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VARIOUS ASPECTS  
OF  
BIRTH CONTROL

By

E. ADOLPHUS KNOFF, M.D.

NEW YORK







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# VARIOUS ASPECTS OF BIRTH CONTROL

MEDICAL, SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, LEGAL  
MORAL AND RELIGIOUS

BY

S. ADOLPHUS KNOPF, M.D.

(Univ. New York and Paris)

Formerly Professor of Phthisiotherapy, N. Y. Post-Graduate Med. School and Hosp.; Major Med. Off. Res. Corps (Aux.) U. S. Army; Consulting Physician to Riverside Tuberculosis Hosp. Gabriel Sanatorium, N. Y., West Mountain Sanat., Pa., Bruchesi Tuber. Institute, Montreal, etc.; Honorary Member of Amer. Ass'n. for Thoracic Surgery, Member Nat. Tub. Ass'n., Amer. Med. Ass'n., N. Y. Acad. of Med., Soc'y. of Medical Jurisprudence, Ass'n. of U. S. Military Surgeons, Etc.

New York

FOURTH EDITION

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S. ADOLPHUS KNOPF

New York





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Dedicated to that as yet small band of noble women and men who have seen the light and, unafraid of scorn, abuse, imprisonment, and social ostracism, are battling for the rights of the wife, the mother, and the child, so that the latter may be well wanted, well born, well loved, and well reared.

The author of this booklet would be grateful to his readers for any criticisms, comments, or suggestion whereby the value of future editions may be enhanced and the cause of scientific, rational, and humane birth control furthered.



## PUBLICATIONS BY THE AUTHOR ON THE SUBJECT OF BIRTH CONTROL

The Marriage of the Tuberculous and the Size of the Family in Their Bearing on the Tuberculosis Problem; *American Medicine*, January 6, 1906.

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The Sanitary, Medical, Social, and Moral Aspects of Birth Control; *MEDICAL JOURNAL AND RECORD*, January 6, 1926.

A Protest Against a Protest—A Reply to Dr. Eliza M. Mosher's article on Birth Control in *Medical Woman's Journal*, of February, 1926.

Birth Control as it Confronts the Medical Profession in the United States; *Clinical Medicine and Surgery*. Chicago, Ill., October, 1927.



FOREWORD to the Fourth Edition, by Charles E. de M. Sajous, M.D., Sc.D., LL.D., Professor of Endocrinology, in the University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Medicine.

“My dear Friend Knopf:

“Your book on ‘The Medical, Social, Economic, Legal, Moral and Religious Aspects of Birth Control’ should be read by every one interested in human welfare. So convincing is the evidence it contains in favor of this precautionary measure against many of the world’s greatest evils, wars due to overpopulation, propensity to crime, feeble-mindedness, abortions, marital relations leading to divorces, venereal disease, etc., that it promises to become one of the most potent means at our disposal for their eradication.

“I would add as the fundamental evil effect of excessive reproduction by those who are unable to take care of their offspring, its injurious action upon the ductless glands which, as I pointed out in 1903, and as confirmed by many investigators since, sustain life and defend it. The fact that the number of deaths is over twice greater among the children of large families than it is among those of small families (4 children or less) indicates that besides weakening the vital fabric of the mother, excessive reproduction debilitates that of the child and its defensive powers against disease. Hence the predilection of children of large families to disease, particularly those of the poor through deficiency of food, crowding in small quar-



ters, uncleanliness, etc. When we add to this the inevitable neglect and lack of moral training, the fact that large families are prolific sources of youthful criminals, prostitutes, narcotic addicts, etc., becomes clear. All these misfortunes would be mitigated and even prevented to a marked degree, if Birth Control—or rather conception control—as urged by you were studied and practiced with due care. In Holland, Sweden and other countries where this form of prevention has, with government sanction, been practiced under the guidance of family physicians, excellent results have been obtained.”

Yours cordially,

CHARLES E. DE M. SAJOUS.

To Professor S. Adolphus Knopf, M.D.,  
16 West 95th Street, New York, N. Y.



## PREFACE TO THE FOURTH EDITION

*By the Author*

The third edition of this booklet has been rapidly exhausted. It has received a warm welcome by physicians, philanthropists, jurists, political economists, and men and women in all walks of life. It would lengthen this preface too much even to summarize the comments of all those who have thus honored my humble work. A circular of most favorable comments on the book, issued by the American Birth Control League, contains such names as Mrs. Margaret Sanger, President of the American Birth Control League; Mrs. Mary Ware Dennett, former President of the Voluntary Parenthood League; Mrs. F. Robertson Jones, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the American Birth Control League; Dr. Alice Hamilton, Professor of Industrial Medicine, Harvard University; Rev. Charles H. Parkhurst, D.D., Emeritus Minister of Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church, New York; Rev. John Haynes Holmes, Minister of the Community Church, New York; Rev. Edgar Swan Wiers, Minister Unity Church, Montclair, N. J.; Rev. Stephen S. Wise, D.D., Rabbi of the Free Synagogue, New York; Mr. Eric H. Thomson, General Secretary of the Young Men's Christian Association of the North Dakota Agricultural College, Fargo, N. Dak.; Dr. George B. Lake, Editor of "Clinical Medicine and Surgery," North Chicago, Ill.; Dr. Lawrence Litchfield, Ex-president of the Pennsylvania Medical Association, Pittsburgh, Pa.; Prof. William Allen Pusey, M.D., Ex-president of the American Medical Association, Chicago, Ill.; Dr. J. E. W. Wallin, Professor of Clinical Psychology, Miami University, Dayton, Ohio; Percy L. Clark, Jr., of the Rational Life Publishing Co., Ithaca, N. Y.; Dean George Kirchwey, LL.D., Professor of Criminology in the Department of the New York School of Social Work; Prof. C. C. Little, ScD., President of



the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor; Prof. Raymond Pearl, Ph.D., Director of the Institute of Biological Research of Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore; George Haven Putnam, of G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York and London.

Besides treating the medical, social, economic, moral and religious aspects, I have enlarged the essay by a discussion of the legal aspect of birth control. A list is added of the alas! all too few existing birth control clinics and Maternity Health Centers in the United States where contraceptive advice is given.

May this fourth edition of the little book go forth on its mission to help educate not only the medical profession but also the people at large. May our statesmen come to realize that we are confronted with a serious menace of overpopulation which will result in unemployment, misery and want, with an increase of the physically, mentally and morally unfit and a dangerous spread of venereal diseases with its terrible consequences. In enlightenment and wise legislation on the subject of control of conception which, besides being called birth control, has also gone under the name of Control of Parenthood or Voluntary Parenthood, lies the solution of many of the perplexing problems of our times.

S. A. KNOPF.

New York, May 1st, 1928.



## PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION

The first edition of this booklet consisted of an address on the subject of Birth Control delivered nearly ten years ago (October 17, 1916) at the forty-fourth annual meeting of the American Public Health Association at Cincinnati, Ohio. It was reprinted a number of times and in 1917 appeared in a revised and enlarged edition, published by the New York Women's Publishing Company, Inc. A second edition, brought up to date, appeared in 1919 and was again honored by being reprinted several times. In the preface to that edition I mentioned the latest works of Harold Cox, of England, and G. H. Knibbs, of Melbourne, on the subject of the population of England and the world at large, showing even then an alarming state of overpopulation. Later statistics, which are incorporated in this edition, show the problem of overpopulation throughout the civilized world to be growing more acute. I will not describe again the sufferings of women and children after the great war, of which I endeavored to give a graphic picture in that edition. Philanthropy has done much to relieve the sad plight of the children in the war affected countries, but what is needed there today more than ever is birth control. In this way alone can we remove that great incentive to war, which is overpopulation. By judicious and scientific birth control we can materially aid in bringing about a better and saner condition in this respect in America as well as in Europe. To contribute my mite towards the attainment of this goal, I have devoted whatever time I could spare from a busy consultation practice in tuberculosis to advocating birth control by lecturing and writing.

As the basis of this edition I have used a lecture which I delivered by invitation before the Yorkville Medical Society on October 19, 1925, and before the Medical Association of the Greater City of New York on December 21, 1925. Dr. Gregory Stragnell, to whom I sub-



mitted the manuscript, gladly accepted it for publication in the first number of the year 1926 of the *MEDICAL JOURNAL AND RECORD*, of which the doctor is the distinguished editor. The previous editions dealt mainly with the medical, social, and moral aspect of birth control. These phases of the problem have again been treated here, but more extensively than in the previous editions. To this present edition I have added much concerning the economic and religious aspects of the subject.

To the many leading divines of the various denominations, whose letters I reproduce, I am deeply grateful for the invaluable aid and support they have extended to me in my modest efforts. To Mrs. Margaret Sanger, the originator of the birth control movement in this country, and to Dr. Stopes, of England, and their efficient staffs, and to the many of my colleagues and co-workers throughout the civilized world who, by their writings and personal influence have given me the inspiration to my work, I wish to express my deep and grateful appreciation.

The two preceding editions had an unprecedented circulation among the medical profession as well as among the laity and I am in hopes that this new one will find a like welcome and be productive of real good—one more step towards the ultimate goal—a humanity composed of just and noble men, emancipated and noble women, mothers of welcome children, physically, mentally, and spiritually well endowed, all enjoying a life with no more fear of war and revolution, with social justice reigning supreme, and crime, disease and poverty constantly diminishing, in short a happier, peaceful world.

S. A. KNOPF.

New York, May 15, 1926.



Motto: Unconscious procreation degrades man to the level of the beast; conscious procreation—voluntary parenthood—will elevate him to the highest possible development and make him a fellow worker with his creator.

## VARIOUS ASPECTS OF BIRTH CONTROL: MEDICAL, SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, LEGAL, MORAL AND RELIGIOUS

S. ADOLPHUS KNOPF, M.D.  
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Formerly Professor of Phthiotherapy, N. Y. Post-Graduate Med. School and Hosp.; Major Med. Off. Res. Corps (Aux.), U. S. Army; Consulting Physician to Riverside Tuberculosis Hosp., Gabriels Sanatorium, N. Y., West Mountain Sanat., Pa., Bruchesi Tuberc. Institute, Montreal, etc.; Honorary Member of American Ass'n for Thoracic Surgery, Member Nat. Tub. Ass'n, Amer. Med. Ass'n, N. Y. Acad. of Med., Society of Medical Jurisprudence, Ass'n of U. S. Military Surgeons, etc.

Before entering on the discussion of my subject, I believe it is an imperative necessity, even a duty, to give a comprehensive explanation of what is meant by the words "birth control". One might justly wonder why such plain, simple and widely used words should need any definition, yet if there ever were words whose meaning was misunderstood, misinterpreted, misconstrued and used to designate something base, unholy and abhorrent, it is the words "birth control". The reason for this is that great numbers of people in this country have been taught, or have without reasoning assumed, that the meaning of the words is the same as abortion. Yet the difference between the words birth control and abortion is as great as that between the words life and death. In England and other English speaking countries, however, there seems to be no confusion about the true meaning of the words.

Birth control is the control of conception, the prevention of the formation of the very beginning of life. Abor-



tion, on the other hand, is destroying life already created, and is a procedure often followed by serious consequences and even the death of the woman. What is known as "therapeutic abortion" is sometimes resorted to by physicians after careful consultation, when it is the only way to save the life of the mother, but this is not called birth control. A further opprobrium has been cast upon the words and the movement by the fact that information on the subject is classed with immoral and obscene things in the Federal post office and in many States laws.

When Mrs. Sanger, the heroic pioneer of this new humane and scientific movement, adopted the words "birth control", she meant "the control of the birthrate by prevention of conception" and by the use of harmless and effective medical or chemical methods called contraceptives, and never thought of the possibility that this designation might be so misconstrued. To counteract the erroneous idea and the seeming disrepute of the words so used, friends of the movement have suggested and used in their writings such names as Voluntary Parenthood, Neo Malthusian Movement, Voluntary Motherhood, Parent Control, Population Control, Conception Control, etc. However, none of these designations have become popular or have been universally adopted, and now the majority or lay and professional workers on the subject have retained or returned to the name of "birth control". Even the clergy amongst liberal Protestants and Hebrews, so many of whom are now in favor of the movement, use these words in their sermons. Sociologists and political economists who see in the unrestricted increase of population an absolute necessity for birth limitation, use the words birth control for the means to this end. Even in our legislative halls the meaning of the words is beginning to be rightly understood as designating scientific, humane and harmless method of preventing conception, based on careful research work by competent medical men and women and to be made use of in cases where pregnancy may cause physical, mental or economic suffering or death. It is life saving and not life destroying.



When the substance of this essay was first delivered as a lecture, I felt that perhaps I should apologize for appearing before a purely medical audience to discuss a subject which would most likely be better treated by a specialist in diseases of women, an expert sanitarian, or a political economist. I know that not a few of my colleagues who honor me by their friendship, have often wondered at my interest in this as yet unpopular subject, and those familiar with my past work have asked themselves whether I have not enough to do in helping to prevent the spread of tuberculosis and treating the many unfortunate sufferers from this disease. I can only reply that it is through more than a quarter of a century's practice among these very sufferers from tuberculosis, the rich and the poor, in palatial homes and humble cottages, in dark and dreary tenements and overcrowded hospitals, that I have become convinced of the danger to individual and public health and public welfare in general, from thoughtless procreation, and last but not least of its utter immorality. And most of my experience has been limited to this one disease of the masses—tuberculosis—only.

The tears and sufferings I have witnessed when I have had to decline help because it was too late to prevent, the despair of the poor, frail mother at the prospect of another inevitable confinement, and later the sight of a puny baby destined to disease, poverty, and misery, has made me take the stand I am taking today.

The prevention of conception in a tuberculous mother actively ill, is advised with, I think, few exceptions, by all tuberculosis workers, and it is my firm conviction that this practice has had its part in the constantly falling death rate from this disease during the last twenty-five years.

The importance of birth control considered in its sanitary, medical, moral, social, and economic aspects, is coming to be more appreciated, and wise laws concerning it should be helpful to the physician in his high calling to keep the mind and body of his patients in the best possible condition. The laws enacted in some states, however,



which forbid giving contraceptive information even by physicians, cannot well be called wise and sanitary, for neither sanitation nor medical science is furthered thereby. If these laws did not exist, I venture to say that we would have less infectious disease, particularly venereal diseases; we would have less tuberculosis, and less diseases among children; for birth control, judiciously exercised, as has been demonstrated in other countries (Holland, Sweden, New Zealand, and Australia), would lessen congestion and overcrowding. Families would be smaller and the breadwinner of the family could provide better care, better food, and better hygienic conditions in general for fewer children.

An illustration may be taken from my personal experience. In all my private cases, when taking the history of a patient, I have made it a practice for years not only to ask about the hygienic conditions—whether he has his own bed and his own room, whether there are any and how many windows in his bedroom, whether the windows lead to an airshaft or to an open street, etc.—but I ask also how many brothers and sisters he has or has had, and whether he is the first, second, third, sixth, eighth, or tenth child. Almost invariably in a large family it is one of the later born who contracts tuberculosis. The physiological reasons for this are doubtless the reduced vigor of elderly parents and the worn out condition of the woman after her previous pregnancies. She gives to the later child a heritage of physiological poverty which makes it less resistant to infectious diseases, and particularly to tuberculosis. But perhaps the most important reason for the later born children contracting tuberculosis more readily lies in the fact that with the increase of the family the father's earnings are rarely correspondingly increased. The results are overcrowded quarters, less good food and less warm clothing in severe seasons; and the mother, as already stated, worn out by many pregnancies, cannot bestow upon the later born children that care and supervision she gave to the first born.

The morbidity and mortality among such children is



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greatest when the children are most numerous in one family. Miss Emma Duke, in the third of the Infant Mortality Series, gives the result of a field study in Johnstown, Pa., based on the births of one calendar year. (*Bulletin of the American Academy of Medicine*, Vol. XX.) The inspection was made of two year old babies and so that the last born baby included had reached its first birthday—or rather had had a chance to reach its first birthday; many of them were dead long before that day. The following is Miss Duke's table showing the infant mortality rate for all children borne by married mothers during that year:

Deaths per 1,000 births in	
Families of 1 and 2 children.....	108.5
Families of 3 and 4 children.....	126.0
Families of 5 and 6 children.....	152.8
Families of 7 and 8 children.....	176.4
Families of 9 and more children.....	191.9

Dr. Alice Hamilton, formerly of the Memorial Institute for Infectious Diseases, Hull House, Chicago, now Professor of Industrial Medicine at Harvard University, made a study of 1,600 families in the neighborhood of the settlement. The following is the table of the child mortality rate of the 1,600 families as published by Dr. Hamilton:

Deaths for 1,000 births in	
Families of 4 children and less.....	118
Families of 6 children.....	267
Families of 7 children.....	280
Families of 8 children.....	291
Families of 9 children and more.....	303

Early in 1928 the following editorial appeared in the *Cleveland News*: "Chicago provides another baby story, having nothing to do with accidental poisoning but still not wholly happy. It is about Mrs. Carmelia Carbone, who has given birth to a pair of twins, her fourth pair.



That makes sixteen babies Mrs. Carbone has borne in nineteen years of marriage and forty of life. But seven of the children, including all the previous twins, died early. And prospects are none too bright for the nine living children. Mr. Carbone is out of work." Such and similar cases are by no means rare among the class of people which can least afford an unusually large number of children. I have had such cases in my own practice in families where tuberculosis was an additional factor to increase misery and want. Whatever the case may suggest to advocates or opponents of birth control, it should inspire something like a feeling of satisfaction in the hearts of parents who have had few children but have managed to bring them safely through the hazards of early life.

When the size of the family will be regulated by the knowledge of birth control, there will not only be a diminution in the mortality rate of infants and children, but it will make for better family life. There will be more leisure for the mother to devote to the care and raising of all her children and a longer period in her life to devote to helping her husband by more intimate companionship. She will have time for self-culture, the pursuit of philanthropic and social activities, or whatever she feels will be of greatest service to her life partner and her children. As a result of teaching and practicing rational and judicious birth control, the old idea that the cemetery should help to make the education of the remaining children possible, will no longer be considered a comforting, ethical, or much less a religious conception.

Not long ago, I received from the New York Child Welfare Committee a letter of appeal for help which reads as follows: "It is almost unbelievable, but it is a fact none the less, that in congested sections in New York as many as thirteen, fourteen and even seventeen human beings sleep in three or four rooms. Such is the pressure from the shortage of decent inexpensive homes. Fathers and mothers worried and going half starved to pay their rent, have broken down physically and morally under the



strain, and pale unkempt children are living in houses that are dark, infested with vermin and utterly demoralizing."

More than ten years ago the Hon. John A. Kingsbury, former Commissioner of Charities of New York, now head of the Milbank Health Foundation, expressed to me very emphatically his opinion on the limitation of families among this class by saying: "In the year 1915 more than ten thousand children were proposed to the Department of Charities of New York City for commitment to institutions. Poverty, sickness, or unemployment has outworn the welcome of more than ten thousand innocent little citizens in their own homes. Many of these children are paying the penalty of the social error of too large families. It is frequently remarked that children are often found in the largest numbers in those homes which are least equipped to properly provide for them. I believe it is a serious mistake for parents in adverse circumstances to bring children into the world for whom they are not prepared physically, mentally, morally, and economically, just as I believe it is a serious mistake for parents in affluent circumstances and otherwise prepared for parentage to decline to have children, because of the inconvenience or embarrassment to their scheme of living. If contraception can benefit them by limiting the unborn, without bringing about any physical or mental deterioration in human lives, I am unqualifiedly in sympathy with it."

Miserable housing, overcrowding in tenements due to unusually large families, physical, moral, and spiritual neglect of children, is a situation characteristic not only of New York but of nearly all the larger Eastern cities. This is particularly the case in negro quarters, where among the recent immigrants of the negro from the South the density of population in limited quarters has become a veritable danger in every respect and the children suffer most under these conditions. However, we must not forget that even in less densely populated sections of our country, in the homes of the White Mountaineers for ex-



ample, bad living conditions and large families among the poorest of the poor, are equally prevalent and here again the children are the greatest sufferers.

In the February 1926 issue of *Hygeia*, a journal published by the American Medical Association, there appeared an article under the title of "The Honest-to-Goodness American Child" by Frances Sage Bradley, describing the Caney Creek section in Kentucky. From this and a letter from Miss Bradley who is working among them, it would seem that the housing and general moral condition of that section are almost unbelievable. Among shocking conditions of a morality, which she describes in her letter, she tells me that recently she had to place in a state institution five defective children from one family and two younger ones must go later. Through Miss Bradley's courtesy, I came into possession of the accompanying illustration (Fig. 1).

Is it any wonder that there are in the United States 250,000 children in public institutions, or being cared for away from their homes? (*Welfare Magazine*, of February 1926.) In many cases it has become necessary to place children in institutions because the parents had so many that they could not give them all adequate care. Doubtlessly there is an equally large number of half-orphans where the mother, worn out by too frequent pregnancies, had succumbed to an intercurrent disease or to the result of a criminal or selfinstituted abortion.

Another distressing result of overpopulation is child-labor. This in its most horrible and inhumane form is most prevalent in China and Japan and in some of the overpopulated European and American industrial centers. Owen B. Lovejoy, the former General Secretary of the National Child Labor Committee, is right when he says "We can fairly say that with knowledge on the part of parents in the poorer classes of the means by which their children may be limited to the number that could be reared and supported in decency, perhaps one third of all the working children in this country could be saved from a life of exploitation and from an existence made well-



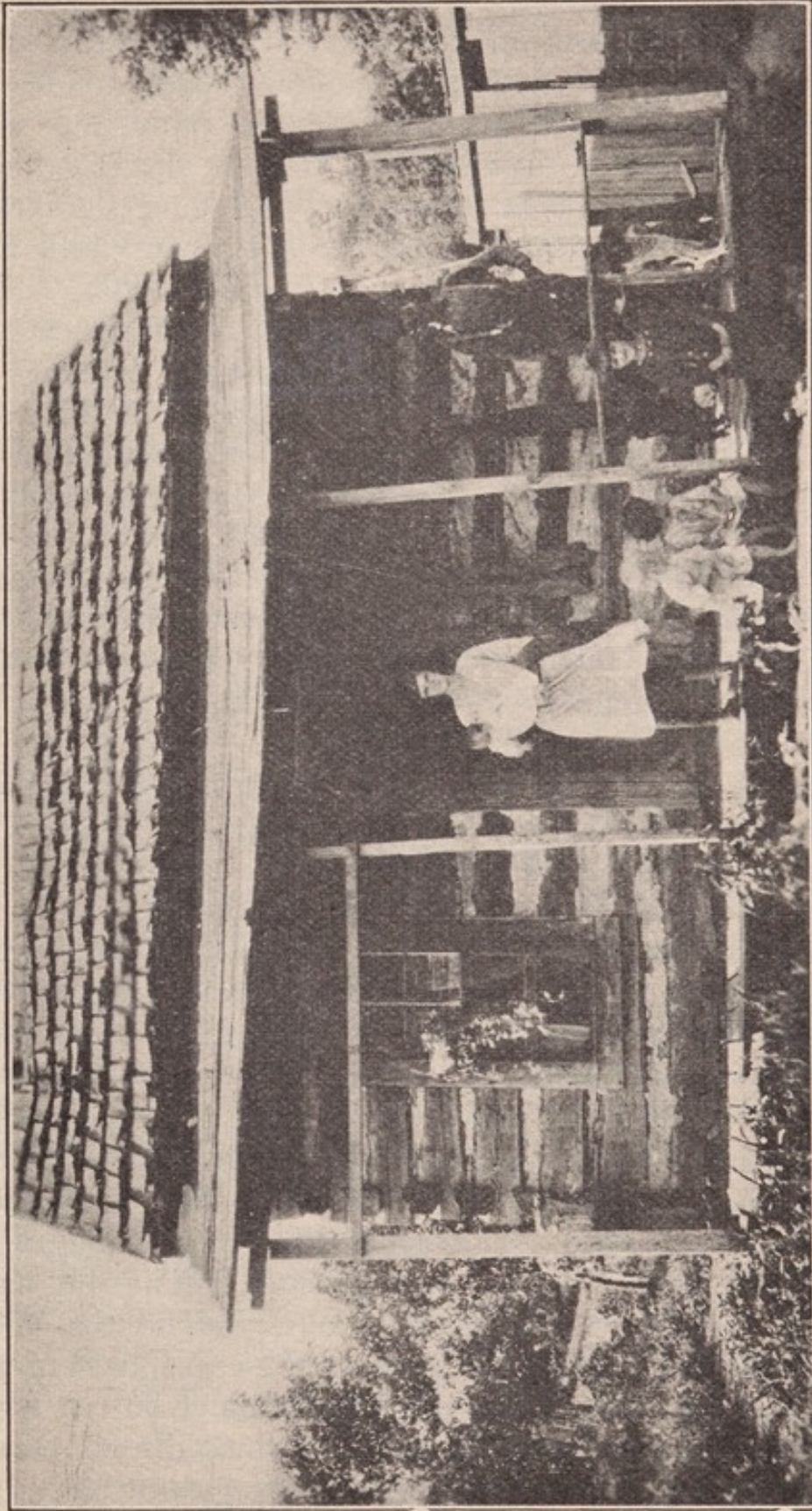


Fig. 1.—Clubfooted Ruby and four of her nine brothers and sisters who live with their parents in this one roomed cabin on the mountain side.



nigh unbearable through lack of early opportunity and training."

As already pointed out, the later born children in large families, particularly among the poorer classes, frequently show a poor physique, stunted in body, mind and soul. No less an authority than Herbert Hoover, the Honorable Secretary of Commerce, made the following significant statement before the meeting of the American Child Hygiene Association at its annual session in 1920: "The American nation, with all its worship of efficiency and thrift, complacently forgets that every child defective in body, education or character is a charge upon the community. The nation as a whole has the obligation of such measures toward its children . . . as will yield to them an equal opportunity at their start in life. If we could grapple with the whole child situation for one generation, our public health, our economic efficiency, the moral character, sanity and stability of our people would advance three generations in one." (Sanger: *Pivot of Civilization.*)

The reasons for the necessity of birth control are given very concisely by Mrs. Sanger in the titles of a series of editorials for the *Birth Control Review* of 1928 as follows: Woman's rights; Married love; The health of mother and infant; Welfare of children; The prevention of poverty; Eugenics; Overpopulation; The progress of civilization and the standard of living; The prevention of abortion and infanticide; The promotion of morality; The right to be welcomed.

The standard of living and sanitary environments of the laborer and his children are lowest where labor is cheapest and laborers abound. It reaches its lowest standard in India and China. I have never visited China but have seen the Chinatowns in many of our cities in the West and in the East, and if the lives of these people here are an example of what sanitation is in China, I do not wonder at what an epidemic of any infectious disease means in that country; nor do I wonder at the greater mortality among the children of the teeming population of India



both in and out of seasons of famines and plagues. It is this situation which prompted the great Indian sage and philosopher, Sir Rabindranath Tagore recently to write to Mrs. Sanger: "I believe, that to wait till the moral sense of man becomes a great deal more powerful than it is now and till then to allow countless generations of children to suffer privations and untimely death for no fault of their own is a great social injustice and should not be tolerated."

Among newly married couples one often finds young women who have worked long hours and slaved and economized up to the very moment of their marriage in order to accumulate a little fund to help the future husband in establishing the home. As a result of this strenuous life, these young women are often so worn out as to be utterly unfit for motherhood. With a knowledge of how to delay this event until the physician may pronounce the young wife strong enough to expect with reasonable certainty a normal confinement and a healthy, vigorous child, invalidism of the mother and a sickly offspring may be avoided. The mother in good health can and should give the child her own breast. A breast-fed baby has many more chances to resist infantile diseases and to grow up strong and healthy than a bottle-fed infant.

Concerning the effect of large families on the average parents of the average poorer classes, let me quote from that brilliant essay by Margaret Sanger, *Woman and the New Race*: "Large families make plentiful labor and they also provide the workers for the child labor factories as well as the armies of unemployed. Without the large family, not one of these evils could exist to any considerable extent, much less to the extent that they exist today. The large family—especially the family too large to receive adequate care—is the one thing necessary to the perpetuation of these and other evils and is therefore a greater evil than any one of them."

"If its effects upon the mother and the wage-earning father were not enough to condemn the large family as an institution, its effects upon the child would make the



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case against it conclusive. In the United States, some 300,000 children under one year of age die each twelve months. Approximately ninety per cent. of these deaths



Fig. 2.—Dr. Marie C. Stopes and her wanted baby.

are directly or indirectly due to malnutrition, to other diseased conditions resulting from poverty, or to excessive childbearing by the mother.”



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Contrast the arrival of an unwanted baby with a wanted child. I recently saw the picture of Dr. Marie C. Stopes, the author of *Radiant Motherhood*, and her wanted baby, and here is what was written underneath this beautiful picture (Fig. 2): "Dr. Stopes not only writes of *Radiant Motherhood* but she achieves it. This is the baby of whom she has said, 'He was loved for three years before he was born.' He was wanted, intended, and given the most heartfelt invitation into this world. Perfect health, a beautiful disposition, and a happy serenity are his birthright. Three months old at the time this picture was made, he is now six months old; and his mother says he has never had a crying night or single digestive upset. He is a bit of sunshine and joy such as all babies should be. And better still, he has been started on his human career, with a position of dignity, of which he may well be proud all his life. Pride in having been wanted by both one's parents is a sort of pride that is soundly justifiable in any human being who is blessed with the opportunity of having it. This little lad will grow to manhood, not only with the opportunity for such pride, but with added richness, born of the knowledge that his parents have also helped thousands—and it may be millions—of other parents to give their children the inestimable birthright of a sincere and thorough welcome."

Dr. Stopes has done and is doing for England what Margaret Sanger has done and is doing for America. What is said of Mrs. Stopes' fine baby may be said of Mrs. Sanger's two fine boys (Fig. 3). These two women, with a staff of devoted assistants, have indeed helped untold numbers of mothers and fathers to see the light and have paved for them the way to perfect parenthood and happiness.

Besides Dr. Stopes, there is another brave English woman, a Mrs. Ettie A. Hornibrook, who published an interesting little book in 1927 under the title of "Practical Birth Control". The book is endorsed in a preface by no less an authority than Sir William Arbuthnot Lane, Bart., Consulting Surgeon to Guy's Hospital in London.



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Mrs. Hornibrook pleads for early marriages as a safeguard for womanhood and emphasizes the well known fact that in countries where birth control is openly taught,



Fig. 3.—Mrs. Margaret Sanger and her sons.

maternity is twice or three times as safe for women as in those countries where birth control is prohibited. The statistics published by the Children's Bureau of the



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U. S. Department of Labor confirm this fact. The mortality from puerperal causes, per 1,000 lives, is reported as being 6.6 in the United States, while it is 2.2 in Norway and 2.3 in the Netherlands. As is well known birth control information can be obtained freely in the two last named countries. Mrs. Hornibrook considers that the main reason for this difference is probably because in the absence of birth control knowledge, self-inflicted abortion is frequently practiced with disastrous results.

Statistically such cases are classified with puerperal causes, but they nevertheless show the effect of anti-birth control laws on maternal mortality. How many times the already living children are thus deprived of mother's love and care at a time when they need it most, statistics do not tell.

How would the teaching of judicious birth control affect the unmarried population? I mean the young man and woman who would willingly enter wedlock were it not for the fear of having too many children. I believe there are hundreds of young men and women, physically and morally strong, who would gladly marry if they knew that they could restrict their family to such an extent as to raise a few children well. But their fear of a large family prevents conjugal happiness to which they are entitled and *ipso facto* prevents the procreation of a better and stronger man and womanhood. The woman sometimes withers away in lonely maidenhood and the man, whose sexual instincts are often so strong that he cannot refrain, seeks relief in association with the unfortunate and often diseased sisters of other men called, "prostitutes". The result is a propagation of venereal diseases with all their dire consequences. These involve sterility, physical and mental suffering in the man, or sterility in both man and woman, according to the severity of infection, pelvic disorders, abortion, premature labor, a dead child or one lastingly tainted with disease.

How very serious and prevalent this disease is, was shown during the draft year of 1917. I am indebted to Surgeon General W. M. Ireland of the U. S. Army for



the following exact figures: "8802 applicants were rejected on account of syphilis, 578 on account of tabes, and 252 on account of paresis;" the two latter diseases usually being the result of the chronic type of syphilis. Thus, nearly 10,000 young men were deprived of the privilege of serving their country in the hour of need and were equally unfit to serve the community as fathers of healthy and vigorous children.

Through the courtesy of the American Social Hygiene Association I have come in possession of some interesting figures concerning venereal diseases in the United States, which were the result of studies by Dublin and Clark. I quote from their report as follows: "Taking all the evidence together we are inclined to agree with the estimate of the British Royal Commission on Venereal Diseases that no less than 10 per cent of the population of the large cities have been infected with syphilis. As this is by all accounts an under-estimate, and as the prevalence of infection in the rural areas is somewhat lower, this figure (10 per cent) may well prove to be a safe estimate for the country at large."

At times, disease does not enter as a factor in the tragedy, but the result is a girl mother and a blasted life, for our double standard of morality recognizes the so-called sin only in our sisters, not in ourselves. Of her, compassionate tongues say she loved not wisely but too well; of him nothing is said at all. He is spotless and virtuous in the eyes of the world and can go through life as if he had never sinned or been responsible for a ruined life or two. The innocent child is stigmatized as illegitimate.

In anticipation of some criticism by well meaning laymen and clergymen I may say right here what I have often said before regarding the prevention of venereal diseases, illegitimate births, etc.: I absolutely agree with those who believe that self-control is the best possible, cleanest and purest preventative. But while this may be easy and possible for some, it is not so for everybody, and our psychologists and psychiatrists are not in full accord about



the wisdom of total abstinence from sexual intercourse in full grown men and women. Dr. William J. Robinson, who has been a student of the sex problems for many years, referred to this in *The Critic and Guide* of February, 1928, as follows:—"In the close relationship of married life the effects of continued abstinence may be grave for persons of certain temperaments." I am not going to discuss this question here any further, but wish only to repeat that from a purely sanitary point of view, teaching young couples desirous to marry, the means of contraception, to which they may resort until they are able to support a few children well, would cause a marked diminution in venereal diseases and result in many more happy and successful marriages with not necessarily fewer, but surely more well developed children physically, morally and spiritually. I wish to emphasize morally and spiritually. Recently the warden of one of our largest prisons, after reading the statement that in the larger families, particularly among the poorer classes, it was the later born child who contracted tuberculosis, expressed the opinion to me that a moral handicap might also exist among the later born offenders. The super-numerous youngsters, particularly in the families of the poor, have less care, are less supervised by the overworked mother than the first born and in a sense are often abandoned to the street and to the gang.

In an interesting address, "The Unwanted Child Comes Before the Court," by Dr. Van Waters, delivered before the Sixth International Neo-Malthusian Congress, March, 1925 (1), we read the following significant words: "Delinquency in young children is a symptom of deep distress; delinquent children are often unwanted children."

Dr. George W. Kirchwey, former warden of Sing Sing, stated in a recent address that in his opinion "birth control is a proper procedure, which is, perhaps, able to create a balance between the fit and the unfit. Its practice would go far towards a solution of the crime problem of today."

Medical science has for its purpose not only to cure but



also to prevent disease and stay untimely death. The knowledge of contraceptive measures would be the saving of the lives of thousands of poor mothers who in their desperate efforts to get rid of an unborn and unwanted child, resort to violent and dangerous means. The report of a Special Committee on Criminal Abortions, quoted in the *Textbook of Legal Medicine and Toxicology* (Peterson and Haines, Vol II), states that "one third of all pregnancies throughout the country end in abortions. This was estimated in 1903 at not less than one hundred thousand; how many more must there be now, with thirty million more population! A large number of these are criminal abortions from which the committee estimated that six thousand women die yearly."

On April 19, 1926, there appeared in "Health News," published by the New York State Department of Health, the following notice: "Recently in Buffalo Mrs. Catherine Malinowska, who has not been licensed for several years, was convicted of manslaughter, second degree, in the Supreme Court, and sentenced to five to ten years imprisonment. This woman has a record of a previous conviction for performing the duties of a midwife without holding a license. The woman whose death she is said to have caused was the mother of eleven children. According to a newspaper account of the trial the judge, in passing sentence, stated that he believed her guilty of 146 criminal operations within a year."

I agree with what Mary Ware Dennett says in a pamphlet entitled "The Stupidity of Us Humans," published by the Voluntary Parenthood League\*: "To produce children 'nature's way' without restriction means in most families, dire disaster. The babies, the parents and the community all suffer. Even if the purse can stand the strain of babies coming as frequently as is physically possible, the health of the mother can not. It is an utterly unintelligent procedure. So regulation there must be, of some sort or other. Let those who believe in abstinence except

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\*This association is particularly active in behalf of the repeal of Federal laws prohibiting birth control information.



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for procreation, act accordingly as long as they hold the viewpoint, and let the others—the vast majority—use the best contraceptive knowledge they can acquire.” This would result in wanted and welcome and not in unwanted and unwelcome children. At the end of this interesting pamphlet the author asks for a united effort to repeal those abominable laws which now keep people in ignorance and in fear. She calls attention to the fact that “these laws even forbid the gospel of the ‘purest,’ for a wife who refuses sex relations may be subject to action for divorce.”

We must indeed make it plain once more that there exists a sharp line of demarkation between abortion and the prevention of conception. Dr. Ira S. Wile, when discussing the subject before the American Public Health Association (2), has well said: “The former is life destroying, the latter is life saving. The interruption of pregnancy to destroy a developing ovum entails physical hazards to the woman which often adds to the mortality rate. At the same time, this is the destruction of life, feticide, literally speaking, infanticide.” Knowledge of contraception, imparted to the married woman, may not only preserve her own life and health, or prevent her from invalidism, but it is most likely also to add to the happiness and social and economic wellbeing of the family.

The same authority points to the absurdity of a law which “recognizes the interruption of pregnancy as legal and justifiable in order to save the lives of women suffering from diseases or from conditions whose fatal progress would be hastened through continued pregnancy,” but “holds it to be illegal to teach these same women how to avoid conception. It is manifestly contrary to every principle of modern preventive medicine that there should be such interference with the judgment and action of physicians where it seems most rational and medically sound to give advice as to the methods of preventing a condition containing a hazard of life.”

Among the diseases which may be aggravated or cause death in case of a first or an additional childbirth, we



must mention serious heart disease, diabetes, tuberculosis, syphilis, leucemia, hemophilia, general debility, epilepsy, the various psychoses, and uncontrollable vomiting, particularly when as a result of previous pregnancy a therapeutic abortion had been performed. Prevention of conception should be imperative in a case of a malformed pelvis when a Cæsarean section or craniotomy had been performed because of previous pregnancy. All this comes under the heading of preventive medicine.

Scientific prevention of conception has not been, and to the best of my knowledge is not now, taught even in our best medical schools, with the exception of the Medical Departments of Johns Hopkins and Columbia Universities, which have offered each year for the last four years one comprehensive lecture on birth control to a group of elective students.

One of our most distinguished teachers and well known consultants, Dr. Lewellys F. Barker, Professor of Medicine of Johns Hopkins Medical School and successor to the great Osler, sent me recently the following lines on the timeliness of imparting birth control knowledge to our medical brethren: "Your work in diffusing knowledge and information regarding this topic cannot fail to have its reward."

Concerning the great lack of opportunity to study contraceptive methods, I would like to quote the following information given by Dr. Robert L. Dickinson:

"Finding that no organization was willing to make a study of contraceptives, a selfconstituted group, chiefly made up of well known New York physicians, started, in March, 1923, an inquiry into birth control, sterility, and sterilization of those whose progeny constitute a social menace. Researches are under way looking toward determination of long term methods that do not present the handicaps of present measures." Dr. Dickinson is the secretary of the Committee on Maternal Health with offices in the building of the N. Y. Academy of Medicine. The first report has already appeared (3). I have the assurance that our powerful American Medical Association



will be helpful in spreading such knowledge as may be obtained through the work of this committee. In a personal letter recently received, the editor of the *Journal of the A.M.A.* said: "We hope from time to time to give attention to original investigations or reports of new studies in the field of contraception." It is to be hoped that as a result of the studies by the Committee on Maternal Health new special birth control clinics, where physicians can receive proper instruction, will be established.

Early in 1928 the *Medical Journal and Record* published a forum soliciting the opinions of various physicians on the subject of birth control. It was pathetic to read the replies which expressed regret for the lack of opportunities to study scientific and judicious contraceptive methods, but among the many replies received there was an almost unanimous protest against the absurd Federal and State laws, prohibiting physicians to apply contraceptive methods when future pregnancies would result in the aggravation of an existing disease, or might even cause death.

The opponents of birth control claim that disease, misery, mental and physical suffering, are far greater when conception is interfered with than when Nature is allowed to run its course. To this let me answer that it has been proved that the physiological effect of voluntary parenthood is not only less disease in general and less venereal disease in particular, but a physically stronger and morally better man and womanhood. In Holland, where the medical and legal professions have openly approved and helped to extend artificial restriction of the birth rate, the health of the people at large, as shown by its general deathrate, has improved faster than in any other country in the world. Although there are no official birth control clinics in Holland, physicians are allowed, by royal decree, to teach judicious and ethical means of contraception. At a recent eugenics congress it was stated that the stature of the Dutch people had increased more rapidly than in any other country—the increase being no less than four inches within the last



fifty years. According to the Official Statistical Year Book of the Netherlands, the proportion of the young men drawn for the army over five feet seven inches in height has increased from twenty-four and a half to forty-seven and a half per cent. since 1865, while the proportion below five feet two and a half inches in height has fallen from twenty-five per cent. to under eight per cent.

The question is often asked whether birth control practiced for any length of time, makes the woman lastingly sterile. I have known even medical men to answer this question in the affirmative, yet there is any amount of evidence to the contrary. If the woman uses the usual hygienic precautions so as not to injure or infect the genital organs, contraceptive methods will not cause sterility.

At the World Population Conference, held at Geneva in September, 1927, one of the representatives of Sweden, Dr. Karl Arvid Edin reported that since contraceptive methods have been openly allowed and legalized, the number of children of the upper classes has increased while that of the industrial classes has decreased, so that a better and happier economic condition prevails throughout the country.

Viewing our own statistics concerning physical fitness for military service as a contrast to Holland, I will quote what Ex-President William H. Taft said in the preface to the fifteenth edition of *How to Live* by Fisher and Fisk. "According to General Crowder's report, close to forty per cent. of the men called in the draft in 1917 were disqualified for active military service because of physical defects. These did not by any means include all who had physical impairments, for many were accepted with certain forms of serious infection which could be treated in the camps. . . Thus we have, as a by-product of a terrible and devastating war, the revelation of a great national need and, in consequence, a new and lively interest in human vitality and efficiency. It is now, as never before, the evident and urgent duty of all citizens to make themselves in the highest degree fit."



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But how can this invaluable suggestion by our great Ex-President be carried out when we allow those physically and mentally unfit, not only for military but for any kind of service, to be reproduced by indiscriminate procreation and raised in the most unfavorable environments?

Concomitant with increase in stature of the men in Holland, the deathrate has decreased more rapidly than the birthrate and there is still a normal increase in population. The families of the poor have fewer but better children, and what is most interesting to observe, is that the families of the well to do in that country are not nearly as small as in other countries.

If we again contrast Holland with some of the overpopulated countries, we have a graphic picture of the effect on the labor situation. Wherever there is excess of population there is unemployment, be this in Asia, Europe, or America.

Millions of dollars are annually spent by many States of the Union for the maintenance of the epileptics, mentally defective, and the insane. Of the latter, syphilis (which could be so largely diminished by birth control) must be considered among the most frequent causes. The New York State Hospital Commission reported that for the year ending June 30, 1924, 911 of the insane people admitted to institutions owed their insanity to syphilis. The cost per year for each patient is \$425, which makes an average total cost of \$637.50 for each syphilitic insane person, figuring that the syphilitic insane stay in a state institution on an average of one and one-half years. This makes the estimated cost for care of the 911 syphilitic insane committed during the year to be \$580,762. (*Jour. of Social Hygiene*, Nov. 1925.)

Moore of Johns Hopkins, who studied one hundred cases of syphilitic women who had become pregnant, reported that 70 of these pregnancies ended disastrously, the ultimate fate of 25 could not be determined, and only 5 were living and well.

The mental defectives of the type known as morons (the kind with higher grade of mental deficiency) are



too numerous to be segregated. Only a comparatively small portion are under state care, yet the moron is the very one who most thoughtlessly and most frequently procreates, not being able to distinguish between right and wrong. Our legislators may well take to heart the fact that the "whole tone of a nation is permanently affected by that moral and intellectual contagion which is due to the presence in its ranks of persons of inferior types, even though they are not the lowest types." (Darwin.)

Eugenical sterilization should have an important part in the birth control movement, but as long as sterilization is considered unconstitutional in most states birth control by contraceptive methods would, at least in a measure, diminish the number of defectives, and the millions of dollars thus saved could be expended for better physical, mental, and moral development of normal children, for parks and playgrounds and other useful improvements. However, the time will come and must come soon when sterilization will become a legal procedure in all states for eugenic purposes; that is to say, for all individuals whose progeny is sure to become a burden to the community by reason of absolute degeneracy.

According to an interesting report by Dr. H. H. Laughlin, on the "Present Status of Eugenical Sterilization" (*Eugenical News*, March, 1926), there are now 23 states which have legalized some form of sterilization. The first state to enact laws to that effect was Indiana in 1907. The last two court decisions of importance were made in Michigan, June, 1925, and in Virginia in November, 1925. Both decisions upheld the constitutionality of the new laws which are primarily eugenic in motive. These, Dr. Laughlin says, were clean-cut instances of the recognition of the right of a state to purge its population of hereditary degeneracy by means so radical as surgical sexual sterilization. Punitive as well as therapeutic reasons for sterilization have been abandoned. The laws now have gotten rid of all motives except the eugenic, and any state can, if it desires, enact a eugenical sterilization law.



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After experimentation and litigation, the law has finally settled down to requiring a court hearing and order for each case which is to be sexually sterilized under the law. The state must prove, to the satisfaction of the court, that, in accordance with the law, the particular individual is a "potential parent of degenerate offspring."

I cannot enter at any length here into the discussion of the all important subject of sterilization for eugenic purposes, but must refer the reader to the invaluable book by Dr. Laughlin, entitled "Eugenical Sterilization in the United States." The book was published upon the suggestion of Chief Justice Harry Olson of Chicago who is intensely interested in the subject. The volume contains the records, observations and careful study made by Dr. Laughlin as Eugenics Associate of the Psychopathic Laboratory of the Municipal Court of Chicago.

I feel, however, that I must quote a few of the striking facts presented by Dr. William J. Hickson at the Third Race Betterment Conference which convened at Battle Creek in January, 1928. Dr. Hickson is now the director of the Psychopathic Laboratory just referred to. He based the following conclusions on the results of the examination of 40,000 criminals: "Defectives or the inferior semi-defective classes generally, from which criminals are bred, reproduce at a much faster rate than normal or superior individuals. The modern organization of life, particularly in America with its great economic surplus, enables more of the inferior and the unfit to survive and propagate, than ever before. As a result, bad heredity is in the ascendent and good heredity is on the wane. Human society is definitely menaced by the ascendancy of the unfit. In applying itself to the undertaking of ending crime, and saving society from the dominance of the unfit, science has two recommendations to make: 1. Segregate congenital defectives before they have an opportunity to commit crimes. 2. Make it impossible for defectives to reproduce their kind."

It is surprising that, in view of our present knowledge of the causes of disease, the danger from congestion, un-



derfeeding, and the other causes of social crime and misery increased by overpopulation, there are so relatively few advocates of birth control—which should perhaps be more correctly called conception control—in the medical and learned professions in general. In fact, among many of our colleagues, leaders in education, teachers of political economy, jurists, statesmen, etc., there seems to exist—with some laudable exceptions—an outspoken hostility to the movement. They oppose birth control on ethical and moral grounds or a belief that there is no danger of overpopulation. Yet, I am grateful to be able to say that the greatest moral and religious support of birth control comes from representative clergymen among liberal Christians and Hebrews. At the last International Neo-Malthusian and Birth Control Conference in New York one entire evening was given over to the clergy. Rev. William H. Garth, the Episcopal minister and special preacher of St. Bartholomew's Protestant Episcopal Church of New York presided. The Rev. Frank S. C. Wicks of All Souls Unitarian Church of Indianapolis, spoke on "Birth Control and Biblical Interpretation." Another Unitarian minister, the Rev. Nelson Junius Springer, spoke on "Assured Romance"; the Rev. A. Ray Petty of the Jackson Memorial Church, New York, on "Fear and Morality." Prof. Barnes of the Department of Economics and Sociology of Smith's College, Northampton, Mass., spoke on "Conduct as a Science." He urged a new code of conduct instead of the present one based on might, tradition, and supernaturalism. The Rev. Sidney Goldstein made an ardent plea for birth control, particularly for the sick poor, and an equally strong address on the same subject was made by the Rev. Karl Reiland, D.D., of St. George's Protestant Episcopal Church.

As a result of a short article of mine on the subject of "Birth Control in its Relation to Religion" (*The World Tomorrow*, of September, 1925), I have been the recipient of a number of gratifying expressions of approval from well known distinguished clergymen, representing various denominations in our own country and England.



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I am personally convinced that the masses of the people in this country are religious in spite of statements to the contrary. They like to follow their leaders, and in such an important question as we are considering, I feel that I cannot render them a greater service and defend the cause better than by quoting at least a few of the letters I have received which will speak for themselves.

However, I wish to precede these letters by an expression of opinion from a leading clergyman of England, made before an audience of physicians:

On June 1, 1925, the Rt. Rev. Bishop Barnes, of Birmingham, England, when addressing the Royal Institute of Public Health, advocated birth control in the following words: "Human welfare is now menaced by human fecundity. Vast masses are deprived of the uncramped freedom necessary for healthy existence. The change from large to small families is not to be impatiently condemned. Victories in medicine and hygiene may be disastrous for public welfare unless the desire for many children, which is natural and until recently laudable, is held in check."

The Rev. Henry E. Cobb, D.D., pastor of the West End Collegiate Church of New York said: "I have read your article on '*Birth Control*' in *The World Tomorrow* and thank you for giving me the opportunity to see it. I am sure I approve of the position you take. The creation of a human being is fraught with such tremendous consequences that it is fully as much a 'religious issue' as the nurture and care of a soul when it has come into the world. It should be intelligent; it should be voluntary; it should be safeguarded. The real crux of the matter, as I see it, is not touched upon in your paper, nor have I seen it satisfactorily met. I doubt whether it can be. Can birth control be enforced among the sort of people where it is most vitally important, not only to the individual but to the community? You point out clearly the menace of the prolific generation in the slums. From those who 'Should never have been begotten' comes our criminal class—made so by 'the congestion which



makes prophylactic measures practically impossible.' There is too much birth control among people of wealth and education—the class out of which might come and ought to come those qualified to become the moral leaders of the race. I am not confident that these thus fortunately born do become helpful members of society—but they should. But how limit the procreation of the criminal class? Intelligence there puts no curb on sexual passion, nor other criminal instincts. What shall we do to the deboucher who brings life into the world without thought of the consequences?"

Rev. Dr. Charles F. Fagnani, professor at the Union Theological Seminary, wrote as follows: "As for an opinion on the subject of birth control you may quote me as saying that irrespective of the manifest arguments—religious, economic, and political—in favor of birth control, the claims of ordinary decency and common sense are overwhelmingly in its favor."

Rev. Frank Fitt, of the Presbyterian Church of Highland Park, Chicago, said: "I read your article in *The World Tomorrow* with keen interest and hearty agreement. More power to your elbow."

Rev. John Haynes Holmes, A.B., minister of the Community Church of New York, wrote: "I have read your statement on birth control and feel indebted to you for so authoritative an interpretation of a public policy in which I so thoroughly believe. Birth control is a part of my religion and is one of the things, therefore, which I preach with sincere conviction. The fulfillment of man's spiritual destiny waits to a very large extent upon his mastery of the physical aspects of his individual and social life. Birth control is one phase of that larger social control which must some day redeem the world from the ills which now oppress and even threaten to destroy it. I look forward to the time when ministers, physicians, and social workers will join hands effectively for the accomplishment of this great reform."

Rev. Charles H. Parkhurst, D.D., LL.D., pastor emeritus of Madison Square Presbyterian Church and



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president of the Society for the Prevention of Crime, wrote: "I have read your strong and persuasive article in *The World Tomorrow*. In view of all the facts, both as relates to the present generation and more particularly as concerns the generations to come there is, in my judgment, but one side to the question which is the subject of your compelling argument. I am glad you have published it. I am sure it will abundantly satisfy the minds of those who are of your way of thinking, and I am equally sure that it will tell with great effect upon the opinions of those who disagree with you."

Rev. Charles Francis Potter, B.A., formerly of the West Side Unitarian Church, now minister of the New York Universalist Church of the Divine Paternity, wrote: "Birth control is the next step forward in the conscious evolution of the human race. It is a step made necessary not only by social and economic considerations, but by moral responsibility and religious idealism. The time has come for all who are sincerely interested in the progress of humanity to align themselves with this sane and eminently commendable movement."

Rev. A. Maude Royden, a most distinguished English woman preacher of London, wrote: "I have been especially interested in your article on 'Birth Control.' It is still a very vexed subject over here—or rather, as in America, everybody is practicing it and everybody is arguing about it."

Rev. Maxwell Savage, D.D., minister of the First Unitarian Church of Worcester, Mass., wrote: "As to birth control of course it will come. Has come, in fact, among the intelligent and its pioneers will then, of course, be thanked. The pioneers are always underdogs until history, after they are dead, places them on top."

Rev. Minot Simons, D.D., of All Souls Unitarian Church of New York, wrote: "I am glad to say another word concerning my appreciation of your article on 'Birth Control.' You bring out very clearly the deeper religious aspect of the whole matter. To cooperate with nature



and at the same time exercise a guiding influence may fairly be called a matter of religious importance."

The Rev. Stephen S. Wise, the senior rabbi of the Free Synagogue of New York, upon direct inquiry for his opinion on birth control, wrote me as follows: "Viewed traditionally, birth control can hardly be said to be sanctioned by the teachings of the Jewish religion. The position of those of us rabbis who favor birth control grows out of our conviction that it is our duty and our right as teachers in Israel to take a position touching the problem of birth control, because since the Bible canon and rabbinical code were closed we have come to have new light upon some of the most important problems of life. I accept the evolutionary hypothesis and as a collateral implication I accept the viewpoint that birth control is a necessary factor in present day life. The business of religion is to improve man and to better the social order which is his background. I accept the teaching of the scientists that in order that there may be a better, finer race, and in order that the social order may be increasingly livable, it is become necessary to accept birth control as a factor in the social life of man. As a Jew, I feel particularly justified in taking this position because the religion of Israel holds human life to be sacred. The sacramental attitude toward life appears to me not to dictate that there shall be an illimitable and unchecked generation of life, but that humans shall will to give life to children only when they are fitted to be the bearers of life and to give to children such background as gives the fullest chance of life worth living."

Rev. Alfred W. Martin, D.D., a leader in the Society for Ethical Culture, wrote me as follows: "I need hardly say that I find myself in sympathy with your general statement and am glad to know that you contemplate enlarging upon the article in book form. There can be no question about the importance of the subject and I am particularly glad to note that you are treating it in its relation to religion and ethics.

"Assuring you of my hearty sympathy with the cause



you have espoused, and more especially in the fact that you are dealing with it from the point of view of a biologist and physician as well as that of an ethical thinker, I remain, etc."

Dr. Martin also kindly called my attention to a very fine article on the subject of "Ethical Aspects of Birth Control" by the Rev. Anna Garlin Spencer, another leader in the Society for Ethical Culture. From it I may be permitted to quote just a few sentences. Mrs. Spencer does not agree with the religious teachers who "still forbid any advocacy of the application of reason, prudence, ethical choice and scientific understanding to the great adventure of child-bearing. The first ethical consideration in the birth control movement is the clearing of the ground of inherited so-called "Divine commands" which prevent free and reverent study of actual life and of modern conditions relating to the family."

In another part of this very enlightening article, Mrs. Spencer says: "We are all becoming convinced that the negative side of birth control must be understood and its command obeyed if we would have social service a blessing to the race. That negative side is the absolute forbidding of the breeding of feebleminded and wholly incompetent human beings." And the concluding sentences in the article read: "The one thing that seems fully established by social history and seemingly certain to last, is the conception of parenthood as a sacred symbol of the race-duty which every individual owes his kind. There is, therefore, no more commanding subject of ethical study and search for the right and wise way of life than is the ideal and practice of rational parenthood."

More recently, that is to say, on December 4, 1927, the Rev. Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick preached a strong sermon, part of which appeared the following day in "The New York Times", in which he said: "The greatest social problem of the present day is excess population, and its only solution is the general practice of scientific birth control. . . . The facts are clear that we should take the shackles off the physicians and let them tell the



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nations that there is no hope for the solution of the population problem except in the scientific control of the birth rate. You cannot trust God to bring everything off all right if you let the earth population double every sixty years. If we do sow that, we will reap starvation, unemployment and physical and moral decay." In a personal letter with which he honored me he expresses virtually the same sentiments.

In the sermon just referred to Dr. Fosdick quotes Dean Inge of St. John's Cathedral, London, saying that "the Dean has taken his share of obloquy because he has said, in his straightforward fashion that 'there is no hope for the basic social problem of population except in the scientific control of births.' All honor to him! He is not a sentimentalist. He is facing the facts."

After presenting a copy of the third edition of this book to the Rev. Henry Darlington, Rector of the Episcopal Church of the Heavenly Rest, he wrote me: "Each year I become more and more convinced that we must find some way to diminish disease, crime and immorality, and that the only way we can do it is by seeing that the individuals who are born into the world are free from these tendencies,—to use Wiggin's expression, to do to the unborn as you would want done to you if you were unborn."

The Rev. C. P. G. Rose of London justly says in his booklet "The Christian Case of Birth Control": "The old adage that a man should 'take what the Lord sends' is obviously misleading. Applied to the cultivation of the garden it would mean a garden of weeds. It is time that we began to use as much intelligence in cultivating our race as in cultivating our gardens, so that in every home, whether of the rich or of the poor, each child should be deliberately wanted, should be regarded as a gift of God."

We should not hold God responsible for bringing unwanted children into the world, knowing beforehand that we would have difficulty in rearing them properly, that we would have to leave them to the State to clothe, feed



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and educate. The poor and ignorant believe in the efficacy of simple prayer much more than the so-called cultured do. I have known many a poor woman who was infirm or worn out by too many pregnancies to confess that she prayed fervently to the Lord to save her from further childbirths. When her prayers were not answered she lost faith in God. She did not realize that God had endowed man with an intelligence which should be used to procreate wisely and in this way had elevated him above the brute, possessing merely animal instincts. Birth control made a truly religious issue and not an arbitrary church decree may help to give back to such poor women their faith in God.

No other animal but man, no other being capable of reproduction, has the intelligence which gives it the power to regulate the number of its offspring and the time of their arrival. Man alone can do this and I reverently call it a God-given power, and believe that its judicious exercise deserves the name of a "religious issue."

How is mankind affected when his God-given power of intelligence is not exercised in this matter? Famines in India and Russia are not due exclusively to drought but are rather the result of an overpopulation because the masses practice thoughtless and prolific procreation. Even in China, where infanticide has been practiced, this condition often prevails.

Famines will repeat themselves in China so long as there is no check on the tendency to have large families. The Chinese believe in worshiping their ancestors and girls cannot perform the rite. The more boys in the family the greater they believe will be the benefit derived from ancestor worship. Neither emigration to other parts of that great country, nor famine relief will be a permanent help. Birth control is the only salvation, but it will be a hard task to tear down a custom based on deeply rooted religious tenets which can be carried out with comparative ease. There is at the time (Spring of 1928) of writing the fourth edition of this book, another terrible famine raging in the Shantung province of China



where 9,000,000 people are suffering for want of food. Generous hearted America and Europe will again send millions of dollars to relieve the situation and the same relief or more will again be necessary within a few years. No less an authority than Mr. Walter H. Mallory, Executive Director of Foreign Relations and formerly in charge of the International Famine Relief Commission in China, said exactly the same thing at so recent a date as March 12, 1928, at a meeting of a Unitarian Men's Club in New York City. Even if the humanitarian efforts now on foot to teach the Chinese more modern methods of cultivation should prevent the periodic famines; if modern medical education and the teachings of hygiene and sanitation inaugurated there by the wonderful munificence of Mr. Rockefeller result in diminishing the mortality from infectious diseases, and should missionaries succeed in their praiseworthy efforts to stop the Chinese from killing their female infants, how long would it take the 600,000,000 Chinese, with no birth control to double or triple the population? What the introduction of modern sanitation and improvement of farming methods may do for India may be divined from the accompanying illustration (Fig. 4).

How about China's nearest neighbor, civilized Japan? The average birth rate in Japan, according to the latest statistics gathered by Harold Cox (4), was thirty-three per thousand inhabitants; the deathrate twenty-one, which gives an increase of twelve per thousand. Cox very justly says: "That is a very rapid rate of increase for a country already so well filled as Japan, and helps to explain the eagerness of Japanese statesmen to find an outlet for the surplus population."

It is indeed gratifying to see the women of that country taking a different stand, and arising to battle for social reform and Birth Control. In the issue of *Current History*, for April 1926, Baroness Ishimoto, in an article entitled "Japanese Women for Social Reform," makes the following statement: "Japan has neither the land nor the metals with which to support her teeming multitudes. Whereas



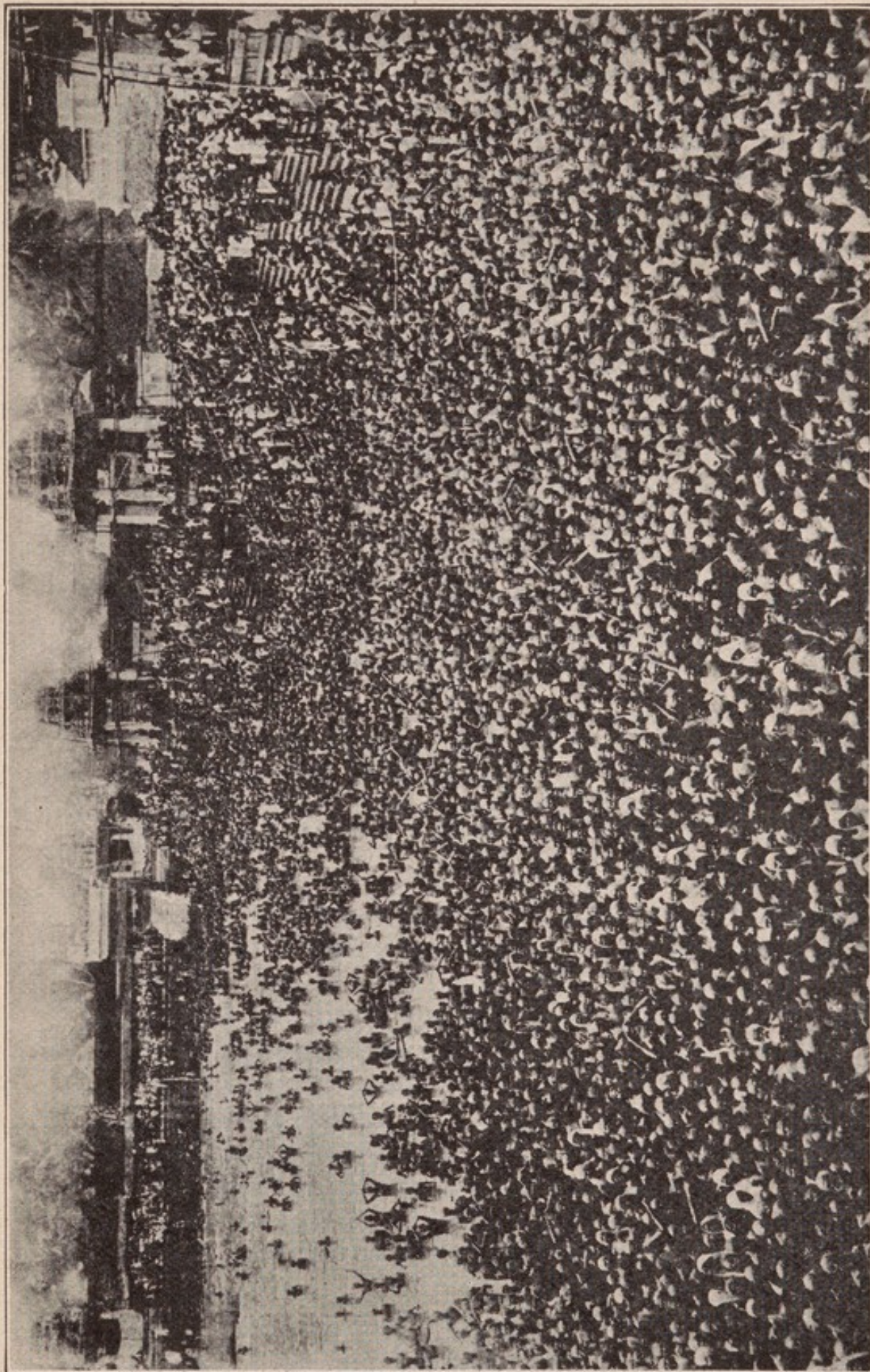


Fig. 4.—The swarming human ant heap of India. Thousands of Hindus bathing in the sacred river Ganges during the yearly "purification" ceremonies. Already overpopulated when the English took hold of India, by introducing sanitation and improved farming methods, they succeeded in even more densely populating it, with worse famines and more deaths as the consequence—a condition toward which the whole world is rapidly moving, according to many scientists. The "purification" ceremonies, which the English have not been able to stop, spread disease and pestilence among the natives and are one of the means nature uses to reduce the population.



in America a middle class family spends on an average forty per cent. for its food, twenty-five per cent. for shelter and clothes, and thirty-five per cent. for education, the majority of Japanese people must spend over one half of the income for food alone, and for a family of man, wife, and five children, the cost of food amounts to sixty-five per cent., and as so many families are larger, the amount spent for food for them is still more expensive." She concludes by saying: "If the oriental nations, which are now developing race consciousness and national duty, are not made to feel that they are deliberately shut out from a fair share of the world's blessings, they will in time follow an enlightened policy of raising the standard of living by having fewer children."

Are our Western countries so much better off than the Near and Far East, where overpopulation and scarcity of food are almost a chronic condition? There may be no immediate danger, but in time the situation is sure to go from bad to worse, unless remedied by judicious birth control.

The overpopulation of Germany, the desire for elbow-room and "a place in the sun" has justly been considered as one of the reasons for the world war, yet many teachers of orthodox religions, while constantly preaching against war, are also opposing birth limitation.

The new German republic evidently realizes that excessive population is not a blessing, for the birthrate in that country has been decreasing since the war. There are no laws in Germany against contraceptive advice or wise, humane and scientific contraceptive methods, and the insurance companies allow their physicians to practice sterilization of women diseased or burdened with too many children, when they fear more cannot be supported or reared properly. The great benefit derived from such procedures must be evident when we bear in mind that in Germany nearly everybody is insured in some life or invalidity insurance company.

The ministers of all denominations and the social workers everywhere to whom married women appeal for advice



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in their distress, often before they seek the physician's aid, should know what counsel to give. This advice should consist in referring the women to a competent physician or to a birth control clinic, where such exist, and in giving her the assurance that the employment of contraceptive methods in her case is not wrong or sinful in the eyes of God, but essential to her self-preservation and the happiness of herself, her husband and children.

Annual medical examination for every individual, man, woman, and child, is now recommended by the leading medical authorities of our country for the purpose of instituting timely treatment and for the prevention of diseases of all kinds. These examinations will also show whether a woman is in fit condition to bear healthy children. What a great opportunity there is here also for the medical man, heretofore often unmindful of his greatest mission as a sanitarian and teacher, and as a physician not only of the body but also of mind and soul in many instances.

Among our great educators, Dr. C. C. Little, of Ann Arbor, has fearlessly expressed his opinion in a number of addresses given in Michigan, Illinois, and New York which have been quoted in the press throughout the country. He has based his argument for birth control boldly on the advantage, not to those who may become parents, but to the children they may bear. He calls on the present generation of mature adults to shift the centre of interest from itself to its young, and the greatest agency of happiness for the next generation he holds to be birth control. He takes issue with the theological conception of unborn souls and would leave a few more among the billions whom nature herself throws away wholesale and bring to birth only those who can be well born, cared for, and developed into a race higher and happier than that which the haphazard methods of reproduction of the last half million years have produced. He protests against the attitude of the Episcopal House of Bishops which met a few years ago in New Orleans and rejected birth control but favored eugenics.



I wonder if these wise church fathers realize that eugenics is as yet a science in its infancy. If we ever get all our legislators educated up to the point of enacting sterilization laws and granting marriage certificates only to the physically and mentally sound, we may perhaps prevent the mating of those chronically afflicted, either mentally or morally, and of those suffering from infectious and transmissible mental or physical diseases. That, however, is about as far as eugenics could be put into practice at the present day. Who would be willing or capable to supervise the mating of apparently normal people and decide how to increase or create a superior type? The best we can do with our present knowledge in the effort to prevent overpopulation is to limit the children who come into this world, doomed *a priori* to a short and miserable existence, but perhaps long enough to reproduce their kind. To those church fathers who sat in New Orleans and so readily favored eugenics but inconsistently condemned birth control, I would suggest a little volume entitled *A Handbook of Moral Pathology for Clergy, Ministers and Social Workers* by A Priest of the Church of England (John Bale Sons—Danielsson, Ltd., publishers). I can recommend this book as an authoritative statement by a man who has lived in slumland, "has seen the pathetic dumb misery of tainted lives, has baptized poor little mites born by undernourished mothers, destined to a fleeting but dreadful slum experience, and which one feels should never have been begotten." Ask some physician practising in the tenement houses of our great cities and he will tell you of the ravages of infectious diseases due to congestion and overpopulation which make prophylactic measures virtually impossible. It is gratifying to see Dr. Little take such a brave and decided stand on this all important issue. As president of the great University of Michigan he has made the teaching of birth control a responsibility of the educator; he has taken the movement out of the apologetic stage and made it a criticism of our present educational system as well as of many other social institutions.



The eminent sociologist, Prof. Franklin H. Giddings, Ph.D., LL.D., in sending his greetings to the last Neo-Malthusian and Birth Control Congress, wrote: "The question at issue is really quite simple. Should human reproduction be controlled by knowledge and conscience or be left to ignorance and luck, the powers of darkness? Should we use our moral sense or only knock on wood? Do we wish to increase and multiply *homo sapiens* or *homo neanderthaliensis*? Do we want to fill the earth with imbeciles, paranoiacs, snake worshippers, fundamentalists, natural bone setters, etc., or with normal men and women, sound in mind and body? We shall have to choose soon."

In regard to the unfortunate laws concerning birth control in the State of New York, I desire to quote from a letter received some time ago from the Hon. Judge William H. Wadhams, formerly of the Court of Special Sessions, in which he says: "In order to save the State from the burden of large families, where there is no possibility of their being supported and where the neglect which follows often results in their becoming State charges, not only because they are mentally but often physically unfit to bear the burden of life, I am of the opinion that there should be some proper birth regulation after a certain number of children have been born, and that, therefore, there should also be some modification of the laws with respect to the giving of information upon this subject. I think the sanitary, medical, social, economic and moral status of the population would be improved by proper and more general information upon this subject."

None of the wonderful endorsements of birth control which I have quoted have been surpassed by the one which has come from that great thinker, philosopher, and student of all problems of humanity, Havelock Ellis, who says: "There is something pathetic in the spectacle of those who are still only able to recognize the animal end of marriage and who point to the example of the lower animals as worthy of our imitation. It has taken



God—or Nature, if you will—unknown millions of years of painful struggle to evolve Man, and to raise the human species above that bondage of reproduction which marks the lower animals. But on those people it has all been wasted. They are in the animal stage still. They have yet to learn the A B C of love. This comes from the blindness which cannot know that, beyond the primary animal end of propagation in marriage there is a secondary but more spiritual end. It is needless to insist how intimately that secondary end of marriage is bound up with birth control.”

Besides the letters and statements from some of the eminent ecclesiastical, ethical, and legal authorities already quoted, I have been the recipient of communications from many leading physicians, scientists, divines, political economists, and sociologists, expressing directly or indirectly their belief that judicious birth control, under ethical and medical guidance, is becoming a national necessity, and that our laws on the subject urgently need revision. For want of space I will mention only the following: The late Dr. A. Jacobi, Dr. John A. Wyeths, Dr. J. N. Hurty, Dr. L. Emmett Holt, Dr. Godfrey R. Pisek, Rev. Dr. Cornelius Woelfkin, and Rev. Dr. Percy L. Grant. Among the many who are still with us favoring and pleading for birth control are: Assistant Surgeon General J. W. Trask of Washington; Dr. Lydia Allen de Vilbiss, formerly of the New York State Department of Health; Dr. Ira S. Wile, editor of *American Medicine*, New York; Dr. William L. Holt, Dr. Wm. J. Robinson, Dr. John Blake White, Dr. F. W. Robie, Dr. John C. Vaughan, Dr. John B. Solley, Jr., Dr. Benjamin T. Tilton; Dr. Gregory Stragnell, editor of the *MEDICAL JOURNAL AND RECORD*; and Drs. Carleton Simon of New York; H. G. Brainerd, of Los Angeles; John Favill of Chicago; Lawrence Litchfield of Pittsburgh; Professor William F. Osborn, of Columbia University; The Reverend Doctors Frank Crane, Frank Oliver Hall, A. Wakefield Slaten of New York; Harold B. Speight of Dartmouth; Honorable Homer Folks, former Com-



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missioner of Charities of New York, now Secretary of the State Charities Aid Association; William H. Allen, Ph.D., formerly Director of the Institute of Public Service, New York City; Cold Spring Harbor, L. I.; Lillian D. Wald, founder of the Henry Street Settlement, New York; Jane Addams of the Hull House, Chicago; Drs. James F. Cooper, and Hannah M. Stone, Medical Directors of the Clinical Research Department; Godfrey Dewey, Sc.D. and Prof. Melvil Dewey, LL.D., of Lake Placid, educator and President of the National Society for Efficiency.

In the *Christian Century*, of August 27th, 1925, perhaps one of the most widely read of American religious journals, we note the following significant statement: "The more intelligent classes already practice birth control, while the less intelligent, who lack the knowledge to restrict their births are breeding so prolifically that they imperil the general standards of human excellence of the race. The welfare of society therefore demands that all classes be placed in command of the same information, so that restriction of births may be fairly equal in all classes."

As physicians, sanitarians, and American citizens, do we not all approve of more children among our healthiest, most intellectual, and most moral stock, not necessarily the most wealthy, where there are at present altogether too few? There must be birth release as well as birth limitation, but to those who cannot see that there is nevertheless danger of overpopulation, I recommend to read *The Proceedings of the World Population Conference of 1927*, and the study of the works of Cox (4), Fairchild (5), Malthus (6), Paul (7), and Pearl (8). Professor A. B. Wolfe (9) of the University of Ohio, declared before the American Statistical Association in December 1925 that "unless the birth rate is retarded, a few generations at most will see it at the saturation point."

We can only hope that the alarming increase of the yellow and black, as well as the white races, may be



checked in time to prevent a catastrophe to our present civilization. With our own growth of population in dear old New York, with its tenement house districts containing more human beings to the square mile than any other city in the United States, and with all the evidences of overpopulation in other cities, every student of sociology is familiar. In Greater New York we now have a population exceeding 7,000,000 and constantly increasing.

Henry P. Fairchild, Professor of Social Economy of New York University, after a survey of conditions in both the Old World and the New, estimates that the population for America will be 550,000,000 at the end of the twentieth century, and for the middle of the next century, as many people as there are now on the entire globe. He emphatically says: "This enormous increase must and will be controlled. History supports the fact that war, famine and pestilence have already operated to settle population problems. There is, however, a theoretical possibility of putting off the operation of these forces. The nations of the world must uniformly undertake to solve their own population problems by the application of rational measures of control rather than by aggression upon the rights of other people."

As true humanitarians we have no right to comfort ourselves with the thought that the middle of next century is more than a hundred years ahead and that the situation does not concern us at all for the time being. To assume such a selfish attitude would be disgraceful and certainly unworthy of a civilized nation. The welfare of posterity should concern us as much as that of our own generation.

There are also certain opponents to birth control who point to France as a warning, a country in the process of depopulation where the government has to give prizes to encourage parents to have as many children as possible. To answer these objectors let me say that there is now no decrease of population in France, but according to careful and unbiased observers, a slow and steady increase. Furthermore, I venture to say that if the French government would aid worthy young people financially so that



they could marry and have a few wanted and welcome children the population would gain in quality as well as in quantity, more surely than by encouraging families (usually in very moderate circumstances) to have a surplus of children.

What kind of children the average Frenchman can have when left to his own devices and choice as to the number of offspring, the recent World War has amply shown. No army participating in that fearful struggle had braver, more vigorous, or more intelligent fighters than the French "poilu." He proved that his sires were wise and careful parents who had few but physically strong and mentally well developed children. It was the quality and not the quantity which made the French army able to hold back the enemy often so far superior in numbers.

Raymond Pearl, in his latest book, *The Biology of Population Growth*, while speaking hopefully of that as yet little understood biological phenomenon, "adaptation," concludes by saying: "We can only dimly envisage a small fraction of the changes in the mode of human existence which population pressure will entail. But that these responses to environmental forces will be generally adaptive seems to me certain. They will somehow or other conduce to wellbeing and happiness. Birth control would seem to be a case in point. It is an intelligent adaptive response to an environmental force, population pressure. It is an attempt to slow the rate of population growth and thereby maintain the level of living standards. It will become more and more widespread."

On the front page of the *Birth Control Review* of March 1926, which has for its motto "Fewer children better born," is printed the following strong declaration by Prof. Edward Allsworth Ross, professor of sociology of the University of Wisconsin:

"We are headed straight for a world saturation which will make toil, poverty, anxiety, and low expectation of life the portion of the masses in all countries. It was some job during the war for the allies to feed a portion



of the Belgians. Well, as things now are, food for two new Belgiums must be found every year. In the words of Prof. Edward M. East, 'The tillers of the soil must prepare, plant, cultivate and harvest each year nearly forty million acres more than they did the year before.' The end of rapid expansion is in sight. Within a lifetime, we shall arrive at a nearly stationary state of population. Shall the equilibrium between births and deaths be struck by adjusting the birth-rate of ten per thousand per annum, which we may look for before very long; or shall it be struck by allowing the growth of crowding, overwork, and underfeeding to raise the mortality to twenty-four per thousand per annum, which is the present birth-rate?

There is one group of opponents to birth control to which I have not yet referred. It is those who realize the danger of overpopulation and consequent food shortage, but wish to remedy the situation in our country by restricting immigration. To this Professor E. E. Free, Ph.D., an expert in agriculture, replies in an article entitled "Have We Food to Feed Our Immigrants," which appeared in the *Scientific American* of February, 1926. "The problem of overpopulation," he says, "is not created by immigration. If there had not been one immigrant admitted to the United States in the last ten years we would still be faced with an approaching lack of food. The really important sources of population pressure are the excess of births over deaths and, more important still, the lengthening of the average length of life by modern efficient methods of disease prevention and bodily repair. There is only one real cure. That is some way of limiting births. But the present propaganda for birth control has not yet received the sanction of the scientific profession, let alone of the sociologists or the clergy. With regard to immigration, any attempt at restriction of the total of admitted immigrants is but a palliative. Such an attempt would be about as effective as pouring a bucket of water on a burning forest. But there is one thing



that a wise immigration policy might do. It might help us to increase the average competence of our population."

Before leaving the question of emigration as a means for helping to solve the question of overpopulation of the inhabitable regions of the globe in general, it must be noted that this would merely prove a fallacy in the end. The emigrants from one country who have gone into another, in course of time would simply overpopulate their newly chosen land.

The U. S. immigration laws are just in excluding all undesirables. The physically, intellectually and morally unfit should not gain entrance into this country, and even the number of desirable immigrants must be restricted. Mrs. Margaret Sanger, who returned from Europe in March, 1928, after a two years study of the situation there, says: "Would it not be wiser for all the countries not to permit undesirables to be born?" She with the many other students of overpopulation realizes the seriousness of the situation, and the result of her studies has brought her to the following prophetic conclusion: "Europe has become so over-populated that within ten years it must either recognize the necessity of birth control or it will burst its confines and become involved in a chaos of food riots and war."

"Estimates put out in 1924 for the League of Nations give the population of the earth for 1880 at 850,000,000 and 1,800,000,000 now. Daily 100,000 die and 150,000 are born. Each sun beholds 50,000 more on our planet. During the single year 1927 the world increase was 20,000,000. If the estimates of the great Australian statistician, Sir George Knibbs, are correct then in the lifetime of the average person born in this year (1927) in the United States, as many human beings will be added to mankind as were developed in all the 1500-2000 generations during which the human race has been spreading over the planet." (Edward A. Ross "Standing Room Only.")

My late friend and teacher, Dr. Hermann M. Biggs, whom we may justly consider to have been one of the



greatest sanitary authorities of our time, prior to the dismissal of the case by Judge Dayton of the Federal Court, against Mrs. Sanger for sending information about birth control through the mail, gave to the press the following statement: "I am strongly of the opinion that the present laws in regard to the governing of infant control are unwise and should be revised. There can be no question in the mind of any one familiar with the facts that the unrestricted propagation of the mentally and physically unfit, as legally encouraged at the present time, is coming to be a serious menace to civilization and constitutes a great drain on our economic resources."

The State and federal laws referred to by Dr. Biggs deserve only one comment, namely, that it is time that physicians should assert their right and duty to practice medicine according to the best of their knowledge and the highest ethical conception, and that our legislatures should cease prescribing and proscribing in matters which concern the medical profession alone.

Enough will be found in this essay, however, to show that some scientists, sociologists and many among the clergy are not only waking up to the importance of the problem but giving sanction to the present movement for birth control. This is only the beginning, but each one who bravely comes out and makes public his favorable opinion helps towards what must be the ultimate outcome in order to insure the continuance of mankind on the earth on as high or a higher level than he has attained at the present time.

Indifference or hostility to the many-sided question of birth control on the part of our lawmakers, clergymen, sociologists, educators, physicians, and sanitarians will not further the welfare of the nation. Fortunately, there are a few brave men among the leaders of the American medical and other professions who are not afraid to deal frankly with these vital issues. Among the past presidents of our American Medical Association, the late Professor A. Jacobi was, and Professor Charles A. L. Reed and Professor William Allen Pusey are, in favor of birth



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control. Most American physicians are familiar with the latter's wonderful essay on Medicine's Responsibility in the Birth Control Movement (10). From it I will quote that chivalrous sentence referring to the fact that while birth control is truly a man's problem, it is above all a woman's problem: "It is woman that bears the penalties in injury, disease, death, and mental torture that are involved in childbirth. She has a right to know how she can intelligently—not crudely and dangerously—control her sexual life. And she is justified by the highest considerations in fighting vigorously and persistently until she has this right granted to her."

The woman of today is demanding the right to use her God given intelligence to decide the number of her offspring and regulate the time of their arrival. No less an authority than Dr. Alexis Carrel, of the Rockefeller Institute, winner of the Nobel Prize for his scientific research, strongly emphasizes the advantage of quality over quantity in the human race and the utilization of man's brain power for more intensive study toward this end. In a recent brilliantly written article for *The Scientific Monthly* (11) entitled "The Future Progress of Medicine," he says: "The spiritual progress of man could be greatly promoted by a scientific knowledge of the physicochemical phenomena which take place within the brain cells. Instead of merely increasing the number of human beings, we could increase their quality. The progress of medicine, understood in this manner, would be the most important factor in the development of civilization."

Alas, laws forbidding a married couple to use their brains in the interest of voluntary parenthood instead of practicing blind procreation, are still in force in our own and many other States. On the other hand, there is no restriction of the procreation of the unfit. The diseased in body and mind are allowed to reproduce *ad libitum*. The progeny of domestic animals, the horse, the cow, the hog, are controlled by man's intelligence but human beings are bred indiscriminately.



What our laws on this subject really mean, how antiquated, absurd and inhumane they are, is really astounding to any one who has the welfare of America at heart. For an article published in "Clinical Medicine and Surgery", October, 1927, entitled "Birth Control as It Confronts the Medical Profession in the United States," I collected all the information I could get on the status of these laws. In addition to the parent Federal law, which is responsible for the anti-birth control attitude of many uninformed statesmen, legislators and judges, I will give here a resumé of the various State laws relating to birth control, by Dr. H. M. Dilla, formerly of Smith College.

The Federal parent law, for which Anthony Comstock was responsible, known as the original Section 211, reads as follows: "Every obscene, lewd, or lascivious, and every filthy book, pamphlet, picture, paper, letter, writing, print, or other publication of an indecent character, and every article or thing designed, adapted or intended for preventing conception or producing abortion, or for any indecent or immoral use, and every article, instrument, substance, drug, medicine, or thing which is advertised or described in a manner calculated to lead another to use or apply it for preventing conception or producing abortion, or for any indecent or immoral purpose; and every written or printed card, letter, circular, book, pamphlet, advertisement, or notice of any kind giving information directly or indirectly, where, or how, or of whom, or by what means any of the hereinbefore-mentioned matters, articles or things may be obtained or made, or where or by whom any act of operation of any kind for the procuring or producing of abortion will be done or performed or how or by what means conception may be prevented or abortion may be produced, whether sealed or unsealed; and every letter, packet, or package, or other mail matter containing any filthy, vile, or indecent thing, device or substance and every paper, writing, advertisement or representation that any article, instrument, substance, drug medicine or thing may, or can be, used or applied, for preventing conception or producing abortion, or for any



indecent or immoral purpose; and every description calculated to induce or incite a person to so use or apply any such article, instrument, substance, drug, medicine, or thing, is hereby declared to be a non-mailable matter and shall not be conveyed in the mails or delivered from any post office or by any letter carrier. Whoever shall knowingly deposit or cause to be deposited for mailing or delivery, anything declared by this section to be non-mailable, or shall knowingly take, or cause the same to be taken, from the mails for the purpose of circulating or disposing thereof, or of aiding in the circulation or disposition thereof, shall be fined not more than five thousand dollars, or imprisoned not more than five years, or both."

This unfortunate legal statute on birth control makes the instruction of physicians by means of books or journal articles or the mail, and even teaching in most colleges, virtually impossible.

What are the State laws concerning this issue, of which it can surely be said, that the life and death of American Mothers depend?

"Twenty-four states (and Porto Rico) specifically penalize contraceptive knowledge in their obscenity laws.

"Twenty-four states (and the District of Columbia, Alaska and Hawaii) have obscenity laws, under which, because of the Federal precedent, contraceptive knowledge may be suppressed as obscene, although it is not specifically mentioned. Obscenity has never been defined in law. This produces a mass of conflicting, inconsistent judicial decision, which would be humorous if it were not such a mortifying revelation of the limitations and perversions of the human mind.

"Twenty-three states make it a crime to publish or advertise contraceptive information. They are as follows: Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Washington, Wyoming; also Porto Rico.



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“Twenty-two states include in their prohibition drugs and instruments for the prevention of conception. They are as follows: Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Washington, Wyoming and Porto Rico.

“Eleven states make it a crime to have in one’s possession any instruction for contraception. These are: Colorado, Indiana, Iowa, Minnesota, Mississippi, New Jersey, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Wyoming.

“Fourteen states make it a crime to tell anyone where or how contraceptive knowledge may be acquired. These are: Colorado, Indiana, Iowa, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Washington, Wyoming.

“Six states prohibit the offer to assist in any method whatever which would lead to knowledge by which contraception might be accomplished. These are Arizona, California, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oklahoma, and Porto Rico.

“Eight states prohibit depositing in the Post Office any contraceptive information. These are: Colorado, Indiana, Iowa, Minnesota, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, Wyoming.

“One state, Colorado, prohibits the bringing into the State of any contraceptive knowledge.

“Four states have laws authorizing the search for and seizure of contraceptive instructions, and these are: Colorado, Idaho, Iowa, Oklahoma. In all these states but Idaho, the laws authorize the destruction of the things seized.

“Certain exemptions from the penalties of these laws are made by the states for:

*Medical Colleges*—Colorado, Indiana, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Wyoming.



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*Medical Books*—Colorado, Indiana, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Wyoming.

*Physicians*—Colorado, Indiana, Nevada, New York, Ohio, Wyoming.

*Druggists*—Colorado, Indiana, Ohio, Wyoming.

“Seventeen states prohibit any information which corrupts morals, 11 of them, as starred in the following list, particularly mentioning the morals of the young. This is an interesting point of view of the frequently offered objection to freedom of access to contraceptive knowledge, that it will demoralize the young. These states are: Colorado, Delaware\*, Florida, Iowa\*, Maine\*, Massachusetts\*, Michigan\*, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas\*, Vermont\*, Virginia\*, West Virginia\*, Wisconsin\*, and Hawaii.

“Two states have no obscenity statutes, but police power in these states can suppress contraceptive knowledge as an ‘obscenity’ or ‘public nuisance’ by virtue of the Federal precedent. These states are: North Carolina and New Mexico.”

That the unwisdom of these laws has been felt for a long time is shown by what the late Professor A. Jacobi said in his presidential address before the American Medical Association, some ten years ago: “Our federal and state laws on the subject of contraception are grievously wrong and unjust. It is important that these laws be repealed at the earliest possible moment.”

Contrast our attitude with that of England. A recent issue of the *Nation* (1928) states that there the Neo-Malthusian League has announced the disbanding of its organization in a triumphant hymn of victory. “Our aims have succeeded beyond our wildest dreams,” says Dr. Charles Vickery Drysdale of a campaign which during its fifty years of existence was inspired and led by members of his family. In the heat of passionate discussion of the Malthusian doctrine the first organized movement for conscious control of fertility was founded. Dr. R. C.



Drysdale and his wife, Dr. Alice Vickery, one of the first women physicians in England, and later their son and daughter as well, led the movement through stormy decades of vilification and abuse to ultimate victory in England and on the Continent. Once abused as obscene, unpatriotic, demoralizing, shunned by respectable people, the campaign has disarmed most of its opposition. The British House of Lords has passed a resolution in favor of birth control instruction at the public health centres; The National Council of Public Morals, under religious auspices, has declared that nothing should keep married persons from obtaining birth control information for medical or economic reasons.

Mrs. Margaret Sanger, the woman who suffered imprisonment and persecution for her advocacy of birth control in its medical as well as sociological aspects, receives an average of sixty thousand letters annually from mothers in distress. Some are from virtually destitute mothers who have too many children already and fear that there will not be enough to feed a new arrival; others are from mothers afflicted with diseases of all kinds, feeling intuitively that an additional pregnancy will aggravate their condition. Federal and State laws make Mrs. Sanger virtually powerless to help directly, except in the comparatively few cases which come to the clinic and in which reason for advice is based on actual disease or when an additional pregnancy would endanger life.

This clinic is maintained by the N. Y. Branch of the American Birth Control League and was founded by Mrs. Sanger. It is under the supervision of two physicians in good standing. No advice is given and no contraceptive help is extended to the healthy married woman or a single woman who desires to marry but for economic reasons wishes to postpone motherhood. Such advice on purely sociological grounds cannot as yet be given without violation of the law.

It has been said that no contraceptive method is an absolutely sure preventive. In regard to this I can say that according to the available statistics in the New York



clinic, where the most careful methods are employed, there have been only about two to three per cent of failures. I am indebted for this information to Dr. H. M. Stone who is in charge of the clinic. In passing, let me say that most conscientious work is done in the Research Department connected with the clinic, of which Dr. James F. Cooper is the director. The latter is frequently called upon to lecture before medical bodies and during the past year he addressed no fewer than 60 medical associations. Wherever the doctor lectures, he informs himself of the names of physicians in that locality who are doing gynecological work and are willing to help patients in need of contraceptive advice. The names of these physicians are given to Mrs. Sanger to enable her to refer the women who write to her to a physician in or near the locality where they live. In this way Mrs. Sanger is able to help a few more of the thousands of women who appeal to her.

The clinic is conducted on strictly ethical principles, but besides aiding the diseased mothers in the prevention of further childbirths, the institution has another purpose. Just as there exist among the well to do, women eager for children but who are apparently sterile and who by surgical or medical means can be cured of their sterility, so one finds among the poor many seemingly sterile women who are eager for motherhood. In such a clinic they may obtain the same advice and help free of charge as is given to the well to do by expensive specialists, and they may thus have their hearts' desire for a child fulfilled. Physicians in good standing are admitted to the New York clinic for instruction. In a letter addressed to the editor of the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (Oct. 10, 1925), Dr. Robert L. Dickinson, of New York, referring to the work of the American Birth Control League and that of the Committee on Maternal Health, mentions the fact that seven thousand physicians have applied to the League for information on contraceptives. It is thus evident that there is an urgent need of scientifically and ethically conducted birth control clinics in the in-



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terest of suffering mothers and also of physicians willing but evidently not sufficiently well instructed to be helpful to them.

There exist thus far according to information obtained from the New York Committee on Maternal Health, the following clinics and centers where diseased married women may obtain information concerning contraception. In New York City there is only one typical birth control clinic with a research department (46th West 15th Street), but there are a few contraceptive clinics according to a list furnished by courtesy of the Committee on Maternal Health, Samuel W. Lambert, M.D., President of the N. Y. Academy of Medicine, Chairman; Robert Latou Dickinson, M.D., Sec'y.

### OUT-PATIENT DEPARTMENTS

(Not designated as Birth Control Clinics)

#### CALIFORNIA:

Pasadena, Cal: Pasadena General Hospital.

#### ILLINOIS:

Chicago, Ill.: Michael Reese Dispensary.

#### MARYLAND:

Baltimore, Md.: Bureau for Contraceptive Advice, 1028 N. Broadway, near Johns Hopkins Hospital, and under direction of Johns Hopkins Physicians.

#### NEW YORK:

Brooklyn: Jewish Hospital.

Bronx: Lebanon Hospital.

N. Y. City: Beth Israel.

Lenox Hill Hospital.

Mt. Sinai Hospital.

N. Y. Infirmary for Women and Children.

N. Y. Nursery and Child's Hospital.

Sloane Hospital.

Woman's Hospital.



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### SEPARATE BIRTH CONTROL CLINICS:

#### CALIFORNIA:

Los Angeles, Cal.: Mother's Clinic, 130 S. Broadway.  
Berkeley, Cal.: Berkeley Health Center, 930 University Ave.

#### ILLINOIS:

Chicago, Ill.: Medical Center No. 1, 203 N. Wabash Ave.  
(Ill. B. C. League).  
Medical Center No. 2, 1347 Lincoln Street.  
Medical Center No. 3, Henry Booth House,  
701 W. 14th St.  
Medical Center No. 4, So. Side Community  
House, 3201 S. Wabash Avenue.  
Medical Center No. 5, Jewish People's Inst.,  
1258 West Taylor Street.  
Medical Center No. 6, Mary Crane Center  
Hull House, 818 Gilpin Place.

May our municipal, state, and federal legislators, and their advisers in sanitary and medical matters soon awake to the crying need of modifying the existing laws which impede the establishment of these clinics!

Because of the incongruity of the postal law which makes all discussions on contraceptive technic and results unmailable, the American Gynecological Society and the American Birth Control League are urging the following amendment: "Standard medical and scientific journals and reprints therefrom and standard medical works which contain information with reference to the prevention of conception are not nonmailable under this section."

There is one more aspect of the work of the clinic that I must touch upon. The personnel of this clinic is not infrequently instrumental in saving the lives of mothers and girl mothers who are in a desperate state of mind, having become pregnant against their wish. They think that prevention and abortion are synonymous and that they can be helped in their plight by the clinic physicians. By the aid of a few generous ladies the clinic has been able to help these unfortunate women through their critical period of pregnancy and provide them with home and



shelter after confinement. Women referred to the clinic by the Charity Organization Society or by physicians as too poor to pay for medicine and material furnished are treated gratuitously. This class of women make up the majority of the clinic's patients. Those able to pay, reimburse the cost of the material, and if disposed to do so may make a voluntary gift. The institution is supported entirely by voluntary contribution. Well to do and philanthropic persons can hardly find a better investment for their gifts than to help this lifesaving institution.

Many people oppose birth control not merely because of church affiliations but on seemingly ideal religious grounds, maintaining that we must not interfere with the laws of nature, which are the laws of God. In that case we must not advocate peace, use intensive cultivation, remove useless and dangerous weeds from our gardens nor plant wholesome vegetables, construct lightning rods, prevent smallpox or typhoid by vaccination, nor give our children antidiphtheritic serum and not operate for cleft palate or other congenital deformities. We must not give insulin in diabetes, operate on early cancer to prevent its spread, stop hemorrhages in tuberculosis, nor cure nor prevent this disease by approved modern methods of interfering with nature's process, which would in these instances be destructive of bodily tissue and cause early death. We must allow a pus-filled appendix or an extra-uterine pregnancy to take their natural course, which means death. We must never perform Cæsarean section but allow mother and child to die rather than prevent Nature taking its course. The prematurely born child must be left to cold Nature and not put in an incubator with artificial warmth to preserve its existence. If we must not interfere with Nature at all, we are not even entitled to artificial teeth which prolong our lives, enabling us to masticate our food properly. In many instances it is our duty to interfere with Nature's course, not only in our own interest and for our preservation, comfort and happiness, but at the same time to see that all those blessings may be bestowed upon future generations.



Most of these believers in not interfering with the laws of Nature will read about and listen to lectures on the prevention of such disease as tuberculosis, syphilis, heart and mental disorders, etc. They also give financial support to national and social organizations which interfere with Nature's course, such as associations for the suppression of the just mentioned diseases.

The Rev. Karl Reiland, D.D., the distinguished minister of St. George's Protestant Episcopal Church in the address of welcome on the occasion of Mrs. Margaret Sanger's return from Europe, in March, 1928, expressed the true attitude modern men and the true church should take toward nature's forces and birth control, in the following eloquent words: "For millions of years nature was in control of man. The supreme object of biological evolution is man, and man having reached his adolescence, has turned the tables on nature and, in according with both moral and biological law, is now controlling nature. Birth control is one great example of this. Under nature's rule, vast and horrible calamities regulated population. Then man assumed the moral obligation of regulating by infanticide, and this in turn has yielded to the method of birth control. This is the biological ethics of birth control. On social grounds birth control — or rather its extension to the poor—would solve the problem of differential fertility, allow hereditary potentialities to have free play, unhampered by unfavorable environment, and complete the emancipation of women. With this process of controlling nature and raising society to a higher place, the ethical purpose of the church should be not to interfere. The church has too often in the past stood in the way of human progress. Hitherto it has chained every Prometheus to the rocks. But it has not, even so, been able to hold progress back, and in the end it has accepted the gifts of those whom it has persecuted. Its attitude toward birth control must change also; it must support this method of raising the level of human existence. Objections on religious grounds are all irrelevant—they are for the most part just another chance to



ask a question and throw in an inhibition. They are un-intelligent, unscientific, unethical and inhuman."

When birth control was discussed a few years ago in the English House of Parliament, Mr. Turtle, a labor member, asked leave to present a bill authorizing local authorities to incur expenditures in conveying knowledge of methods of birth control to married women who desired it. He very pertinently said: "In districts where overcrowding is most rampant and poverty most acute, there is a very high birth rate. We are spending money in broadcasting information about sanitation, personal hygiene, diet, tuberculosis, and venereal disease, solely on the ground of maintaining public health, and there is not a phase in the work that is not rendered more difficult by women in the poorest districts having larger families than is good for themselves or for the state."

Akin to the believers in non-interference with Nature are the Christian Scientists, who deny the existence of disease and are thorough disbelievers in preventive and curative medicine. In the December, 1925, issue of the *Medical Woman's Journal*, there appeared a "Protest Against Teaching Birth Control" by the senior editor of that periodical, the venerable and distinguished woman physician, Dr. Eliza M. Mosher. All the arguments which she sets forth against birth control I believe have been answered in the preceding pages, but in the same issue there appears also an interesting editorial by the junior editor of the magazine, Dr. Bertha Van Hoosen, wherein she asks many questions appertaining to the practice of birth control. One of them reads as follows: "Is the Christian Scientist going to practice birth control by denying its existence?" My answer is "No, just as in surgical cases he does not 'as yet' deny the existence of a compound comminuted fracture, so does he know 'as yet' that without contraceptive methods the natural act will as a rule be followed by natural consequences." I happen to know some very estimable people who do not believe in the existence of disease, but who very firmly



believe in cause and effect in their sexual relation and act accordingly.

Another of Dr. Van Hoosen's questions reads: "Is birth control feminine, masculine, or neuter?" My answer is, that it concerns both men and women and by its judicious exercise the married relation can and should be all that may be desired, free from anxiety neurosis and concomitant evils, with fewer misunderstandings and divorces.

Anxiety neurosis is a pathological condition frequently found in married men and women, particularly in the latter. It is the fear in the minds of the married couple who already have enough children of the arrival of more little mouths to feed, that causes this condition. Our relatively new science of psychoanalysis has traced to this fear many a severe nervous and mental condition, resulting even in typical insanity. At times there is added to this neurosis the nervous strain coming from an endeavor to repress the sex urge, which makes this mental suffering even more serious. Yet all married men and women who are in the prime of life are entitled to the fullest conjugal happiness. With the knowledge of birth control they may enjoy this; lacking this knowledge, there are cases where the fear of too frequent childbirths on the part of the already overburdened wife, makes her frigid to the husband's embraces and disastrous consequences ensue. The ignorance concerning contraceptive measures results in wrecking what would have been a truly happy marriage with a few lovable and healthy children.

It has been said that a general knowledge of birth control would lower the moral standard of the unmarried. In answer to this, I may say that a good many people who are unmarried and are eager for illicit intercourse already know preventive measures; but the saving of thousands of lives, the bringing into this world of only wanted and welcome and not unwanted and unwelcome children, the many more happy married young couples, the prevention of venereal and other infectious diseases, would make up a thousand fold for the isolated cases where resort was



had to contraceptive measures by those who, according to our standard of morality, should not be entitled to them.

The spread of birth control knowledge among young people of marriageable age should not only be the cause of a great many more early marriages but of less illicit intercourse, and last but by no means least, fewer illegitimate children.

Let us see what an experienced woman has to say on this subject. In *The Forum* of April, 1928, there appeared an article under the caption "Choosing One's Children, Sidestepping the Stork", written by a young mother of three well wanted and welcome children. With the help of birth control, which she freely admits she has practiced and is still practicing, she arranged the children's arrival at such a time as her husband's position permitted a family increase. Among the many wise statements she makes in favor of birth control is the following: "The major portion of maladjustments in married life, I venture to say spring from a fear that could be assuaged by ample knowledge of the method of birth control" . . . "Factors responsible for the meagre families of this generation are: High cost of living, scarcity of domestic labor, the strain of high speed civilization that makes for lessened health, the romantic view of marriage, and the changed conception of what constitutes woman's part in marriage. Probably in most cases birth control proceeds from different combinations of those factors. In view of the fact that these considerations affect a large proportion of the populace and that need for accurate knowledge of contraceptive methods is so widespread and urgent, a great number of us are convinced that a law which forbids the dissemination of information about birth control is a bitter injustice. The sensual, the immoral will never be deterred by fear of consequences any more than murderers are deterred by fear of capital punishment, while countless self-respecting men and women are done a serious injury by such a law."

Furthermore I very much doubt that such birth control knowledge would really influence the average morally and



mentally sound youth or adult. The Honorable Ben. Lindsey of Denver who, in his long experience as a judge of the juvenile and family court of Denver, Colo., dealing with delinquent children, adolescents and adults, being certainly entitled to an authoritative opinion on this subject, has made the following declaration: "There is nothing in this world that I am more convinced of than that knowledge of birth control would positively not change the moral attitude of men and women towards the marriage bond, or lower the moral standards of the youths of the country. On the contrary, I am positive it would improve and increase both. . . How anyone could doubt that knowledge that enables parents to limit their families could fail to make for human happiness and raise the moral, social, and intellectual standards of the population, is more than I can understand. Of course, I believe that such knowledge would do all of these things, and to my mind it is little short of crime itself that such knowledge is being withheld."

It has been claimed by opponents to birth control that a knowledge of contraceptives would diminish the desire for offspring in the normal married woman because she would prefer ease and pleasure to the care of children. I protest against this statement because the desire for motherhood is overwhelmingly innate in every woman. The exception to this may exist, but if it does, it is one of the rarest instances.

How strongly the motherly instinct and the love for a child exists in the average woman, has been most beautifully shown in Judge Lindsey's book above referred to. He cites case after case where the unfortunate girl-mother in spite of poverty and degradation has clung to the child which society designates as illegitimate, but which to the poor unfortunate girl-mother is the product of her own flesh and blood and in most instances conceived in moments of the purest love for the father of the child.

In this connection let me say something more of the rights of the wife and mother, a subject as important as



any other relating to birth control; in fact, it is to me so important that I made it a subject of a lecture a few years ago, which finally appeared in the *Medical Woman's Journal*. I will repeat in part what I said then, for my opinion on this matter has not only not changed but on the contrary, I have become more deeply convinced that a woman, whether ill or economically poor, or well and in good circumstances, who has a thoughtless, brutal, diseased, and sometimes even drunken husband, whether already the mother of a number of children or not, has the moral, and I call it even the divine right to prevent the conception of a child which, according to all human judgment, is bound to become a burden to itself and to the community. Every wife has the right to wish to be the mother of finer and physically, mentally, and morally better children. There can be neither medical, legal, moral, nor religious reasons why this right should not be granted to every wife and mother.

One of the favorite arguments against birth control is the tale that several great men have been the later or last born child in a very large family. We are told that Napoleon was the fourth of a family of thirteen; Enrico Caruso, the great vocal artist, was one of nineteen, and that Benjamin Franklin was the fifteenth of seventeen children. It is claimed that these and other great men would never have been born had it not been for the large family they had been a member of. Yet because of the possibility of having another Napoleon would any one wish to advise all French parents to have thirteen children? Or because of the desire to have another Caruso urge all the Italians to have nineteen? And to have another Benjamin Franklin to wish all American families to consist at least of fifteen children? The two De Reszkes, Jean and Edouard, the predecessors of Caruso, came from a small family. If in the course of American history another Benjamin Franklin is needed, who will dare to say that an All Wise Providence will wait until there is an American family of at least fourteen children



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(a rare incident nowadays) before such another great statesman is allowed to see the light of day?

To enumerate the great generals, artists, statesmen, inventors, scientists, world benefactors, and other great men and women in the various fields of human endeavors, who have come from average sized or very small families or have even been the only child, would make a very long list indeed. If such statistics were conscientiously gathered they would entirely silence the plea for justification of larger families than necessary to stabilize the population, preventing overpopulation and bringing into this world those who would constitute a detriment instead of an asset to the community. Such statistics would show how the number of great men and women coming from small families outnumber by very much the isolated instances where great men came from a family of very numerous children. How many great men might have been among the descendants of those who have never married had they been parents of even very small families, we will never be able to know, but if every family were to consist of thirteen to nineteen children we would surely be in need of several Napoleons to reduce their numbers by war.

The greatest and most determined opposition to birth control comes from the Roman Catholic Church, and according to reports opposition also comes from the National Council of the Episcopal Church. The latter body, at its meeting in New York on January 21, 1926, voted to join forces with the Roman Catholic Church to protest against amending of the Federal Law Penal Code and Traffic Act so to make it lawful to transmit through the United States mails and to import into this country information explaining and encouraging the practice of contraception. The Episcopal Church took this step on the request of the Rev. John J. Burke, a Paulist Father, General Secretary of the National Catholic Welfare Council which has its headquarters in Washington. The Executive Committee of the National Lutheran Council, at its annual meeting, which took place on the same day at the Hotel Astor, voted not to take part in



the birth control controversies. A copy of a similar letter from Father Burke had been read at the council asking the Lutheran Church to take the same action as had been taken by the Episcopal Council.

That there are also Protestant Episcopal clergymen of high standing who will not subscribe to such an agreement with the representatives of the Roman Catholic Church, I have already shown by quoting the distinguished clergymen belonging to the Episcopal church who gave their support to birth control by their attendance and their addresses at the meeting of the Neo-Malthusian and Birth Control Conference, held in March, 1925, and at subsequent birth control meetings and personal letters to me. On January 31, 1926, an Episcopal clergyman devoted an entire sermon to this subject, of which the report in the *New York Times* of February 1st, read as follows:

“Calling birth control a ‘splendid campaign to benefit humanity, and not designed to breed immorality,’ the Rev. Dr. Stuart L. Tyson, Episcopalian Modernist, in his sermon yesterday in the Episcopal Church of St. Mark’s-in-the-Bouwerie, Tenth Street west of Second Avenue, condemned the action of the National Council of the Episcopal Church in voting to join forces with the Roman Catholic Church in combating Federal legislation concerning birth control. Dr. Tyson spoke on ‘Twentieth Century Religion.’ ‘To do justly, to love mercy, to walk humbly with thy God,’ he said, ‘constituted the essence not only of twentieth century religion, but the religion of all time. Whoever followed these rules, he pointed out, was truly a religious man. “Orthodoxy consists in complacent, unthinking acceptance of what has become a crystallized idea,’ Dr. Tyson declared. ‘It is much easier for man to accept the standards set up by other people, standards which may now be obsolete, than for man to think for himself. Thinking of this kind always requires effort, whereas following the principles already laid out is an easy way of complying without too much thinking. That was the



priestly point of view. It is much easier to accept than to think for ourselves. That point of view has been held for many centuries, and is still being held by persons too lazy mentally to look ahead. But true religion cannot consist in the acceptance of any intellectual formula, because all formulæ lead to selfsatisfaction, selfcomplacency, instead of serious, progressive thinking.' ”

Leaving aside for a moment the wisdom or unwisdom of such procedure by the dignitaries of the Roman Catholic and Episcopal churches, I believe we should honor the honest convictions of any one who, by reasons of his church affiliation, does not agree with us, and unkind comments because of this opposition will not better the situation nor further our cause. I have tried to set forth in this little book all that justifies our stand, but I believe that in the last analysis the freedom to advocate birth control may even be considered as a religious duty, since mankind at large will be benefited thereby. The Catholic Church prohibits the marriage of its priests and nuns and no one would wish on religious grounds to criticize this commandment of a great, respected and historical church. Only as a biologist, physician, and student of human nature I cannot help thinking that this celibacy of so many thousands of men and women is really birth control. To judge from what I have seen of Catholic priests and Catholic nuns in my professional work, they represent the flower of the Catholic population. With their spiritual development, their devotion to high ideals and service to mankind, they would make ideal parents, and their progeny would be a most valuable asset to a nation. Even physically the average Catholic priest and nun are of a superior type, and among the nuns and Sisters of Charity there are many beautiful and physically well developed women. Thus, from a biological point of view, it is regrettable that the nation is deprived of the progeny of these people, while the church is allowing if not encouraging the reproduction of the incapable and diseased.

That it is considered most sinful for the devout Catholic to resort to any method to prevent even morally,



mentally, or physically deformed children to be born, has been clearly set forth by a declaration of His Eminence, Cardinal Hayes. Here is what he said: "Children troop down from Heaven because God wills it. . . . He blesses at will some homes with many, others with few or none at all. They come in the one way ordained by His wisdom. Woe to those who degrade, pervert, or do violence to the law of Nature as fixed by the eternal decree of God Himself! Even though some little angels in the flesh, through the moral, mental, or physical deformity of the parents, may appear to the eye hideous, misshaped, a blot on civilized society, we must not lose sight of this Christian thought, that under and within such visible malformation there lives an immortal soul to be saved and glorified for all eternity among the blessed in Heaven."

Judge Lindsey, who copied this statement in his remarkable book, "The Revolt of Modern Youth" (12), comments on it as follows: "That, I think, is a fine and clear statement of the point of view of those who believe artificial contraception to be a sinful frustration of God's purposes. But to me it does not seem logical. To me it seems that those who are guilty of bringing deformed or perverted children into the world have, to paraphrase the words of Cardinal Hayes, degraded, perverted, and done violence to the law of Nature as fixed by the eternal decree of God Himself. It seems to me also that many such persons have permitted their theological beliefs to do away with their common sense. . . . "I cannot admit that any man born of woman has either the knowledge or the authority to tell other men, as a statement of ascertained fact, what God's purposes are in this or any other matter."

To show to what a seriously pathetic situation the conflict between common sense and church obedience leads, I must quote an entire page from Judge Lindsey's book so full of graphic examples. Mrs. H., a wholesome, innocent woman, but grossly ignorant of the most elementary facts about sex, had been enlightened on her marital obligations by the kind priest who married her. "One



warning the priest strongly emphasized in his instructions was that she must never 'interfere with Nature.' Birth control, he assured her, was contrary to the will of God. Well, as a result of that warning, which she swallowed whole, she bore three children, close together. As her husband's income was very small, three was a whole lot too many. When the fourth baby was evidently on the way, therefore, there was trouble. Mr. H. burst into a fury of wrath at the news that his wife was pregnant. He threatened to leave her and the whole family forthwith unless she would go to an abortionist. She did this—three times in the next three years. Abortions became a custom in the H. family. It must not practice birth control, since that was a sin, and an interference with Nature and with God's purposes—rather remarkable that human beings could interfere with the plans of the Maker of the Universe, is it not?—but abortion would do very well as a substitute for it. So, in three successive pregnancies, she had her living but unborn children killed before their birth.

“‘Don't you think it would be better,’ I asked, ‘not to permit life to start than to take life after it starts?’ ‘Yes,’ she said, ‘I do. But he demanded his marital rights in spite of my protests; and the priest says it is sinful to interfere with the beginning of life, and also that I must obey my husband. So I submitted. But later, how could I bear to lose my husband's love, and his support for our three living children.’ In other words, she yielded to fear, and to the economic pressure that threatened her living children, and largely for their sakes she killed three that were unborn. I don't think the question as to whether this was a case of superstitious terror or of religion, needs extended comment here. Another woman with whom I talked said to me, ‘I practice birth control, whether it's forbidden or not, and nobody is going to scare me out of it. Believe me, those who do the forbidding don't bear the kids. We women do!’ All of which would seem to indicate that our mechanical and



'materialistic' age is at least doing something for people's minds."

Judicious birth control to diminish overpopulation and decrease the number of socially unfit, is as important as birth release and a greater fecundity among these intellectually, physically, morally, and economically so situated as to be reasonably sure of a better progeny. In my humble opinion there is at this time no greater and more important subject before mankind than birth control. The preceding pages have shown what a support the movement already has among all classes of thinking Americans and in his book, "The New Decalogue of Science," Albert Edward Wiggam has said: "Birth control is the most momentous fact in the history of mankind. If wisely used to increase the superiors it is the most effective instrument for race improvement. If decreasing superiors while inferiors breed with undiminished vigor, it will wreck the race trying it."

We medical men look upon our presidents of the American Medical Association, who are elected by approximately ninety thousand American physicians, as the standard bearers of all that is scientifically, ethically, and morally sound in medicine; so, if we subscribe to what Dr. Pusey has said concerning the morality and ethics of birth control, we cannot go far wrong. This is what he said in the above mentioned essay: "Adequate and satisfactory methods of birth control and widespread knowledge of them, would not only conduce to human happiness and social betterment but would be invaluable influences in favor of sexual morality. They would indeed promote morality in its broadest and best sense."

I have referred to the anxiety neurosis created in many married couples because of lack of knowledge how to prevent an undesired conception. In the name of all that is holy and sacred to all physicians, who are supposed to help prevent diseases of mind, heart, body, and soul, can we take upon ourselves the responsibility of denying to such couples the knowledge which will make them healthy and happy and prevent a sure catastrophe? And yet, there



are laws in some States of the Union which would punish us for doing so.

Concerning the injustice of and the harm done by such laws, we will finally quote one of our most distinguished authorities on psychiatry, Adolf Meyer of Johns Hopkins (13). Discussing what he calls "The Obligation of Procreative Hygiene" and avoiding all extreme statements concerning the propaganda of scientific and judicious voluntary parenthood, he concludes by saying: "We are urging nothing more than this: that physicians be protected against unjustified prosecution to which they are liable in some States, when they follow their medical conscience in advising married couples who need it with regard to the wisest and sanest adjustment of married life so as to avoid unjustified accumulations of pregnancy and the hazards of any probable ill health of the potential parents and progeny."

Because, some years ago, Anthony Comstock, a well meaning but misguided and fanatical reformer, was instrumental in causing federal and state laws to be enacted which hinder the physician in his duty toward suffering women and forbid him to prevent physically and mentally unfit children from coming into the world to constitute not only a burden but a danger to the community, are we as physicians, who are entrusted with the physical and mental welfare of the citizens of this great country, to remain idle and indifferent in face of the absurdity of such laws? Not only as sanitarians and physicians but also as men and women, lovers of mankind, we must be in favor of preventing overpopulation which we know has been in the past the cause of aggressive wars, pestilences, and untold human sufferings.

Major-General John F. O'Ryan, of the United States Army, has well said that "Of all the circumstances which involve man in dissatisfaction with his normal peace time existence, there is perhaps none which exercises so great an influence as overpopulation. . . . It is the quality and numbers of the population which, I am pointing out, so



vitably affect the question of the abolition of war by international agreement."

To this statement by a great American patriot and valiant soldier of many battles, I may add the opinion expressed by a great financier and student of the political, industrial, and economic situations in our own country, Europe, and Asia. Mr. Frank A. Vanderlip believes that "Congestion of population will always breed war. It is because of congestion that all nations endeavor to branch out. That is why Austria is starving today. It is this same condition that is costing the lives of millions in China. During the last seventy years the population of the world has increased 700,000,000. This increase of one per cent. a year is bound to bring about great economic problems."

Both General O'Ryan and Mr. Vanderlip have, like so many others, pointed out the danger of war which overpopulation is so likely to entail and I wonder if birth control should not be made a subject for discussion leading to universal peace. In a brilliant essay by Havelock Ellis on "Life versus Lives" in the *Forum* of December, 1925 that great author refers to the book by Prof. Edward M. East, of Harvard, *Mankind at the Crossroads*, and says what I believe is today the consensus of opinions of all those who have the welfare of the whole of mankind at heart: "The main thesis of East's book is not novel. If it had been it would be unlikely to be true. It has been seen and stated by Darwin and others. But until today it has not been possible to see it clearly and in detail, and before today no one had arisen, with a full grasp of the essential factors involved, to sweep away the fallacies which had sometimes concealed those essential factors from sight. It has become definitely demonstrable, not merely that the human species cannot continue to multiply indefinitely at the present rate, but that we are now actually at the point where, if a period of incalculable suffering is not to be inaugurated, it is imperative to begin to stem the tide of procreation. The key to the situation, East sees, is to be found in the control of re-



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production, building firmly and deliberately on the foundation of a full sense of responsibility towards the individual, the family, the community, and the race. In the situation we have now reached we are without hope, 'unless voluntary parenthood is taught to all classes of people by the governments of the various white nations as a serious momentous public health measure.' That is where Professor East's demonstration of the present situation comes into line with the new policy of the United States. That policy implies that America is no longer a vast tract or virgin country into which the nations of the world may pour their superfluous numbers to propagate at random and indiscriminately. That policy, in fact, politely enjoins on other nations the duty of birth control—and it would be discreditable to attribute to the people of the United States any desire to enforce on other nations a rule it is not willing to practice. Further, that policy recognizes at last the great truth that what is now needed for the human race is no longer quantity but quality."

Not only the well to do and the middle class, but in a republic like ours where democracy is supposed to reign supreme, all classes, the poor overburdened workingman in city, mine, or field, the colored and the white, the ignorant as well as the educated, should know the responsibility of parenthood and be instructed how to regulate the size of their families. Birth control clinics as referred to in the preceding pages and committees as formed by Dr. R. L. Dickinson and his associates, should be aided, by the government in their researches for safe and harmless means of preventing an undesirable increase of children in families and a dangerous increase of population in general.

A government which aids in the production of good food supplies for its citizens by promoting animal and horticultural industries, protecting its forests and natural parks, and keeping its rivers free from pollution, will only reach the ideal when it exerts equal efforts in the direction of improving the character and types of the in-



habitants by the application of voluntary parenthood and what is and will be known of eugenics and euthenics.

In view of the facts and statements presented in the preceding pages, including the opinions of some of the highest ecclesiastical, medical, sociological, and judicial authorities and leaders in finance and economics, representatives of the highest type of American citizenship, shall we be silent, in face of what seems to be a situation as deplorable and unwise as it is dangerous to the well-being of the present and future generation in our own and other countries?

Let us arise and demand the revocation of such laws which, by their very nature, prevent the United States from being the leader in human progress, world peace, happiness, and good will on earth.

Let us then unite with other nations and establish a World Bureau for Birth Control, as planned by Prof. C. C. Little, the president of the University of Michigan, and this year's president of the International Birth Control Organization. By the labors of this organization it is to be hoped that the entire civilized world may be benefited. Perhaps it will be brought nearer the Millennium than by any other social, economic, or even spiritual movement devised by human intelligence.

My studies of the various aspects of birth control which led me to write this booklet have convinced me of the necessity of popularizing the subject, so that it may be understood by the laity as well as by the learned professions. I desire at the end of this essay to state my conclusions in the form of recommendations, which it is my inmost conviction should be the object towards which we should work for the future betterment of mankind:

#### CONCLUSIONS

1. Every man, woman and child should be subjected to a periodical health examination. The infant up to the age of 2 years should be examined by a competent phy-



sician every month; after that, up to school age, every six months; every school and college should have its physician and nurses to discover diseases among the pupils and prevent the spread of infection. Between the ages of 15 and 30, the most susceptible age for tuberculosis, and other diseases, there should be a semi-annual examination; after that age an annual examination should suffice.

2. There should be domestic relation courts and juvenile courts in all communities. To them should be attached physicians on full time, fitted for the work by temperament and training, who may be able to help straighten out domestic difficulties, arising from misunderstood sex relations, and study the causes of delinquency in children and advise how to deal with them.

3. Education in eugenics, sex hygiene and sex ethics should be made obligatory in private and public schools for boys and girls between the ages of twelve and eighteen.

4. All candidates for marriage should be submitted to a medical examination, and only if this results in a clean bill of health should the license be granted. This law should of course be the same in all States and Territories of the Union. After presenting a clean bill of health, the man as well as the woman should be obliged to attend a short course of instruction in eugenics, sex hygiene, and sex ethics.

5. All federal and state laws forbidding birth control information and the manufacture and sale of contraceptives, should be abrogated.

6. The United States Government's Public Health Service should have a bureau for the study of contraceptives and the most harmless methods of sterilization.

7. Wise and just sterilization laws with a view of preventing the physically, mentally and morally unfit to propagate, should be enacted in all States in the interest of the individual, of society and of the improvement of the race.

8. Medical schools, after the example of Johns Hopkins and Columbia, should include lectures on birth con-



trol in their curricula, and physicians seeking instruction in contraceptive methods as well as in producing or curing sterility, should be entitled to receive gratuitous instruction in official birth control clinics.

9. Abortions, except by legally qualified physicians and for therapeutic purposes, should be held as most criminal offenses, and the professional abortionist severely punished.

10. The prospective mother should have the necessary 4 to 6 weeks of prenatal care. The woman should also have rest and care for the same period after the birth of her child.

11. Birth control clinics, under strictly ethical medical supervision, and under state and municipal auspices, should be established in all larger communities. The birth control clinic should be made self-supporting by charging a moderate fee to all able to pay. The research departments of such clinics should be in communication with the federal bureau so that the result might be tabulated, sifted, and verified.

12. Birth control, in order to be effective, must become an international issue. It should be enjoined upon all countries whose population is increasing to an extent to endanger food supply and threaten the maintenance of the wholesome, peaceful existence of its citizens.



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# P R E S S   R E V I E W S

OF DR. KNOPF'S BOOK ON

VARIOUS ASPECTS OF BIRTH CONTROL

*Birth Control Review*, New York: "Birth Control is fast becoming a vital social problem. Those interested in the world's problems of today, or taking part in any of the humanitarian and scientific endeavors to solve our social difficulties must acquaint themselves with the many arguments for and against a wider dissemination of contraceptive knowledge. The eugenicists like Havelock Ellis, Little, Wiggam and others have stressed the peril to civilized races from the uncontrolled propagation of the racially unfit, and have urged a more generalized dissemination of birth control knowledge to offset the possibility of racial deterioration. A number of leading physicians, on the other hand, among them several former presidents of the American Medical Association, have openly favored the extension of contraceptive knowledge primarily from the viewpoint of public health. They have claimed that dependable birth control knowledge is an important factor in conserving and improving the health of parents and offspring in very many instances, and that the dissemination of this knowledge would prove a forward stride in the direction of preventive medicine. The various angles of birth control have been presented authoritatively and convincingly by Dr. S. Adolphus Knopf in this book on the subject. He has gathered a number of succinct and pertinent quotations regarding birth control from many



leaders of thought in medicine, sociology, economics, religion, and so on. These quotations come either from published articles or from personal letters to the author. It is highly significant of the trend of modern opinion to find such an array of outstanding men and women in the various fields of human endeavor and learning favoring the dissemination of contraceptive knowledge."

*The Christian Register*, Boston, Mass.: "A comprehensive, scholarly, and constructive discussion of one of the most urgent of present-day social problems. Anyone seeking light upon the question cannot do better than acquaint himself with the considerations herewith presented. Written in a spirit as restrained as it is scientific, with an entire absence of sensationalism, this little book abounds in information for the candid truth-seeker. The discussion is approached from many directions, not the least of which forms a noble statement of the deeper religious aspects involved. A timely and valuable contribution to the literature of this perplexing subject."

*Clinical Medicine and Surgery*, North Chicago, Ill.: "In this brief pamphlet the case for birth control from all points of view, is clearly, logically and forcibly set forth by a man who knows, by personal experience, whereof he speaks and who, moreover is one of the ablest writers of powerful and elegant English who now adorn the medical profession. We sincerely recommend this little book to all physicians. Its price is so insignificant that one can afford to distribute a few copies among influential people who are open-minded and have judgment. Such distribution may help to hasten the day when doctors can legally do what their consciences now tell them is right."



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*The Eugenic News*, published by The Eugenics Research Association and the American Eugenics Society, Cold Spring Harbor, L. I., N. Y.: "A well known physician of New York City, specializing in tuberculosis and long an active propagandist for birth control, has written an essay in support of the movement. His interest in the prevention of conception seems to have been aroused by the frequently fatal consequences of pregnancy to the tuberculous mother. The book contains many arguments, excerpts, etc., which makes it interesting reading. As to the relation of contraception to eugenics, it may be said that eugenics is concerned with quality rather than quantity. In this fast filling earth we would like to see the remaining spaces filled by a population more highly endowed, on the average, than the present."

*The Medical Critic and Guide*, New York: "A most excellent little book which well covers the ground outlined in the title. We hope it may have an enormous circulation, for while practically the case for birth control is almost won, there is still a great deal of dense darkness in some quarters, and we who have the cause of humanity at heart must not relax our vigilance and our activity. When the *dictator* Mussolini, at the helm of a great country, openly advocates and *imposes* unlimited breeding in order *that we may have another war*—in which he hopes to come out victorious with a few colonies as his booty—the work of the birth control advocates is not yet over. Far from it. Once more: We wish Dr. Knopf's booklet unlimited success and we welcome it as the latest addition to our birth control literature."

*Medical Journal and Record*, New York: "Dr. Knopf's interest in birth control was aroused over twenty



years ago as a result of his observations on tuberculous families. He is rightfully and deservedly considered one of the pioneers of the birth control movement, and remains today one of its leading medical exponents. His essay is a very valuable contribution to birth control literature, and will no doubt stimulate a great deal of thought and discussion on the subject. He has accumulated in his booklet a surprising wealth of facts, figures, argument and opinion in support of his contention that thoughtless procreation is distinctly dangerous to individual and public health and public welfare. He forcibly points out the need and indications from the social, racial and individual viewpoint for regulating the birth rate, and, in addition, effectively refutes many of the objections ordinarily raised by the opponents of the movement. In several passages Dr. Knopf emphasizes the importance of birth control as a medical problem. 'Wise laws concerning birth control,' he says, 'should be helpful to the physician in his high calling to keep the mind and body of his patients in the best possible condition,' and he advocates the abrogation of 'all federal and state laws forbidding birth control information,' and the establishment in all larger communities of 'birth control clinics, under strictly ethical medical supervision, and under state and municipal auspices.' This program, if enacted, would surely be a most important step towards bringing contraceptive knowledge to that class of the community which is most in need of it, and towards putting the entire problem on an ethical, scientific and far-visioned basis. Dr. Knopf's name is already indelibly written in the annals of his specialty—tuberculosis. His contributions on the subject have been an incalculable aid in the fight of mankind against this disease. Now his efforts on behalf of birth control should prove another valuable factor in promoting



human welfare. When the history of the movement comes to be recorded, Dr. Knopf's name will be found among those who have done most to lend the subject the benefit of their knowledge and their wisdom, and the dignity of their authority."

*The Military Surgeon*, Washington, D. C.: "This is a little book which is however big enough to give a sufficiently full discussion of the arguments and reasons in favor of birth control from the various aspects mentioned in the title. A few pages are also given to the statements of those who are in opposition; they can scarcely be called arguments since they are based not on logical or practical grounds but on ecclesiastical dogma. This appears to be a belief that God wishes always more immortal souls to save even though they may come into the world in diseased, deformed or even idiotic bodies. This idea that quantity production regardless of the quality of the children brought into the world is pleasing to the Divine Will is by no means generally accepted by all theologians. Dr. Knopf quotes many prominent ecclesiastics in favor of his thesis. He quotes the Rev. D. Stuart L. Tyson as saying 'Orthodoxy consists in complacent, unthinking acceptance of what has become a crystallized idea. It is much easier for man to accept the standards set up by other people, standards which may now be obsolete, than for man to think for himself.' It is apparently such a crystallized idea which is behind the opposition to birth control and is in favor of the obsolete and absurd laws which forbid the transmission of information on this subject through the mails. This idea seems to be that there is something immoral in interfering with Nature's methods of reproduction where the human race is concerned. But Nature's methods in this case are those of mammalian reproduction



in general and are those of extravagant overproduction with the killing off of the surplus. The advance of medical science and the operation of benevolent charities are as contrary to Nature's methods as are limitations to reproduction. The long climb of civilized man up from savagery has been accomplished by successive conquests over Nature, and by modification of Nature's ways. Therefore this opposition seems to be a taboo pure and simple without any clearly established foundation in ethics or revealed religion or common sense. Meanwhile the use of contraceptives is admittedly wide spread and spreading among the more intelligent classes of the most progressive nations. Unfortunately those who are least fitted by economic conditions or physical fitness to produce and bring up healthy children are those who breed like rabbits. The taboo operates therefore against the principles of eugenics and the improvement of the race."

*Unity*, Chicago: "Dr. Knopf's treatise on Birth Control, already in its fourth edition, is a revised and much enlarged version of an address delivered before the Medical Association of Greater New York on December 21, 1925, and later published in the *Medical Journal and Record* (January 6, 1926). It is heartening to think of such an address as presented to the members of a profession, culpably indifferent, or hostile to one of the greatest and most beneficent reforms of the age, by one of the most famous and authoritative of their own colleagues. In its present form, the booklet promises to take a place besides the remarkable prize essay on 'Tuberculosis' which Dr. Knopf published some twenty years ago, translated into 29 foreign languages, and which has been more widely printed and distributed, perhaps, than any other single



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writing on the subject. For this eminent physician has a positive genius as a pamphleteer. More than any other writer of whom we know, he has the capacity to present the widest range of information in the smallest possible space. In the case of this study of Birth Control, the title is staggering for a booklet of hardly a 100 pages. Yet it is no exaggeration. The medical, social, economic, legal, moral and religious aspects on the question are all here treated with admirable concision, but adequately and with helpful citation of authorities. This book is the whole law and gospel of the subject. Especially noteworthy are the illustrations; the picture on page 45 of Hindus bathing in the Ganges is more convincing than any hundred pages of argument on excess population. All in all, this essay by Dr. Knopf is the most useful statement of the subject of birth control now available."





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