she who is deprived of freedom and knowledge in the cloister, even though only the cloister of her home, but the woman who, being instructed from early life in the facts of sexual

physiology and sexual hygiene, is also trained in the exercise of freedom and self-responsibility, and able to be trusted to choose and to follow the path which seems to her right. That is the only kind of morality which seems to us real and worth while. And, in any case, we have now grown wise enough to know that no degree of compulsion and no depth of ignorance will suffice to make a girl good if she doesn't want to be good. So that, even as a matter of policy, it is better to put her in a position to know what is good and to act in accordance with that knowledge.

The relation of birth control to morality is, however, by no means a question which concerns women alone. It equally concerns men. Here we have to recognise, not only that the exercise of control over procreation enables a man to form a union of faithful devotion with the woman of his choice at an earlier age than would otherwise be possible, but it further enables him, throughout the whole of married life, to continue such relationship under circumstances which might otherwise render them injurious or else undesirable to his wife. That the influence thus exerted by preventive methods would suffice to abolish prostitution it would be foolish to maintain, for prostitution has other grounds of support. But even within the sphere of merely prostitutional relationships the use of contraceptives, and the precautions and cleanliness they involve, have an influence of their own in diminishing the risks of venereal disease, and while the interests of those who engage in prostitution are by some persons regarded as negligible, we must

always remember that venereal disease spreads far beyond the patrons of prostitution and is a perpetual menace to others who may become altogether innocent victims. So that any influence which tends to diminish venereal disease increases the well-being of the whole community.

Apart from the relationship to morality, although the two are intimately combined, we are thus led to the relationship of birth control to eugenics, or to the sound breeding of the race. Here we touch the highest ground, and are concerned with our best hopes for the future of the world. For there can be no doubt that birth control is not only a precious but an indispensable instrument in moulding the coming man to the measure of our developing ideals. Without it we are powerless in the face of the awful evils which flow from random and reckless reproduction. With it we possess a power so great that some persons have professed to see in it a menace to the propagation of the race, amusing themselves with the idea that if people possess the means to prevent the conception of children they will never have children at all. It is not necessary to discuss such a grotesque notion seriously. The desire for children is far too deeply implanted in mankind and womankind alike ever to be rooted out. If there are to-day many parents whose lives are rendered wretched by large families and the miseries of excessive child-bearing, there are an equal number whose lives are wretched because they have no children at all, and who snatch eagerly at any straw which offers the smallest promise of relief to this craving. Certainly there are people who desire marriage, but—

some for very sound and estimable reasons and others for reasons which may less well bear examination—do not desire any children at all. So far as these are concerned, contraceptive methods, far from being a social evil, are a social blessing. For nothing is so certain as that it is an unmixed evil for a community to possess unwilling, undesirable, or incompetent parents. Birth control would be an unmixed blessing if it merely enabled us to exclude such persons from the ranks of parenthood. We desire no parents who are not both competent and willing parents. Only such parents are fit to father and to mother a future race worthy to rule the world.

It is sometimes said that the control of conception, since it is frequently carried out immediately on marriage, will tend to delay parenthood until an unduly late age. Birth control has, however, no necessary result of this kind, and might even act in the reverse direction. A chief cause of delay in marriage is the prospect of the burden and expense of an unrestricted flow of children into the family, and in Great Britain, since 1911, with the extension of the use of contraceptives, there has been a slight but regular increase not only in the general marriage rate but in the proportion of early marriages, although the *general* mean age at marriage has increased. The ability to control the number of children not only enables marriage to take place at an early age but also makes it possible for the couple to have at least one child soon after marriage. The total number of children are thus spaced out, instead of following in rapid succession.

It is only of recent years that the eugenic importance

of a considerable interval between births has been fully recognised, as regards not only the mother—this has long been realised—but also the children. The very high mortality of large families has long been known, and their association with degenerate conditions and with criminality. The children of small families in Toronto, Canada, are taller than those of larger families, as is also the case in Oakland, California, where the average size of the family is smaller than in Toronto.[1] Of recent years, moreover, evidence has been obtained that families in which the children are separated from each other by intervals of more than two years are both mentally and physically superior to those in which the interval is shorter. Thus Ewart found in a northern English manufacturing town that children born at an interval of less than two years after the birth of the previous child remain notably defective, even at the age of six, both as regards intelligence and physical development. When compared with children born at a longer interval and with first-born children, they are, on the average, three inches shorter and three pounds lighter than first-born children.[2] Such observations need to be repeated in various countries, but if confirmed it is obvious that they represent a fact of the most vital significance.

Thus when we calmly survey, in however summary a

[1] The exact results are presented by F. Boas (abstract of Report on *Changes in Bodily Form of Descendants of Immigrants*, Washington, 1911, p. 57), who concludes that "the physical development of children, as measured by stature, is the better the smaller the family."

[2] R. J. Ewart, "The Influence of Parental Age on Offspring," *Eugenics Review*, Oct., 1911.

manner, the great field of life affected by the establishment of voluntary human control over the production of the race, we can see no cause for anything but hope. It is satisfactory that it should be so, for there can be no doubt that we are here facing a great and permanent fact in civilised life. With every rise in civilisation, indeed with all evolutionary progress whatever, there is what seems to be an automatic fall in the birth-rate. That fall is always normally accompanied by a fall in the death-rate, so that a low birth-rate frequently means a high rate of natural increase, since most of the children born survive.[1] Thus in the civilised world of to-day, notwithstanding the low birth-rate which prevails as compared with earlier times, the rate of increase in the population is still, as Leroy-Beaulieu points out, appalling, nearly half a million a year in Great Britain, over half a million in Austro-Hungary, and three-quarters of a million in Germany. When we examine this excess of births in detail we find among them a large proportion of undesired and undesirable children. There are two opposed alternative methods working to diminish this proportion: the method of preventing conception, with which we have here been concerned, and the method of preventing live birth by producing abortion. There can be no doubt about the enormous extension of this latter practice in all civilised countries, even although some of the estimates of its frequency in the United States,

[1] In New Zealand the birth-rate is very low; but the death-rate of children in the first year is only 58 per thousand as against 130 in England.

where it seems especially to flourish, may be extravagant. The burden of excessive children on the overworked underfed mothers of the working classes becomes at last so intolerable that anything seems better than another child. "I'd rather swallow the druggist's shop and the man in it than have another kid," as, Miss Elderton reports, a woman in Yorkshire said.[1]

Now there has of late years arisen a movement, especially among German women, for bringing abortion into honour and repute, so that it may be carried out openly and with the aid of the best physicians. This movement has been supported by lawyers and social reformers of high position. It may be admitted that women have an abstract right to abortion and that in exceptional cases that right should be exerted. Yet there can be very little doubt to most people that abortion is a wasteful, injurious, and almost degrading method of dealing with the birth-rate, a feeble apology for recklessness and improvidence. A society in which abortion flourishes cannot be regarded as a healthy society. Therefore, a community which takes upon itself to encourage abortion is incurring a heavy responsibility. I am referring more especially to the United States, where this condition of things is most marked. For, there cannot be any doubt about it, just as all those who work for birth control are diminishing the frequency of abortion, so

[1] E. M. Elderton, *Report on the English Birth-rate*, Part I., 1914. See also the collection of narratives of their experiences by working-class mothers, published under the title of *Maternity* (Women's Co-operative Guild, 1915).

every attempt to discourage birth control promotes abortion. We have to approach this problem calmly, in the light of Nature and reason. We have each of us to decide on which side we shall range ourselves. For it is a vital social problem concerning which we cannot afford to be indifferent.

There is here no desire to exaggerate the importance of birth control. It is not a royal road to the millennium, and, as I have already pointed out, like all other measures which the course of progress forces us to adopt, it has its disadvantages. Yet at the present moment its real and vital significance is acutely brought home to us.

Flinders Petrie, discussing those great migrations due to the unrestricted expansion of barbarous races which have devastated Europe from the dawn of history, remarks : " We deal lightly and coldly with the abstract facts, but they represent the most terrible tragedies of all humanity—the wreck of the whole system of civilisation, protracted starvation, wholesale massacre. Can it be avoided ? That is the question, before all others, to the statesman who looks beyond the present time."[1] Since Petrie wrote, only ten years ago, we have had occasion to realise that the vast expansions which he described are not confined to the remote past, but are at work and producing the same awful results, even at the very present hour. The great and only legitimate apology which has been put forward for the aggressive attitude of Germany in the present war has been that it

[1] Flinders Petrie, *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, 1906, p. 220.

was the inevitable expansive outcome of the abnormally high birth-rate of Germany in recent times; as Dr. Dernburg, not long ago, put it: "The expansion of the German nation has been so extraordinary during the last twenty-five years that the conditions existing before the war had become insupportable." In other words, there was no outlet but a devastating war. So we are called upon to repeat, with fresh emphasis, Petrie's question: *Can it be avoided?* All humanity, all civilisation, call upon us to take up our stand on this vital question of birth control. In so doing we shall each of us be contributing, however humbly, to

> "one far-off divine event,
> To which the whole creation moves."

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