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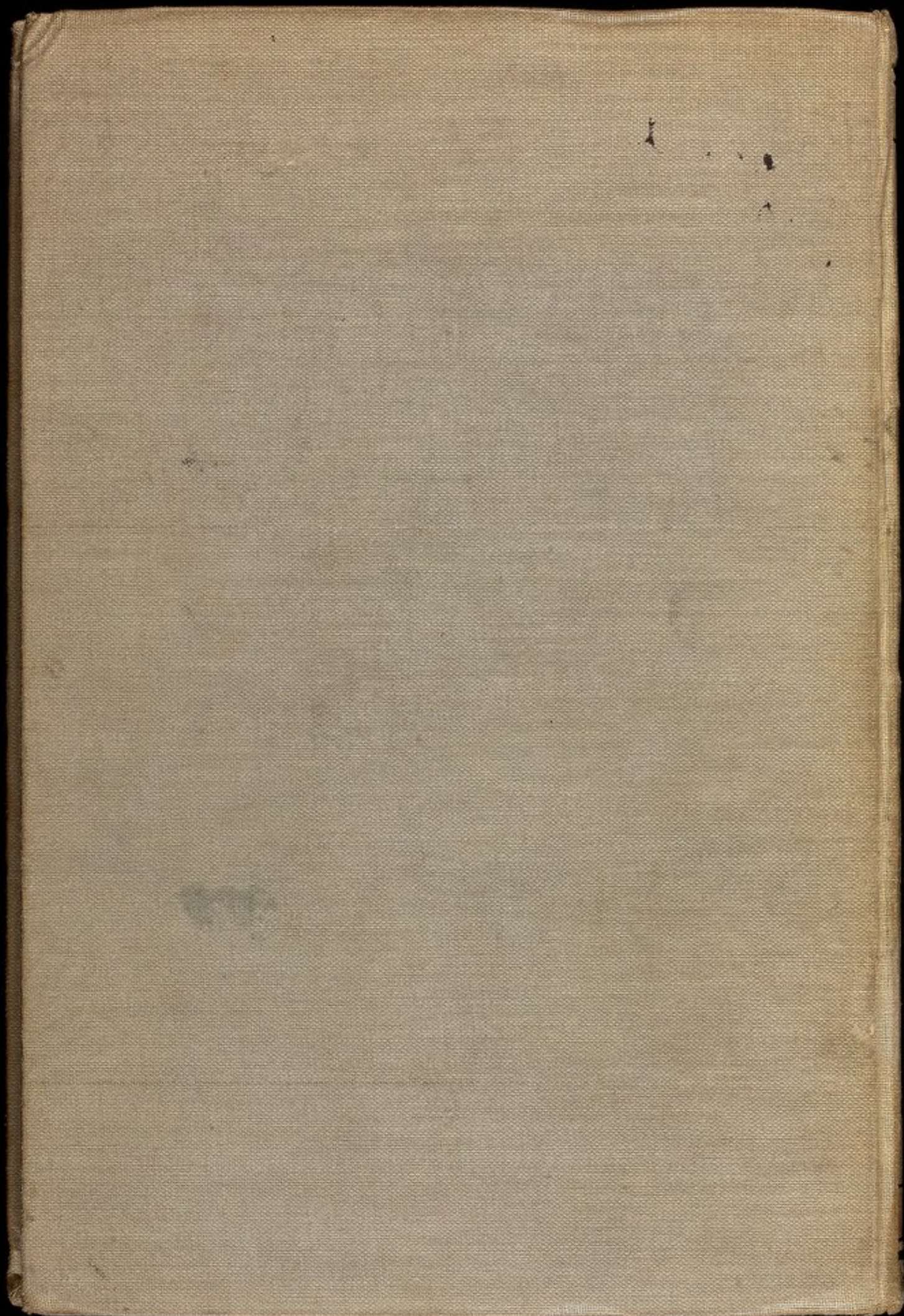


EUGENICS  
AND  
BIRTH CONTROL

By  
J. RUTGERS, M.D.

R. A. GIESECKE, DRESDEN-A. 24.



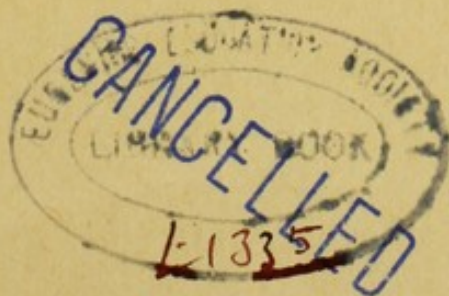






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RUTGERS  
EUGENICS AND BIRTH CONTROL







# EUGENICS AND BIRTH CONTROL

BY

J. RUTGERS, M. D.

NEW AND REVISED EDITION

Translated by

CLIFFORD COUDRAY, L. Sc.

Publisher:

R. A. GIESECKE, DRESDEN-A. 24



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**Erratum.** In line 3 of Preface instead of "which the importance of" please read "the importance of which".

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## TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

Dr. J. Rutger's "Eugenics and Birth Control" is, as its German title "Rassenverbesserung" signifies, a contribution to the amelioration of the human race, which the importance of, in the Anglo-Saxon world at least, has only of recent years been fully recognized.

Engaged couples and the married both old and young, will find much useful information and good advice in its pages, while the student of sociology, the politician and the public speaker will find its statistical information most valuable.

It has been the translator's pleasing duty to preserve, as far as compatible with good English, the originality of the author's style in its entirety, and he trusts the book will be read with interest throughout the English-speaking world.

Dresden, July 1923.

C. Coudray.

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By the same author:

THE SEXUAL LIFE in its Biological Significance, 500 pp.,  
English Translation by Dr. Norman Haire, London. 12<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub>.

(In the press).





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## 1. — Introduction.

For or against birth-control? — That is one of the burning questions of our times. So many lectures have been delivered, so many pamphlets and brochures have appeared dealing with the subject, so much has been argued on both sides by its defenders and opponents, that the layman no longer knows what to think, and is inclined to agree first with the one and then with the other side.

For this question, at first sight so simple, is really so complicated, it stands in such intimate relationship to our inmost feelings as well as to the most elementary circumstances of our lives, in every part of which it has its own importance, that a superficial explanation of it can never suffice to give us a correct judgment, and it must be properly dealt with from many points of view. This question has not been forced upon our attention merely in recent times, even if we are only just aware of its vital interest for us; the *number* of our descendants has been for ages, ever since the existence of organic life, one of the most decisive factors in the question of "to be or not to be", and in the joy or suffering of the individual. Nowadays every one knows, that *Eugenics* meaning the most propitious procreation of children, and *Birth-control* meaning the deliberate choice as to the number of our children, are the two main desiderata of modern hygiene, always coming in conflict with all our traditional dogmas.

## 2. — The method of investigation.

The study that we have before us is an empirical one. Beginning with facts which are easy of observation, because they touch our individual and domestic interests (part I), we shall continue by dealing with those complex questions which refer to the common welfare. In Part IV, the results obtained will be tested by the most important teachings of evolution. So following on the practical factors of eugenics, comes the theoretical treatment of the eugenic principles.

Finally as the fifth parth, we have a comprehensive presentation of the population question.

Perhaps learned people will find the commencement of



our book not academical enough, particularly as the domestic details between man and woman are concerned. The end, where the teachings of DARWIN, WEISMANN and LAMARCK are critically analysed, will perhaps appear too difficult to other readers. We hope that the one will be compensated by the other; neither can be avoided in a comprehensive treatise. The various contested questions will be dealt with in special chapters, which are partly connected with, and partly independent of each other. But in the sequence of the chapters we proceed in order from the simple to the more complex.

The display of too many details of fact, and the overcharging of the work with quotations, have been studiously avoided. Anything like polemics has also been carefully omitted, as this is so prejudicial to the proper presentation of the scientific contents. At the same time we have been careful to avoid the dry tone of a learned dissertation, as a popular exposition, an argumentation which is more empirical than abstract, has much more effect on the reader, and the ethical and esthetic value of the subject is better recognized. Still less do we wish to waste our time with arguments over dialectic meanings and definitions. The object and the methods of prevention are presumed to be sufficiently well known, so we can begin at once "in media res".

Fundamentally we are only dealing with the question: is voluntary sterility a blessing or a curse to humanity?

The train of thought in the work we have before us is generally speaking within our present comprehension; where this is not the case it is specially explained. When for instance KROPOTKIN takes as a starting point a disappearing ice-age in Siberia, and when he accordingly takes a restricted number of inhabitants as a rule, a dense population as the exception, it is after all only a matter of taste if he calls the exception what we should call the rule. It also appears to be as unpractical to take the conditions in a newly founded colony for one year as normal, where fruitful land is to be had in plenty; or again, war-time amongst savages, in which case only the majority gives the result.

Every estimate is only relative. Whether we regard a certain number of people as many or few, depends naturally on the lack or the excess of food-stuffs. So there



are writers and debaters who, every time the insufficiency of food-stuffs is discussed, cry immediately: "the people should not have so many children!", and who, as soon as the number of children is touched upon say: "one ought to make sure that there is enough food for them!"

This is of course, an error in logic. When we speak of one of two things which stand in close relationship to each other, it is evidently an understood thing that the other factor is regarded as a known quantity; i. e. only with the theorem that the one factor is a fixed one, can we criticize the other point. This, however, does not by any means signify that the first thing cannot be criticized in a similar manner.

There is a great obstacle in the way of the study of the complex problem that we have before us. A scientific demonstration consists principally in the investigation of cause and effect, and this question of causality is not always as simple as is imagined. In mechanics, things are generally simple enough; when I push a truck away from me, my cell-movement is the cause of the displacement of the truck, not the contrary. As soon however, as we observe two related cell-movements in action, especially two psychic cell functions, it is no longer easy to distinguish which of the two represents the cause, and which the effect. If one looks closely at it, it generally transpires that each of the factors is equally and interchangeably cause and effect; working exchange, reciprocity, mutual causal unity, just as one may choose to call it.

A surveyal of these facts makes many debates appear superfluous and ridiculous in the highest degree: — two objects diametrically opposed to each other sometimes appear to harmonize. To quote a concrete instance: in regard to the abuse of alcohol, one might just as well say "social conditions are the primary, the abuse of alcohol is the secondary factor", as "the abuse of alcohol is the primary, defective social conditions the secondary". In the same manner it may be said; "lack of moderation in the number of children is primary, economical distress is secondary", and "economical distress is primary, carelessness in the begetting of children secondary." Each of the two manifestations is both cause and effect at the same time. Still more bewildering perhaps is the fact that almost every act, every event, has not only



one single cause, and cannot consequently be exclusively attributed to one cause alone, but to the combined effect of innumerable causes which do not mutually exclude each other at all, but on the contrary are closely connected.

If then, after having consulted ten investigations we find one and the same fact referred back to ten different causes, then it may well be that all these investigations are more or less correct in their findings, while there may be, besides these, a hundred other causes, which have all been overlooked.

And as it is with the causes, so it is with the effects, what in one respect has a harmful effect may in another be useful, and St Paul's saying "that from evil good may come", forces us to prudence in our judgement. Finally we must say a few words in regard to the statistical tables at the end of the book. Much greater accuracy is now observed in statistical demonstration than formerly. If, for instance, inquiring the effect of the fallen birth-rate, we find a diminution of the death-rate per 1000 inhabitants, and especially a diminution in the infantile mortality per 1000 inhabitants, then\* we should not forget, that already on account of the diminution of the birth-rate in and for itself, the entire composition of the population is modified. People produce at the present time far fewer children, (whose lives are always in such danger); it is therefore self-evident that the mortality, and especially the infantile mortality per 1000 inhabitants is now much lessened. To avoid the drawing of such erroneous conclusions, the rate of infantile mortality is at present reckoned not merely at so many per thousand inhabitants, but also per 10,000 infants under one year. In the same way the marriage rate is not only calculated per 1000 inhabitants, but also per 1000 inhabitants of marriageable age, and dissolution of marriages, (divorce, separation etc.) per 100,000 married couples; in the same way the birth-rate is calculated per 1,000 married or marriageable women.

This is the only possible way of judging quite independently of the possibility of the divergent composition of the population in various countries and at different dates. The acciden-

\* Wherever infantile death-rate is mentioned, it is understood to refer to children under one year old only.



tal temporary influences of individual years will be eliminated by taking an average of 5 or 10 years.

Because we are here dealing with the voluntary limitation of births, a measure that was the exception prior to 1876, the previous years are mostly not referred to, nor are the years subsequent to 1914, because the war has annihilated the value of all statistical figures for many years. In order to avoid both prolixity and the calling in question of less well-grounded statistics, I have as a rule, limited my statistics to Europe; I have, however, omitted no European country that has a bearing on the statistics of the subject, for when one begins wilfully to omit some countries and to bring others forward in preference, then such statistics can be made to prove anything.

It is a signal honor for Holland that the central office of international statistics has its seat at the Hague, in a stately building of severe lines, where a staff of learned folks work under the leadership of Professor METHORST. The official organ, "*L'annuaire international de statistique*", from which my examples have been drawn, is published by Van Stockum, of the Hague. Table VI is taken from the "*Statistique générale de la France*", Vol XXXVI, Paris 1921, Imprimerie Nationale.

I offer my best thanks to Giesecke's "Schönheit" Publishing Co, Dresden, for the careful execution of these tables.

### 3. — The Physiological Optimum.

What is our Ideal, our object in life? Is it happiness, utility, energy, the preservation of the individual and of the race, the development of all our faculties, or God? — — That is all so uncertain and subjective. In our strivings after these ideals there lies however one common nucleus. They have all the same objective background, which may be combined by natural science into a formula: we seek with more or less skill and success the *physiological optimum*.

What in a concrete case that physiological optimum is, can be empirically ascertained with fair certainty by weighing, counting and measuring. So the physiological optimum constitutes an objective criterion for the valuation of our deeds and those of others.

For the information of those persons who do not possess a university education, and to whom this idea is therefore



unfamiliar, I will take an example from a form of life less complex than our own, — that of the bacteria. The indispensable conditions of life for all bacteria are now known: such for instance as temperature, at what degree of heat they are killed, at what degree of cold they can no longer exist, — (maximum and minimum limits), and at what temperature they thrive best (the optimum); or in regard to their propagation: when this becomes impossible through heat or cold (maximum and minimum limits), and when their reproduction proceeds most rapidly. Also in regard to the intensity of light that suits them, the concentration of the fluid in which they live, the quantity of food stuff which is offered them, and the degree of concentration of their waste matter (excreta) which they support: for instance it is known that yeast cells cease working and finally die, as soon as a certain percentage of alcohol is attained in the fluid in which they are suspended.

The same obtains in plants and animals; there is in each case, for the reception of nutriment, a maximum limit, a minimum limit, and an optimum; and the same applies to rest or work, to brain activity or muscular activity, for assimilation or secretion.

So in every individual case for each special function, there is an objective criterion. And even if this criterion appears at first sight to be only fitted to the judgment of material functions, — fundamentally the principle also finds its application in the psychic functions; it is not only applicable to the functions of the individual, but also to those of society. For man as a psychic, and a sociable creature, also is and remains a cell-organism, and all ethics is basically only a kind of superior hygiene. The practical significance of such an objective criterion cannot be too highly estimated.

Let us for instance consider the term "luxury". What one man considers to be an indispensable requirement, another regards as a senseless waste. This fact has hitherto rendered all discussion of the needs of man almost impossible. For it is evident that if one takes "needs" to mean "sufficient to prevent death", it can be said with good cause: all men living must have enough for their needs already, — otherwise they would not still be living. And if "needs" be taken in the sense of "desires", then one may easily come to wish for all



that can be desired, and that would not only be unlimited, but often superfluous and injurious.

The objective criterion now mentioned forms a safe foundation for the following explanations. We ought to seek the physiological optimum, i. e. avoid the two extremes. In part IV of the work before us it will moreover be shown that so we obtain fresh light on the systems of DARWIN, MALTHUS and LAMARCK. The striving after the physiological optimum is shown to be the starting point of all evolution and improvement of the race.

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## FIRST PART

### *Voluntary Birth Control in its Individual Aspect.*

#### 4. — The mystery of Procreation.

Is our subject not too fragile and delicate to be discussed openly? Is not the invention, introduction and employment of the usual preventives in itself a desecration of the temple of Hymen, the laying of unholy fire on the altar of love?

Reader, you surely remember the great impression made on you in your young days by so many novels idealising marriage, by the third act of *Lohengrin*, the scene of the first tender meeting of the lovers. I trust that you have also known the spring-time of love. In such sacred moments of inmost love, we forget the past and the present, and as in the spring time a sweet perfume is wafted towards you from the woods, so in these sweet moments there is an image of the future that smiles upon you in an atmosphere of joy. "What perfect unity there will be between us! What ideally happy hours we shall spend together! And if only we can have an, image of ourselves, a child that belongs to us, to us both, that is what we will live for"! , whisper the lovers.

"We will cherish him, and from the first hour we will do all we can to make something beautiful out of him. Yes, even before his birth we will protect him, we will keep from alcohol, and we are both so healthy. And he must be born in the spring time, how nice that would be, — not in the smoke and gas-light of winter. If the window remains open all night he will hear the birds singing early in the morning, and if he tries to imitate them, he will surely have a sweet voice too!"

"First of all we must keep ourselves quiet and reasonable, so that we can accustom ourselves to this new life. Our nest is ready, it is true, but it will be much warmer and more comfortable when we have lived together in it for some time. So we must begin by being very careful, and not disdain the teachings of the new sexual hygiene."

So think and speak earnest people; but there are other natures which are less refined in their consciousness of moral duty, less enlightened, more primitive. The transports of love



cloud their mind still more completely, they forget in such moments not only the sober present, but the future also. This ecstasy bewitches them. It is the Song of Solomon without Solomon's Wisdom. The newly-wedded couple give themselves up entirely to their passion, impulsively, instinctively; like careless children they run the gamut of human emotions, all the joyous scale. But when perhaps a year later, the nurse has left the young mother, and the young couple are once more alone, and have to care for their little darling together, without the nurse who was often so unsympathetic with them, — then they begin to talk rather earnestly to each other. "Thank God that's over. Now we're going to be very careful for a while and leave each other alone. Just fancy, if our little prince begins to walk — can you imagine such a tiny thing walking! It will be a long time yet! But we shall have to find out what other people do to stop it."

Is this then a desecration? Is it a trampling down of flowers, a soiling of the fresh dew of morning with unworthy hand? Is it a desecration, if we force our way into the cell-life of nature, into the details of sexual life?

If we take life seriously, if we are really striving towards higher ideals, when we seek to render life for ourselves and our descendants better and richer and more beautiful, such daring is not only permissible, it is our duty. We then no longer trouble our heads as to what other people will say, we live and think and enquire for ourselves, and we do not stir until we know all about the subject. And we, as physicians, should not shirk the subject as so many do, who send a heart- or kidney-patient away with the advice: "And now, my dear, take great care of yourself, so that you won't have a return of the trouble for some time," — but we go right to the root of the matter of marital intercourse, and show the exhausted mother the way to render the necessary prophylaxis practical and available.

Nothing has been fraught with such fatal consequences or has wrought so much damage to the selection and development of mankind as the hedging round of the sexual province with impenetrable mystery. Whatever Buddhism and Christianity has done for the higher side of man, this so-called "lower" side of his nature has been scandalously neglected. We even



commit a crime against nature if we regard the life of the body is as being of a lower order than that of the soul — they are only the two sides of the same thing. But do not think that because you may call yourself a materialist or a freethinker, you have quite abandoned this attitude on that account. From our very bringing up we are all catholic over and over again in this respect. The dim light of the church of the middle ages impresses us still in spite of everything.

### 5. — Sexual Abstinence.

Is not the easiest solution of all sexual questions of childish simplicity: sexual abstinence? So would everything be satisfactorily settled at once: no sensuality, no excesses, no longer any prostitution problem, no venereal diseases, no illegitimate children, no over population, and no neomalthusianism with its technical encroachments. But it is not so childishly simple after all.

The term sexual abstinence has such a charm for us only because we deem it to be synonymous with chastity. But we must be very careful in this matter. If one could only penetrate into all the secrets of sexual life, he would discover that absolute abstinence, that excludes every attempt to excite or to satisfy the sexual appetite, is as much a rarity as the abstinence from regular intercourse is an every day affair.

And if we could look more deeply into the recesses of the mind, and throw the moving pictures of the fancy of those who live in forced abstinence on a screen before the eyes of the world, we should realise with a shock what every one is obliged to conceal from himself and from others. Then we should not get so enthusiastic for what is commonly known as sexual abstinence. Only in those rare cases where sexual abstinence is really associated with the corresponding state of mind, is it something worthy, perhaps divine. It is only a pity that man is man, and that the body and spirit have many needs that are ignored, but which cannot be rooted out without injury to the full healthy life of man, nor without injury to the mind also. For it is not a question of abstinence from something injurious like alcohol, which is a poison for cell-life, but abstinence from that which is the first consideration of existence in our lives, and which represents, as long as we



live, the highest charm of the adult. Physiology teaches us that every function acquires strength and efficiency from a certain degree of control; that however, a too repressive restriction of a needful function gives rise to morbid disturbance and eventually leads to a paralysis of the function. The blessing of a becoming amount of continence in the sexual life is advanced with great warmth and conviction by PAUL MANTEGAZZA in his "*Physiology of Love*" and this must be familiar to most of my readers from their actual experience. The unphysiological extreme, too prolonged enforced abstinence, shows a striking contrast; in the long run it acts on body and mind as a curse, to which many laymen as well as professionals can bear witness.

In woman especially, the injury to health induced by a too long continued abstinence may occasion serious affections, so much the more because this etiological moment more often passes unrecognized than in man; it often happens that she herself has not the slightest idea about the origin of her psychic and somatic suffering. Celibacy is for a young man, just as it for a young woman, a great wrong and an injury, even when they live in continence; and if the latter is not the case, and they give themselves up to vice, sorrow and remorse may be much more serious for them.

Once legally united, so that at last the period of matrimony for which they have so sighed and longed, dawns upon them, shall they be again condemned to abstinence if they no longer ask for children, or dare not wish for them? Abstinence before marriage, and then life-long continence when married, while living together and loving each other most fondly, — that may be the ideal of an ascetic, but not that of one who strives earnestly after the physiological optimum; and it would indeed be no fight for the "honor of God" if the work of His creation is treated with such disdain.

How far mankind can go in the voluntary control of the bodily functions, (in the "karezza" we have some idea of it), at least so much is certain, that people in many families may be glad at the present time, if they are beginning to rise above the animal level of impulsive and ignorant disputes. How much higher preventive intercourse stands than abortion, and abortion than infanticide! How frequent however, is this crime



in our civilised world, where the burial-insurance money is often more welcome than the child! Even he who advocates sexual abstinence, must when he reviews the actual state of affairs, acknowledge preventives as educational means. Although sexual abstinence may be the most elementary means of restricting pregnancy, other and easier means to the same end should not be overlooked or despised. Experience teaches us that when once people are married, continence is the remedy which is the first forgotten, and the most easily given up. And if the abstinence is not strictly kept, if a man forgets himself only once in the year, his wife may find herself in child-bed every year. Abstinence is a remedy that only acts to a limited extent in the diminution of the birth-rate; fortunately as we have mentioned, there are other methods that are not so disagreeable and are more trustworthy. But even here we must not generalise, but must seek what is best to recommend in each case: a small mechanical preventive or simply abstinence. Of course, in many cases, for instance in exhaustion or illness of one of the parties, abstinence is a sacred duty in married life also. But how about continence as a continued rule of life?

Next we must remember that there are always two partners to be considered. Of what use is it to a woman who is physically weak and mentally superior, if she desires continence with all her heart, and her husband, perhaps a drunkard, will not hear of it? Is it not then her duty to protect herself, so that she does not give birth to a weak and defective progeny? Or in the contrary case, if the wife is too sensual, or follows the old testament too literally, shall not her husband be more reasonable, and seek the best solution of the question for them both?

And who is any the better for it, if married couples mutually torture each other with abstinence for years at a time? Would it not be more just to direct this energy into better channels? These sleepless nights, this unrest, this misery? Can it then be called an ideal marriage, if the pair must avoid each other at all costs, when each of them must try to keep the other at a distance? The husband who prefers this, only shows that he has no real conception of the close relationship of the body and the mind. They are both one, and the one should not



profit at the expense of the other. We should not dig out the foundations of a house in order to find stones for the gables. If abstinence were the only recommendable method of birth restriction, there would of course be no longer any reason for the use of preventive appliances in sexual intercourse. The reader might think from this that it is the author's duty to explain at length what physiological damage can ensue from continued abstinence; this however, would fill a book by itself, and jeopardize the harmony of the whole work\*. It is moreover superfluous for everyone who goes about the world with his eyes open.

Practically it is evident, and this is confirmed by experience, that most married people are not to be forced to such an unnatural mode of life as that produced by continued abstinence, because it is a great privation and entails much suffering; and even in those cases where after mature reflection they have adopted it as their preventive method, they find themselves almost always deceived at last.

#### 6. — Sexual Excess.

That sexual excess is harmful to the individual and to the race, requires no demonstration. "Omne nimium nocet". (Too much of anything is injurious). Nature herself sets her boundaries; but even within these limits errors may be made. It is not easy to grasp, why the opinion has so often been expressed that sexual excess should be a consequence of birth control, because it may be much more safely assumed that it is an error of those who copulate thoughtlessly and carelessly. But there are always people who argue as follows: "if through the regular use of preventives the fear of the consequences, the cares of pregnancy are abolished, people will give way to unbridled passion". These philosophers forget nowever, that just as in eating and drinking, so also here, a peaceful and reasonable state of mind is best attained through the regular satisfaction of the physiological need.

\* This interesting question is dealt with more fully in "*Das Sexualleben in seiner biologischen Bedeutung*" by DR. J. RUTGERS, published by the Giesecke Verlag, Dresden, A. 24, especially chapter 66. (This book appears in English under the title of "*Sexual Life in its biological significance*" translated by DR. NORMAN HAIRE, London. Pub. Giesecke, Dresden.)



On the other hand we find much more frequently than sexual excess in act and deed, a debauchery of word and thought, psychic exaggeration in sexual matters, and this is in most cases the result of ignorance and unnatural sexual abstinence. Indeed it is sexual abstinence that leads to sexual over-excitement. Marital relations however, can only be a remedy for this morbid condition, if through the appropriate employment of preventives, intercourse really affords regular satisfaction.

Nevertheless there are some idealists who do not hesitate to see reprehensible sensuality and debauchery in all sexual intercourse from other motives than that of engendering offspring. But everyone who has learnt to think physiologically and to closely observe sterile marriages, (whether the sterility is artificial or not), knows that even without pregnancy as secondary consequence, the primary result of every copulation is a physiological sensation of well-being, for which the husband and wife are grateful to each other and through which they feel mutually satisfied. With people who wish to mortify the flesh, and who would be happy to see everyone participate in abstinence and self-mortification, we have nothing to do in a physiological treatise. They have no use for physiology any how

#### 7. — Hereditarily tainted persons should not marry.

We can now breathe a fresher air. We are coming to the hygienic aspirations of our times, which reckon with the laws of selection. There is no doubt that one day, as a result of the development of mankind, the improvement of the race (eugenics) will be regarded not simply as a general moral command, but as an indispensable duty towards the community. But meanwhile? For instance, I have a patient who is hereditarily tainted, yet she is married, — what shall I do in this case? Of course the most important thing is as far as possible to prevent a conception. This is indeed no ideal solution of the question, as long as the preventive appliances are not infallible and continence is the most untrustworthy of all; however in such cases it is the only available and the only practical means. And the more preventive intercourse is perfected, and the more the necessary self-control becomes the common property of all men, so much the nearer



draws the time when this solution of the problem, at present insufficient, will be definite and sympathetic. Besides, we also have it already in our power to raise trustworthiness almost to infallibility through a combination of the two methods.

In a case of hereditary taint and in a diseased condition of one or both parents, they will willingly listen to everything advised for the prevention of pregnancy. If one is burdened with an infirmity, one as a rule desires no children, especially when one knows that the future for them can be no brighter than one's own. And if one of the partners is too short-sighted to realize this, perhaps the other would feel it only the more strongly. In which cases the hereditary taint and diseased condition of the parents lead the soonest to danger for the children will not be further touched upon here\*.

Public attention has not been long directed to this prophylaxis; it may certainly be expected that the prohibition of marriage, or at least that of reproduction in such cases, will find the more supporters, the farther one delves into the laws of heredity and especially the more one studies genealogy. Firstly the public conscience will exercise control wherever the parents are affected with such visible diseases as tuberculosis, heart- or kidney-disease, epilepsy or insanity; later also in concealed affections, syphilis or habitual alcoholism. Finally the same circumspection will be extended to all defects transmissible from parents to children, or which predispose them by daily contact to debility, anaemia, nervous irritability, etc. The farther this principle is pursued, the nearer we shall come to ideal selection: the reproduction of better adapted individuals only.

If it were possible for future generations, a few centuries hence, to see the world as it now is, they would be lost in astonishment that the reproduction of the human race had once been entrusted to such specimens.

At the present time for instance, marriage is especially necessary for the weaker girls, who would otherwise find themselves alone in the world and uncared for when their parents die. In this direction everything remains to be done.

\* A short and practical booklet on the subject is DR. MAX HIRSCH'S "*Gattenwahl*" (Choice of a Mate), a medical guide to marriage, 24 pp. Pub. Curt Kabitzsch, Leipzig.



Preventive intercourse is a link practically not omissible in the chain of evolution, and on that account, one of the most powerful factors in the evolution of the race.

#### 8. — The number of children per family.

The object of the family is children. In the remotest strata of all nations of the world it is still the custom to marry and found a household, not as soon as love appears, but as soon as a pregnancy occurs. Just as in birds we observe first the pairing and then the building of the nest in which the eggs may be hatched.

The number of eggs in every variety of bird, the number of young in each species of animal is always limited in some manner. In mammals the number of young the mother may bring forth is proportionate to the number of nipples on her breasts, also to the food supply; as on the other hand the food supply is proportionate to the number of offspring. According to Darwin the two functions must balance. Two is also the smallest number here. Man's fruitfulness has never been great: twins each year must be about the maximum. And the fruitfulness of women is limited, we may say from the 14th to the 50th year. When according to this the extreme limit possible is 72 children, so it appears to be a fortunate circumstance that it is rare for a mother to bear as many as 24. If the mother is in the habit of suckling her infants, if during the suckling period she does not usually conceive, and if she has no twins, the greatest number of children she may bear without the use of preventives is about 18.

In the good old times, — I mean some sixty years ago, when the use of preventives was not so general as at present — experience shows 6 to 8 children to have been the normal number, and on the average a complete family was composed of father, mother and six children.

It is however a matter of doubt whether that average number was at that time the most desired or desirable. It was probably partly the case and partly not. It is certain that in those days much grumbling and many complaints were heard, but that in any case people were then more resigned to their fate than in our days. Was this resignation due to the unconsciousness of the individual, to ignorance of the



fact that pregnancy could be prevented, or to their less practical standard of life, or again to religious devotion? Or, perhaps in those days the economic situation was not so critical as at present? We must leave all this to conjecture.

Let us imagine a case: your daughter, whom you have carefully brought up and protected, marries. Prospects are good, and an increase of income is expected in the next few years. You gave your consent with an easy mind, the papers are all in order, the registrar has performed the ceremony, and all good wishes accompany the newly-wedded pair to their home.

Your daughter's place in your own home is now empty, and when you think of her and her future, what are your wishes for her? The patriarchal blessing: "be fruitful and multiply", or in the words of the fairy tale, "a little golden-haired angel in the cradle every year"? Or did you, the night before the bridegroom said farewell, take him on one side and whisper in his ear: "I know you will be kind to her, you will provide well for her; will you also spare her somewhat at first? She is still so young, so delicate!"

If not, then one year later, after you have been a witness of her pains of motherhood, after the struggle for the new life and the fight with death have wrung your heart, you will beg and pray of him: "Oh! spare our dear child for some time surely, it will be a long time before she can get over this and be herself again!" Oh, the pain she has endured will soon be forgotten, but the reasonable man will not overlook the possibility of future suffering. Is that selfishness, is it baseness or craftiness? Let us be careful in such a judgment.

Of course, the considerations which weigh in this case may be of a lower order, narrow-minded, selfish, purely "materialistic". It may be that the young husband is not conscious of the gravity of his mission as the procreator of the future race; it may be that the young mother is a helpless, childish creature, who dreads every pain or trouble like the plague. But ought we thus to generalise? Are all married couples then like this? Most assuredly not: there are hundreds and thousands who, precisely from their deep love of their children, consider self-control to be necessary, and impose this great sacrifice upon themselves, so as to be able to do



better for a smaller number, to be able to educate them and to bring them up as *men* in the highest sense of the word. We should not forget, if we call this forethought in married life "cowardly selfishness", that "to abide the issue" is a far more crude manifestation of momentary animal selfishness.

An increase in the family is not always profitable.

Who does not know families where each child that comes is a new shadow falling over it, where the burden of care becomes still heavier, and the mother more and more exhausted. The bag of sweets that the baby brings for his brothers and sisters, (a continental custom at the christening. *Trans.*) still appears, but the charm that was felt like an electric shock at the birth of the first little darling, has gradually given way to composure. But even this resignation has its limits, and the nearer they approach to ideally good parents with a great deal of energy, the more rapidly this limit will be reached.

Passive natures will go to the extreme boundary of this calmness hoping against probability that this time will indeed be the last, in a unshakable belief that the heavenly mercy will provide for the results of our own deeds, a view of life which those who believe otherwise, would probably term "tempting Providence". But at last despair may sometimes become so acute that they finally, in spite of clerical despotism and superstition, in spite of short-sightedness and sexual egotism, frankly declare that a stop must be put to the increase of the family.

Sooner or later then, a limit is reached. The death of the mother which might have been prevented is only too often this limit.

If we did not wait for these extremes, but practiced voluntary prevention before the extreme limits are reached, if we wisely took care that the children for whom we long so much shall not follow too quickly one upon the other, whereby their mother would break down from exhaustion, if we rather waited until she has regained her strength and her powers of resistance, feels herself restored and wishes for another little darling; were not this a more lofty point of view? Blessed may sometimes appear to us the condition of childish simplicity of mankind, as they knew nothing of the means of prevention. Blessed the carelessness, the childish naïveté, the in-



difference of the pigeon, which rises in spotless purity after repeated mating. So indeed might we also dream of a paradisaical state, in which the woman brings forth without pain, where she still possesses full powers of resistance, where food is to be had for everyone who is hungry — but it is certain that we no longer live in Paradise, not even in the land “flowing with milk and honey”, — and that the obligations of the reality are very different to the dream-pictures of poetry. Still a little poetry always enters into our reality, and the more happily and hygienically one lives, the more joyous will [this poetry be. The poetry of the primitive races is always melancholy in the extreme.

If we now consider such a family in a strictly objective manner, and ask ourselves without prejudice: is it right — even in very moderate sexual intercourse, for instance on holidays only — to leave to chance what may be the result of the connection between the two married partners? In many cases the doctor will declare with earnestness that he is opposed to it, although the priest, according to his point of view, very often according to the old testament, is inclined to “lay the matter before God” — that is to say, if all goes well, he will baptize the child with pleasure; if the mother dies, he will help to bury her with equal willingness. Let us now see what are the doctor’s considerations in this case:

### 9. — The Mother’s Health.

Is it not, physiologically considered, detrimental to mother’s health, if such natural processes as pregnancy and child-birth are wilfully suppressed? If the friends of preventive intercourse maintain that abstinence from an instantaneous act such as sexual connection may be injurious, — how can the same people calmly allow it and even recommend that such important functions as pregnancy and birth should deliberately be evaded. As a matter of fact this appears to be a paradox, but experience has never and nowhere proved that absence of pregnancy causes disturbance to health.\*

\* One of the most qualified judges, PROFESSOR H. TREUB, says in his Manual of Gynecology: “*Lehrbuch der Gynaekologie*”, 4th Edition, p. 657: “Neither can the fact itself, that the pregnancy is prevented, constitute



Physiologically speaking, gravidity and lactation are not automatic functions, in contradistinction to ovulation in woman, or to the secretion of semen in man, which represent an indispensable part of cell life. It is a fact that at an appropriate moment the congestionability associated with ovulation or with seminal secretion can be artificially induced, and muscle-contractions and blood-pressure thereby produced, and in other cases these manifestations of congestion and excitement can be momentarily prevented by restraining influences, but the sexual secretion of the egg-cells and the sperm-cells takes place unobserved, just as surely as the secretion of urine and the desquamation of the skin. That pregnancy and the milk-secretion are not similarly unavoidable is evident. But we should not generalise, or quote the results of experience in one group in a speculative manner as relating to the other.

So it is readily comprehensible why we sometimes hear of women of working class feeling so much better after parturition than before. For a woman who never has any rest night or day, a nine-days' enforced rest in bed can only have a beneficial effect. And then such a poor ill-used wife has someone to take care of her at least once in the year! So it is indeed no wonder that she feels better in herself, especially in contrast to the burdensome time of her pregnancy, There is no valid reason whatever to think that in normal cases pregnancy should be a hygienic necessity. On the contrary it is only too evident from everyday experience that this condition, and the strain and trial of strength in delivery constitute an eminent danger for the life and health of the wife.

Still more serious is the danger in too frequent pregnancy, through which the strength is exhausted and the health undermined, and this all the more surely and rapidly as intervals between the periods of pregnancy are shorter. Some women can bear these burdens better than others; but still there are certain limits to the endurance of every mother. The instances of exceptional women who bear incredible things without visible signs of disturbance, should not make us careless in

a danger. Nothing of the kind is evident in the numerous cases of sterile unions, and it is quite sufficient at present to look around, to acquire the conviction, that voluntary sterility is not harmful to health either."



the matter. The numerous mothers who are borne to untimely graves through too rapidly repeated pregnancies, disappear from our sight, and are only too soon forgotten.

The injury caused to the mother's health by too frequent pregnancies is not only observed in our own circles; this well-known fact is so evident, that it is recognized in statistics, first and foremost in those of the life insurance companies. We quote from a hand-book for the guidance of medical examiners for life insurance: "*The Life Insurance Examiner*" by DR CHARLES F. STILLMANN, pub. Spectator Co, New York and Chicago page 186: "Among primiparae the rate of mortality considerably exceeds that of multiparae up to the ninth labor, after which the consequent risk increases with each succeeding parturition", and farther on: "postpone as risky, all instances where the mother seems in the judgment of the examiner, to have been bearing children too fast."\*

So far we have only had the well-being of the healthy mother in view, but of course all hygienic motives apply in a much higher degree to those cases, unfortunately not uncommon, in which the mother is not thoroughly healthy and strong; not to mention the cases of hereditary taint, to which we have already referred in Chapter 7. Disease may frequently be a reason for exacting absolute abstinence, but cases of more or less disturbance of the normal health are innumerable, in which intercourse is permissible, but not conception. In all such cases the use of preventives may prove of untold value.

In the defective hygienic conditions in which most families live at present, it may be safely asserted that for 99 out of 100 women, a longer rest period between the pregnancies is much to be desired, not only in order that they may enjoy complete recovery, but that they may also acquire so much reserve strength that they can face the strain of a new parturition with courage. The existing circumstances must be taken into consideration. If however, we explain the hygienic and pathological indications for birth-control, we should never forget that we cannot entirely separate the economic conditions from the others. A hygiene which does not take into account

\* That is to say, they will only accept this risk on payment of higher premiums.



the given economical situation of the individual, remains a dull theory, a lifeless abstract. It is quite impossible on principle to draw a sharp line between pathological conditions and faulty economic conditions. He is short-sighted who seeks to separate them, and a fool who regards them as opposites. We have to recognize the same striving after the physiological optimum in both.

#### 10. — Hygiene of the Child.

If parents ask themselves the question: "is it wise to increase the number of our children?" — the first thing to be taken into consideration is the interest of the unborn child itself, and it must above all be debated, in what manner its life and happiness can the best be planned out. No mother or father can maintain that the only thing that concerns them is the *number* of their children. When parents desire a child, or one more than they already have, they naturally hope that it will be a fine, healthy, good-tempered and happy child, and that later on it will be a useful and happy member of society.

The future, lasting happiness of the child must be the aim of these considerations, not merely its first happy years of childhood. It may very well happen that the saying applies to children, "the more souls, the more joy"; it may very well be imagined that a child finds it uncommonly agreeable to have so many little brothers and sisters, that order and training become impossibilities. To the educational advantages and drawbacks of small, *too* small, large, and *too* large families, we will refer later. Here we shall only discuss the hygienic side of the question, the question of the physiological optimum for the child.

Everyone familiar with the art of cultivating plants or of breeding animals, knows that there is an antagonism between the quantity and quality of the product. Although the supply of foodstuffs is more than sufficient or even inexhaustible, the exhaustion of the mother-plant or mother-animal must always set a limit to reproduction. If there is a shortage of the necessities of life, the optimum will all the sooner be reached and passed. This line of thought is not a consequence of our modern culture, nor is it a symptom of decay. We find the same idea in the old, old story of Hop o'my Thumb. For



the youngest of the string of children there was nothing much left over even at his birth, and at last the parents had no more bread for any of them. It has been so in all times, when there are too many children in family, the supper is sometimes too meagre, the bedstead a little too narrow. And when the Benjamin of the family must yield his place to a new Benjamin too soon everyone is sorry that one child must be sacrificed to another.

"But a numerous family offers such a comfortable appearance, and privations serve as a useful lesson forever". These eulogists of big families are decidedly lacking in correct insight. Attentive observers, such as teachers and physicians, have frequently found that in very large families the children represent a descending scale, both in their bodily and mental development. And for him who has learned to think hygienically, who seeks the physiological optimum, statistics have pronounced judgment. In the report of the Statistical Bureau of the Kingdom of Saxony, 31st year, Dresden, page 30, we read the following statistical table referring to 26,429 births and 5,236 marriages amongst the working classes of Saxony. It was not thought at the time that this judgment would prove such a sweeping one. A portion of the stillborn, and children of marriages where the number of children is only one or two, are not included. Where there were more than two children in a family, the mortality in the first year of the infant's life was as follows:

of all firstborn children	22.9 %
„ second	20.4 %
„ third	21.2 %
„ fourth	23.2 %
„ fifth	26.3 %
„ sixth	28.9 %
„ seventh	33.1 %
„ eighth	33.2 %
„ ninth	36.1 %
„ tenth	41.3 %
„ eleventh	51.4 %
„ twelfth	59.7 %

It is here easily seen how greatly the chances of life diminish for each child from the second or third. We find the same result in a Danish table published in a book by DR J. DE BRUIN



and DR C. DE LANGE, "*The feeding of the child in its first year*". page 2\*.

In a working class population the infantile mortality per 100 children was as follows:

in families with 1 child	20.1 ‰ of the children
2 children	19.1 ‰
3 „	25.1 ‰
4 „	23.4 ‰
5 „	24.5 ‰
6 „	31.1 ‰
7 „	35.8 ‰
8 „	40.3 ‰
9 „	52.5 ‰

We also find in "Sozialharmonie" of the 3rd October 1905 the following statement: in Copenhagen in families of

1—4 children	22.6 ‰ infantile mortality
5—8 „	30.2 ‰ „ „
9—12 „	49.5 ‰ „ „

The statistics supplied by Dr Hamburger of Berlin come to the same conclusions\*\*. As to the inferiority of the firstborn child the case is as follows. In a thorough enquiry made by Professor Methorst into the mortality of the children born in the Hague during 1908, it appeared that the lower viability of the firstborn does not apply to all classes of society but for the highest and lowest only\*\*\*. The inferiority of the youngest in large families on the other hand, is general, as may be seen from the following details.

The statistics quoted so far have referred mostly to needy families; so it may appear as though the results are only to be judged by the standard of unfavorable economic conditions.

Unfortunately we meet with the same appearance in richer families, although here the biological inferiority shows itself somewhat later. Accidentally we have come into possession of a statistic which deals with the richer families, and especially

\* "*De voeding van het kind in het eerste levensjaar*". Amsterdam, Scheltema en Holkema. 1905.

\*\* See "*Mutterschutz*" Aug. 1909. Edited by DR HELENE STÖCKER, Berlin.

\*\*\* Ed. Gezondheidscommissie te s'Gravenhage 1911—1913. See Part I, p. 45.



with susceptibility to a typical disease, phthisis. The pioneer work of DR BREHMER in Görbersdorf, is here to be remembered. He it was who founded sanatoria for pulmonary patients. During the period from 1852 to 1889 he treated 14,000 cases in his sanatorium, mostly belonging to opulent families, and he consistently made up his statistics from this plentiful material\*. Amongst other questions he dealt with, is the following: if pulmonary tuberculosis has already appeared in the parents or grandparents, it is easily comprehensible that this disease will appear repeatedly in the same family; how does it happen however, that it sometimes appears in a family in which there is no history of tuberculosis? He then noticed from his experience that in cases where no pulmonary consumption had occurred and where the parents were strong and healthy, but the family was large, the younger children, generally from the sixth child onwards, are very susceptible to phthisis, while the elder brothers and sisters of the same family remain exempt. And the danger of contracting this disease is greater for those children who are only a year younger than their predecessors. This prospect of being later subject to phthisis, generally becomes a probability if such child (especially at the age of puberty), begins to complain of palpitation of the heart or shortness of breath when climbing a steep ascent, or if it has suffered for a long time from loss of appetite.

The prospect also exists in a family *not* numerous, that phthisis may ultimately appear, if both the parents (or one of them) are more delicate on account of *their* being the youngest children of *their* parents. The children of such people often develop symptoms of scrofula in their youth. This is called "Brehmer's diathesis".

When farther on in his book, DR BREHMER sets himself the question: "how can we best guard against receptivity for phthisis?", he mentions as the most effective means and of the highest importance, that parents who themselves are healthy, must be reasonable and temperate in the procreation of children, and should take care that the children do not follow too

\* See: DR HERMANN BREHMERS, "*Etiology and therapy of chronic tuberculosis*", abridged edition by DR R. J. PÉTRI, Berlin. Vogel & Kreienbrink, 1902, 2 Vols.



closely the one on the other". A more solemn warning cannot be given, and people must be wilfully deaf, if they close their ears to it.

DR EDWARD SMITH conducted a similar enquiry amongst the consumptive patients in the Brompton Hospital, London. He found that the majority of his patients came from large families, seven children per family on the average. And DR ANSELL found in half a million people who had insured their lives, and who consequently were of the comfortable middle class, no increase in mortality from the 1st to the 6th child. (ANSELL, "*Statistics of Families*", London, 1874.)

But no matter how favorable the economic conditions may be, there is always a limit. Even with the statistics of princely families! The report read before the Anthropological Society of Munich, 29th April 1910, by DR A. PLOETZ, dealing with 3300 children of princely families, showed an increased mortality in the case of firstborn children of young mothers, furthermore a constant average deathrate of 26 % up to the ninth child, after which, from the 10th child onward, an average death-rate of 34.4 % is observed.

This same principle that we see laid down here for individual families, we also find in the general statistics for death-rates everywhere. And here we find as the most constantly fixed rule, the following law: "The higher the birth-rate, the higher in proportion is also the infantile mortality (under one year)". If too many births occur, then there arises a final destruction of child-life, child-health and child-happiness. We shall deal fully in Chapter 33 with this result of the statistics.

11. — Should the parents decide how many children they shall bear?

We may be asked if we really believe, that when parents find themselves confronted with the question — "more children or no more?" they will be guided by all these beautiful hygienic motives? Would they not rather be led by selfish and unworthy motives to a wrong decision? Even the catechism teaches us in childhood, that man's nature is wicked and turns from all that which is good! Or to speak in the language of these times: will indeed the parents' decision be made in the sense of selection? I can give the answer to this from my



medical experience. As reasons for restricting the number of their offspring, parents have given: troublesome pregnancy and difficult parturition; weakness and exhaustion of the mother; father ill or out of work; income too small; desire to be able to bring up the children well; too many in family already; crippled, sick or unfortunate children; drinking habits of the husband. It must also be conceded that in every case where the children manifest disorders, even slight, such as peevishness, mutual incompatibility, etc., the parents have certainly good reason not to long overmuch for more such children.

The family is an organic and economic entity, the members of which have common interests. Is it then right to call the above mentioned motives selfish? If a man is disinclined to lose his wife by death and to be left with five or six little creatures, is that love or self-interest? If they like to be able to feed their children well and to give them a little treat now and then on Sundays, are these all objectionable motives? It is a matter of indifference, whether the parents in deciding the number of their children consider the prevailing economic conditions, or the future situation and heritage of the children, or the mother's health, or the probability of the children living — in each case a minimum limit, an optimum and a maximum limit may be set. The decision does not depend on one single factor as a rule, but several motives combine to justify it, and finally the decision will be an approach to several optima. In any case a deliberate decision will be better than fortuity.

Just as every man is the best manager of his own household, even if he occasionally falls into error, — so also the parents of a family will as a rule know best themselves how far they may go, and what is needful for the maintenance and increase of their own family. In this fact lies at the same time the best protection against every unconsidered generalisation.

Nowadays, since the preventive methods for the wife have been so perfected, there exists in every family a new double guarantee. The wife can pronounce the veto as well as the husband; if needful, even without the consent of the other party. This marital right fits in better with the changed conditions than the "married women's property act"! "In dubiis abstine," we say, — (in case of doubt, abstain) when we



physicians are in doubt whehter a drug would do good or harm. And higher eugenics teaches us to abstain if in doubt, even when the begetting of more children is in question. And for this reason it is better in most cases that pregnancy should not occur, if either one of the parents objects, even if other motives are lacking. Especially, if their motives are objectionable, crude and interested, it is doubly desirable from a higher standpoint, that no child should be exposed to the great danger of having such a father or mother.

When some parent sends up a cry of longing for a child, *the child itself must be the main object*. The maxim "no unwanted children" can only be rendered valid if we can imagine ourselves taking up the standpoint of the unborn child.

If later there comes a time, when the community claims a greater increase in the number of children, then this community should first of all show their good will by displaying a totally different attitude towards the wife, and towards the helpless child it should protect, and in whose welfare it must take an active interest.

## 12. — Too large families.

Life to-day is a burden for many people; it is therefore an irresponsible act, to thoughtlessly throw into the turmoil of life, those who have never asked to come, if there is no reasonable prospect of their being able to enjoy a measure of happiness and comfort in their lives. There is no greater evil for a child than to bring him into the world if there is not enough light and air for him, and he has not room to stretch his little limbs. Although it is unfortunate for a bird to sit in his cage alone, it is just as bad if there are too many in one cage. The living room is too small, the bedrooms too small, there is no room to play in the house, and as the parents income has also become too small, it frequently happens that they have to move into a smaller house because they have too many children.

And we must not forget that the landlord will perhaps refuse to take a tenant with such a lot of children; the housing committees do not allow the family to continue to occupy premises if its number is to be exceeded, and the local police do not allow people to sleep out in the open. Then we must



remember that employers do not willingly take workmen who are burdened with too large families. We are accustomed to hear a childless family referred to as a dead family, but a too numerous one can in certain circumstances be a lost one.

A lady devoted to philanthropic work, but opposed to neomalthusianism, said recently: "There can be no greater misfortune for a family than a father who drinks, or a mother who brings a child into the world every year."

What must we as medical practitioners observe in such numerous families! I remember one of my old colleagues who had a practice among the poor, who went his round every day, then took a hot bath, and did not go near his practice any more that day. Particularly in infantile practice he was always ready to give a death certificate without much difficulty. Very convenient for infanticides! And he had a very successful practice!

I was called on Sunday to a very pious family of the lower middle class which did not please me at all; the youngest child was very ill indeed, and I asked them why they had so long delayed calling me in? The child got better. The second time it happened on a Sunday again, that is why I remember it so well, the child was much worse, almost dying, but rallied after all. The third time, however, they were more cautious, and only called me in when the child was really dead, so that I could not fool them again. On another occasion I returned of my own accord late one evening to a family because the baby was so seriously ill. As I entered I noticed the cradle was covered over, and the bedclothes neatly folded and placed on one side, while the family and their friends were sitting round and drinking schnapps. "Oh," said I, "is it all over?" "No, we don't think the child is quite dead yet, but it is nearly so. You can look yourself."

Two official enquiries in regard to the dangers of infantile insurance in Holland revealed a shocking state of affairs at the time: families whose children were insured in several companies at once, and all died! "Yes", said once the father of a family to the parson, "I am getting on better now, the Lord is on my side." "How's that?" queried the parson. "Why, because I have been able to rent a few acres more land . . . now that my baby is dead."



To be thankful to the church-yard for taking pity on the children who were too numerous, was formerly a bye-word, and no one found it at all out of place.

Still worse was the employment of very small children in works and factories for an insignificant wage, until it was prohibited by law. From that time things have taken a better turn, and we can now leave the choice to the parents, even such parents as those above mentioned.

### 13. — Too small families.

Neomalthusianism was termed in its time, more wittily than appropriately, the "two-children system". This inappropriate title was all the more ridiculous, because neomalthusianism was then more frequently than at present advocated as a means of world-reform; and it is obvious that the world would have died out very rapidly if no married couple brought up more than one or two children in the course of their lives. The idea of birth — control is misrepresented at present by its opponents rather as if its aim and object were "the fewer children the better". Many mouths make food runs short, one is more profitable than two. One child at the most is wanted where a heritage is concerned. And why not go one step farther? If you can reckon things out so closely, you will surely soon want no children at all; perhaps no more marriage . . . That is the opponent's logic. Instead of a one-or two-child system, a no-child system would gain ground.

Of course, this one-sidedness, this extreme exaggeration, or rather this parody of marital conscientiousness also occurs. But man is and will always remain a sociable creature, and for sociable creatures children are the greatest treasure on earth. This sociable nature of man will surely long continue to flourish, for it is precisely the sociable people who marry and multiply. Those however, who are so selfcentred that they do not want any childish happiness around them; those who are so degenerated that they wilfully reject that which lends its value to life, that is to say the care of children; those who from pure selfishness would seek to draw the circle of home life as close as possible; not Mr, Mrs and baby but only Mr and Mrs, as to such morbid natures would it not be



a blessing for the race if they were allowed to die out, of their own accord?

That at least would be a very suitable punishment for them, and I should not like to know that even one child was entrusted to their tender mercies. Even if this were the only reason, preventive methods must be made as widely known as possible, so that such avowed self-interest shall die out in every case. That would rather be the most direct selection in an ethical sense: a real auto-selection.

Who looks on children as a burden? Those who have too many. "*La peur de l'enfant*" — the dread of the child — is a scare-crow for our opponents, but not for us. Only the woman lacking in foresight is burdened with pregnancy against her will. Not those mothers who have learnt in good time to use preventive appliances, before the limit of the desired number of children has been reached, and with whom this limit cannot be easily exceeded.

But do not let us judge and condemn each other. It is quite hard enough to establish the motives of our own actions. Those people who desire few or no children may be actuated by other motives than that of selfishness, motives that no other person is aware of: economic, hygienic, pathological or psychological. There may be very sound moral grounds for a married couple in a particular case wishing to remain childless. It is quite possible that there is a high degree of self denial, the greatest conscientiousness, the loftiest strivings towards the ideal for mankind, — and countless other considerations. Now, if ever, is the time to say "judge not!"

#### 14. — A large family as an educational expedient for the parents.

Children should never be brought into the world with the idea of making the father a sturdy worker and the mother a self-denying woman, as many people maintain from ostensibly high ethical motives. That would indeed be refined selfishness! As we have already said: the child's interest should be the deciding factor. But as we desire to examine the matter from all sides, we see no objection to considering the number of the children for once as an educational expedient for the parents, even if only as a secondary consequence.



Many people see in birth control, only a desire for luxury and leisure, a "materialistic" egotism, a hateful trait in modern society. This judgment is however a hasty one. That the requirements of a household are higher nowadays than formerly, is not however to be rebuked without further reason as "modern luxury". Oh yes, it is very easy for a man to say when he himself has a comfortable position in the world: "Every one wants to climb one rung higher on the ladder, they all want to imitate the rich, to dress above their station and especially to have as few cares as possible and to be able to go out evenings. Religion is fast disappearing . . . . the children must be gentlemen; labor is despised. It is the ruin of society, a bringing up that leads to hell"! and so on.

It can however, be readily seen that there is also a real honest striving, that springs from the noblest and most unselfish motives. It is the parents' duty to see that the children look respectable, and rather to train them for the better callings than for badly paid labor. Is it from a social point of view also the parents' duty to set a higher standard on their children's occupation. And just because the rising of the sap in the growing tree is the expression of the highest life-energy, this common impulse to work one's way up economically is so appropriately called "social capillarity".

Let us take for instance a working man's family and apply to it the most objective criterion, 'the physiological optimum. Do the demands of the parents then appear excessive? Is sufficient opportunity for bathing and swimming available for all? Is there sufficient sunshine and fresh air for all? Is the atmosphere that the children have to breathe at night pure, and their work in the day-time healthy, their education well thought out? Is their elementary schooling such as we would allow for our own children? Would you, my dear sir, limit your claims for your own children to this standard? When you think over it, are you not ashamed of your hasty judgment; are you not ashamed of the paltry wage that you pay your workers? I say that it is a marvel of modesty and moderation, that the parents ask *so little* for their children.

"They get their schooling free; holiday colonies, grants — these folks get everything for nothing nowadays", you say. But what do not the children of the rich get allowed from



the public purse for their education! How much does each individual college boy, each student cost the state?

If we should try to blame conscientious parents for their foresight, we might first of all consider whether this verdict can be justified! It is the finest victory of the ethical principle, that we feel to-day our responsibility towards our descendants. And that parents do everything in their power to make the best of their children, is nothing more than their parental duty. That in so doing they sometimes copy the foolishness of rich people like we are, is only human, and rather bears witness against us than against them. Just the same motives which lead us to keep the number of children in our own families within certain limits are also valid for the families of the poor; some in a small degree, others to a greater extent. The more the light of science attracts us all within its circle, the more will similar causes produce similar effects everywhere.

Poor families will not by so doing become rich ones; but they should not rest until the same hygienic advantages are granted them as we enjoy through the principle of birth-control. Then the mothers will not so frequently be carried to premature graves, and the children will be better brought up in every class of society.

15. — A large family as an educational expedient for the children.

Will not the restriction of the number of children in a family also ruin their bringing up from a moral standpoint?

Is not sand polished through friction with a mass of sand, and pebbles by a multitude of other pebbles? Is not the variety of character in a big family, that little world of brothers and sisters, the best training school, the school of life? — —

It is certain that here also there is a limit; an optimum, that cannot be exceeded with impunity. The disadvantages for an only child have been so often described and are so generally known, that it were superfluous for us to linger on them. What a race of selfish little tyrants would be bred from nothing but *only* children! Where is then the life in common and the coeducation of the sexes in the family? We have already seen in the statistics of children's health which we have quoted, that the first-born by no means occupies a privileged position, we



have also seen that two-children marriages would ultimately lead to the extinction of mankind. Happy then are the parents who can permit themselves, hygienically and economically, to bring up more than two children. Through the polishing by mutual contact, through the pressure of obligatory living together, the characters will learn compliance and docility. The children cannot always be served immediately, they can no longer feel themselves to be the centre of the universe. They will learn to share a tit-bit between them, above all the eldest girl will learn to be a help to her mother, and sometimes to take her place. But even here a great deal depends on the characters and the circumstances; so one must not generalise. The characters may also be such that they irritate each other and thereby diverge more and more. They may also mutually increase their ill-nature, if for instance, one will always be the first, and the other is always neglected in consequence. Finally everything may fall into such disorder that the mother no longer has the time or judgment to maintain order or to train the children properly, and anarchy in the worst sense of the word prevails. The children may indeed enjoy this state of things for a short time, and in the long run it might perhaps produce a solitary genius, but certainly not the most useful men. I have known in my own practice, families of willing and capable young mothers, in which through a too great number of children the whole household at last looked like a dung-heap, and the air was almost unbreathable.

In her comprehensive book: "*Concerning Children*", CHARLOTTE PERKINS GILMAN draws the readers' attention to a great danger in the training of children, of which insufficient notice has hitherto been taken. The family has something selfish in its bearing towards the outer world, and if children are brought up exclusively within the bounds of the family, they will never acquire that broad consciousness of the community, the social ethics, which set the stamp of gentility on men to-day. And a large family is only an unsatisfactory substitute for a broad spirited education in and for the great generality. She says: "The privacy and conservatism of the family group have made it a nursing ground of rudimentary survivals, long since outgrown in more open fields, and the ethical code of the family is patently behind that of the society in which it is located."



So the smaller the family is, the more the parents, whether they want to or not, will be compelled to shake off the old evil of family egotism. In this manner those characters can be brought together as comrades, which have the most favorable influence on each other, much better than is ever possible within the precincts of the family alone. These will then, having a better choice, seek their playmates for themselves and exercise with the others. This means indeed a far better form of education, an educational selection, a choice of relations called forth either by the intelligent guidance of the teacher, or by individual selection.

For every child will avoid the playfellow who is unsympathetic to him; and games will be more agreeable to him with others. The joyous and free gaiety of a crowd of children produces a charming effect on one, even when he has not brought them all up himself. In this manner our circle of interest, our sympathies will constantly widen, and the voluntary limitations of the family can only be of advantage in this respect. The more children grow up in the society of those of other families, the more will their little antipathies be corrected, and their sympathies broadened, and so much the more will their mental training be furthered and their lives all the richer for it. To quote only one instance: *chastity*, as the history of the race teaches us unambiguously, is a feeling which young people cherish towards all their brothers and sisters and those with whom they have grown up from childhood. So in future the young souls will be under the gentle influence of this feeling to a much greater extent and in a higher degree than is the case, unfortunately, to-day.

16. — Is the use of preventives injurious to health?

If preventive measures were detrimental to health, then it would certainly be a valid reason for abstaining from birth-control; that is to say, of course, if the hygienic damage were so extensive as not to be compensated by the advantages offered by the limitation of the family. This last question confronts especially those married couples who for some reason or another consider themselves bound to sexual abstinence, which as we have already mentioned, has such a pernicious effect in the long run. In the same manner the momentary



self-control, which is known by the name of "coitus interruptus", may sometimes occasion over-excitement in the man, but only in a nervously inclined individual, and one who has not had sufficient practice. There are also cases in which the woman is over-excited, being only stirred up and left without satisfaction; in which cases they should interchange now and then this method with other methods.

The other methods which are usually recommended, are all harmless, and it is not a difficult matter to choose an appropriate one from the great variety which we have at our disposal. But all intra-uterine remedies are to be mercilessly rejected, they are never recommended by experts, any more than are corrosive or poisonous chemicals. The whole range of internal treatment with drugs which were employed for this purpose in ancient times is now abandoned, they are all and sundry superseded by mechanical appliances\*.

These ordinary appliances which have proved their trustworthiness by long experience, are absolutely harmless. Even the most bitter opponents of preventive intercourse now recognize unreservedly that their scruples are of the ethical order. Only in lectures "for the people" is it sometimes described as harmful, although there is not the slightest mention of such injurious effect in the medical literature dealing with the subject\*\*. *A priori* one would not expect this, and it should

\* We find a clear and unprejudiced criticism of the various methods of prevention in a lucid brochure by G. HARDY, 29 Rue Tixérecourt, Paris XX., which may be had in English, French or German. More detailed descriptions will be found in the writings of DR NORMAN HAIRE, 90 Harley Street, London.W. especially in: DR NORMAN HAIRE, "a Manual of Contraception", for medical practitioners and students. Ed. Oxford medical publications. London 1923. Or one can join of the numerous Neomalthusian Societies for Birth Control, who furnish all particulars on these subjects to their members. Information may be obtained by writing to Mr R. B. KERR, 124 Victoria St., Westminster, London.S.W., or to Mrs MARGARET SANGER, 104 Fifth Avenue, New York City. U.S.A.

\*\* Some of the attempts in this direction are too naive to be taken in earnest. And Professor H. TREUB, in his academic "Treatise of Gynecologie" (*Lehrbuch der Gynaekologie*), 4th Edition, p. 657, states; "It is a difficult matter for the gynecologist who personally recommends his patients to use vaginal injections for reasons of clean liness, to convince people that injections can possibly do harm when taken after sexual union. It would be equally difficult for him to prove that



be suspected, that the use of such appliances should necessitate some technical knowledge and practice, skill and consideration, which are not common property. But practical experience shows us that it is just the simple woman of the poorer classes, who is far less prejudiced in the matter, and allows herself to be taught more readily than many a high-born lady. Formerly, when it was thought that a preventive pessary could be allowed to remain in position for more than one night, the evil of doing so was soon observed. But all manifestations of pressure, congestion, sensitiveness and inflammation, are quite impossible when the pessary is used occasionally in the manner explained to the women themselves by their professional advisers. Nowadays every practitioner finds a hundred opportunities to convince himself of the entire harmlessness of the usual preventives, and even if the statements of a few dogmatic physicians may raise a doubt in the public mind, the actual example of almost every doctor's family should suffice to disperse the last shadow of doubt.

Far from being prejudicial to health, many beneficial effects follow the use of preventives, just as it was known long ago, that the use of the rubber sheath (French letter), on condition that it does not tear, has diminished the danger of infection by venereal disease to a remarkable degree. It is only a pity that there is always a chance of the sheath tearing, and that extra-genital infection may occur, and in the case of syphilis is not infrequent. But as we are dealing here with the health of the race, we must thankfully acknowledge the relative value of this preventive device, as a means of prophylaxis against the above mentioned diseases, which are capable of wreaking such devastation in married life, especially since the war, and not only amongst the newly infected and their wives, but also on their descendants.

The regular use of preventive methods possesses however a further hygienic advantage for the wife. There is only one

psychical disorders are to be feared from "coitus interruptus" because the wife would not receive complete satisfaction, as he knows very well that even when the sex-act is carried right through, very few women experience either any pleasure or real satisfaction at all. And how can he then state that a pessary placed in position by him can do no harm, but that if the patient places it herself it is injurious? This is simply impossible.



means of stopping the lodging and propagation of disease germs in the female genital cavities; which is the chief thing in combatting the numerous diseases of women of bacterial origin—ranging from simple leucorrhea (whites) to the most severe cancerous infections, venereal diseases included, — and that is cleanliness\*.

Now cleanliness is the principal thing, the essential point with the use of all preventive appliances. The prevention of infection and the prevention of pregnancy are, scientifically considered, associated ideas. Still further: in the slighter affections the use of ordinary injections, which is obligatory when using preventives, is alone sufficient to cure these disorders, where they exist. I have witnessed this in many cases in my own practice. In the hygiene of the race, this kind of vaginal hygiene is of primordial interest, and the more bodily cleanliness is cared for from infancy, the earlier will people be led to keep themselves also ethically clean.

#### 17. — Is preventive intercourse immoral?

In the foregoing chapter we have seen — even those physicans who are opposed to neomalthusianism admit this — that it is not so much hygienic as ethical motives that make them inimical to our principles. It is therefore our duty to discuss these ethical objections. For even when it has been sufficiently demonstrated in the foregoing that a restriction of the number of children in certain circumstances may be a necessity, and that even great ethical and hygienic advantages are bound up with it, there may be deep-rooted in our soul a horror of it, a feeling that startles us, so that we hesitate if we are asked categorically: "is this act good or evil?" It happens indeed often enough that even with the most evil thing, some benefits are associated, even ethical ones. We think for instance of the intrepidity of the burglar, or of the patience of the assassin. But that should not render us blind to the main point. Might not preventive intercourse, although often very useful, nevertheless be immoral in its inmost nature?

\* Prof. K. SCHROEDER refers tho this matter in his celebrated standard work: "*Diseases of the female sexual organs*" 9th Edition, p. 348, in which he states that this most fatal disease, carcinoma of the cervix uteri, is found with special frequency in women who have borne many children.



Is it not a recognition of sensuality as such, if we allow ourselves to be led by the principle of utility? Do we not thereby come to the greatest arbitrariness, to subjective utilitarianism?

I say that people who talk like this, have not grasped the meaning of utilitarianism. John Stuart Mill teaches us in his work "On utilitarianism" not that we should state a judgment of an act as an individual case, that would be casuistic and liable to lead us into the most extravagant paths of error; but to enquire first of all, whether an act belongs to a category of actions which are useful in the highest sense of the word. The accidental surrounding circumstances thereby correct themselves. For instance: a murder may in certain circumstances prove of great utility, but this category of deeds renders the lives of all of us so unsafe that it is clearly evident that murder is objectionable on principle. Only as an expression of desperation can such a deed not always be ignored.

Does preventive intercourse then belong in this sense to a category of immoral acts?

Do not smile, dear reader, I do not mean by this to suggest that the use of preventives in sexual intercourse is murder; this accusation can only occur to him who has not learnt to think physiologically. Murder can only be concerned, in so far as an independent existence is in question. Let us suppose the case: I take a knife and cut off a bit of the tip of my thumb, but it is not "murder" that I have committed on the piece of my thumb that is severed, although we are also dealing here with a group of living cells, which are certainly capable of further existence after their separation from the body, if for instance I care to use the piece for Reverdin's skin grafting.

When I wash myself in the morning, I remove thousands of epidermal cells which are rubbed off and which are no longer capable of living anyhow; but if I wound myself with a pin, I also lose thousands of red corpuscles, that is to say living cells cut off in the prime of their life, and ready at that moment for further life, if for instance they are transfused into the circulation of another human being. The cells of the sexual system stand midway between those of the two last examples: they are spontaneously excreted, but are still viable. It is cell-life, but not individual life, because even under the most favorable conditions they can only maintain their separate



existence for a short time, they degenerate and die in a few days, but it may happen that they unite with a cell of the opposite sex, and then attain their development in the uterus.

But however, the probability of this happening is very slender indeed for each individual cell; HENLE found in the ovary of a girl 18 years of age, 36,000 egg-rudiments; and SAPPEY found 400,000 in a three year old girl, of which certainly only 300 to 400 could have come to maturity and expulsion. If such a child had not died, but had lived to be married in due course, her husband could not however have been blamed if these eggs had not all reached their so-called "destination". If we employ the word in the sense now usual, we must say; the fate of all these eggs, with very few exceptions, is to be wasted.

This is still more evident in the case of the male sex. According to LODE'S experiments\*, it has been found that a man expels in a single emission about 200 millions of sperm-cells. For the fertilizing of one or two ova (eggs) only one or two spermatozoa are needed, all the other 199,999,999 living cells are therefore doomed, even in the case of a fertilizing connection, to be exterminated without trace.

This loss of cell-life may appear to us very sad, just like the clouds of living pollen-dust which we see hovering over a cornfield in summer. As a rule this sight does not make such a melancholy impression on us, on the contrary we only see in it a symbol of the prodigality, the inexhaustible richness of Nature.

Otherwise how sad could appear to us chastity in young people, or a decent reserve in married couples; what a waste of cell-life they display! And yet for our moral feelings this is a worthy and charming picture of purity.

The exhibition of prodigality in Nature does not sadden us; we are conscious of its great meaning, and feel the riches, the immensity of Nature.

So also our preventive intercourse, with its squandering of cells is provoked through the excessive richness of nature, a richness in human beings who have been begotten by our own kind, if not by ourselves.

\* Landois-Rosemann, "Manual of Physiology" 1916, page 890.



If we stood higher in social consciousness, this proposition would fill us with as much pleasure as the sight of a shoal of fish which we see disporting in a sunny pool on a spring morning; we should also be proud of the success of others, of the success of the community.

We have really deviated so far from Nature, that natural things seem to us to be shameful. Who does not remember a certain feeling of shame when we realised for the first time in our mind the sexual life of our parents or other respected relatives. So we were already impure. Most people outside of the medical profession find the satisfaction of all natural functions dirty, their details abominable: only think, the beautiful white bread that you eat must be mixed in the mouth with spittle and mucus! We are ashamed, as soon as the details of sexual intercourse are discussed, whether it be a fecundating or a sterile intercourse. That is a fault in us, a lacking in sincerity, but a fault on which many pride themselves as a sign of morality. So far has mankind wandered in error.

This may be partly excused on account of the relative novelty of a physiological trend of thought. So long as Europe is called a Christian continent, one dares scarcely give his thoughts to sexual science, for that is branded as sin and godlessness. No wonder therefore that such physiological, and even most indispensable of the bodily functions are in no honor amongst us, at least they have never been allowed the right to official recognition.

And if by chance, teleologically speaking, one may ask — if Nature in its effort to maintain procreation, has brought a certain group of sperm-cells so far that at last they have reached the region of the egg-cell, is it not wicked to impede them at the last moment, so to speak in sight of the promised land? — We can ask in our turn: who perpetrates the greater fraud on marriage, he who avoids all sexual intercourse, or he who fulfils his marital duty according to the words of St Paul: "The husband shows due friendship to the wife as the wife to the husband," and only avoids the secondary effects? We all know how enticing is that union in Nature which combines procreation with pleasure, and we have just seen that hundreds of millions of cells are lost, even under the most favorable conditions. Now then — the one function,



the giving of pleasure, of satisfaction, is fully performed in intercourse, the other function, that of fecundation, must begin afterwards. What would then be destroyed that is not regularly destroyed by Nature itself?

And the esthetic point of view, which is so closely related to the ethical? No one who is familiar with preventives will take offence at them. In comparison with "normal" intercourse, far greater cleanliness prevails. Firstly, women become from the moment they begin to use preventives, as scrupulously clean as nurses.

And as for the only trouble their use implies, the necessary technical preparation, nowadays there are appliances which require absolutely no attention all night, and they are also the most trustworthy; so this consideration is negligible.

The following objection to preventive intercourse is purely speculative. "He who commits a deed, must also have willed its results." Quite right! But it is just the neomalthusian who keeps its purpose before his eyes more than other people. If the neomalthusian does not want any children, he performs a sterile connection, and expects only one result: sexual satisfaction. But if he desires children, he practices a connection that will possibly prove fecundating. Is that not reasonable? The objectors however, often commit an irresponsible act, when they *hope* that there will not be any consequences.

So we see that the ethical considerations, which are commonly advanced by the opponents of preventive intercourse, are not valid. If the uses and advantages of birth-control are ever so small, there is absolutely nothing immoral in it. Preventive intercourse cannot be classed as immoral.

And yet in certain circumstances the act itself may be very improper and immoral. Just as it can be practised with the laudable intention of tenderly caring for a wife and children already born, — so the same *modus vivendi* may be actuated by vicious motives: selfishness, vanity, laziness, avarice. It can be the expression of either a healthy optimism or of a woeful pessimism. One may have the regeneration of mankind in view, or simply resentment against the existing order of society. These are practically the ethical motives which come into question in this connection. But they are the same ethical impulses which are concerned in *every* human act, and which



therefore must be judged differently in each individual case, according to motives and circumstances. The opponents ought not to say on ethical grounds that the use of preventives is a sin, any more than the advocates should forget that their use is not good in every case.

So far advocates and opponents can agree.

18. — Is our judgment of this question always based upon morality?

It was unavoidable, in this treatise, to dwell so long on the ethical sphere of thought, because, ethical impulses are of the highest importance for the good of the individual and for the preservation of the race, and *à fortiori* also for its refinement. But these feelings should indeed be no conventional falsehoods, as these can only delay the improvement of the race. How then do people come in this field to so vastly distinct a difference of opinion? Some are passionate champions of birth-control and others just as unconquerable opponents.

The one sees in it a panacea for all the sins and sorrows of society, and the other is quite as firmly convinced that it spells the ruin of modern culture. Several reasons may have a bearing on this.

1). The older a conviction is, the more blindly we are attached to it, the more honorable and sacred it appears to us, while in reality the time approaches when this conviction, through changed conditions, shall have become a falsehood a survival. Considered Darwinistically, the conviction that only a fecundating sexual satisfaction can be a right one, must be very old. This conviction, this instinct, must date back to the time when the population was very sparse, and the greatest possible prolificacy was a necessity for self-maintenance, and an indispensable condition for saving the races, unless they should be annihilated in their wars, or destroyed by wild beasts and the primitive forces of Nature. Only those survived who possessed this instinct, whereas nowadays we check the number of individuals from the same instinct of race-preservation.

2). The verdict will vary, just as the experience of life in the different individuals is different. For instance: an official of the "police des mœurs" always sees vice, and fails to



recognize anything else. Just as a student one evening in a debate came out with: "When I was in barracks, all the dirty fellows used this rubbish." This reminds us of certain unsuccessful photographs taken by amateurs, in which the viewpoint had been wrongly chosen. The picture was therefore distorted and optically out of proportion.

In the same way, some people whose first acquaintance with preventives arose from immoral intercourse in their youth, can never forget it, and this association of ideas will always prevent them from forming an unprejudiced judgment in the matter.\*

3). The real blessing of birth-control, ruling our destiny, can be ill understood by individuals who are themselves sterile, whether from morbidity or from old age. They can easily condemn and calumniate birth-control, preaching abroad: "I thank thee Lord, that I am not like these." Especially this feature is manifest in matrons who in their years of fecundity were the most fervent adherents of birth-control; this reversal of opinion only shows us that in them memory is obliterated with the sex-impulse, but not their war-like spirit.

4). Many men publicly condemn birth-control, and vaunt themselves as standing too high for this nonsense, because, as retribution for the sins of their youth, the sins of prostitution, they are, after their tardy marriage, not capable of producing more than one or two children. Those are now preachers of continence, and we, as physicians must be aware of this and yet maintain in the discussion, our professional secret.

5). The most dangerous and perhaps the most numerous class of enemies are those who use employ preventives in secret and condemn them in public. Oh! if only all those

\* So it may readily explained physiologically, why in "Sesame", (contemporary novel by Michel Corday, Paris 1903), the hero of the story, André, who had known no other sexual intercourse in his youth than that with prostitutes, prefers concealment to candour in his conversations with the opposite sex, (his sister for instance); and wherever, — because his social position forbids him sincerely to desire the emancipation of the working man, — he cannot make up his mind to publicly advocate birth-control although he fully realises its necessity. Such a man does not feel himself morally free to do so, even if he knows the best preventive means; as in his mind the fear of misuse overshadows all other considerations.



who pretend to judge in this matter, were candid and honest! If all those who either with their parents or amongst their acquaintances have seen the blessings of birth-control would only relate their experiences to others, disapproval and calumny would soon be silenced. For the evil lies not so much in the biassed notion preached by the opponents, as in the cowardly silence and the false modesty of by far the greater number of its friends.

If the friends keep silence, one only hears the opponents, and readily believes that they represent public opinion, "*vox populi, vox Dei*". When such precious knowledge is in question, silence is a betrayal of the truth. The highest morality is always the truth.

And for this reason we must always recognize every speech and every written article which is seeking after the truth, even if we do not quite agree with it. A speech or a writing cannot be called dubious or pornographic because it openly states something that should have been kept hidden — no truth can or may remain hidden —, but only if an improper idea of the things would be awakened, one-sided or uncleanly exaggerated.

Of course it is quite understood, and we need scarcely insist on it, that we must go to work with tact and prudence in the matter of disseminating knowledge of birth-control. One cannot talk about the intimate technical details of married life at table or in the children's presence.

In the practice of prevention I am of opinion that the following rule should be observed: everyone should know that the begetting of our descendants is a creative act of the parents for which they themselves are responsible; and on the other hand a knowledge of the details belongs to the hygiene of married life.

#### 19. — Is the use of preventives a crime against nature?

The following argument will show what trifling reasons suffice for an idle mind to fall into error or prejudice. We hear people say: "preventive intercourse may not be immoral, nor shocking to our feelings, but it is contrary to Nature."

Contrary to Nature! If they mean that preventive intercourse is not observed in uncultured nature, this thesis is relatively



true; at any rate rubber appliances are not in use in the animal world, and not often among savages; but we find varieties of other forms of sterile pairing and sexual pleasure-seeking. Where fruitful copulation takes place we also find sterile copulation. It is so in the animal kingdom; and so preventive intercourse in mankind should also be regarded as justified and in accordance with Nature.

Or shall it be asserted, that the use of preventives is frequently injurious to the natural course of things, and stands in open contradiction to the "purposes" of Nature? Then this designation would be the greatest praise for man, for man should have a higher purpose than that of Nature.

The birds of heaven fall a prey to the cats, as soon as, exhausted by too long flight or hunger, they hover too near the earth's surface. We drown all the kittens of a litter but one or two, as soon as they are born, and the mother-cat sorrowfully seeks her lost ones. These are the primitive methods of Nature and of the breeding of animals for the removal of the superfluous. Precisely for the reason that these primitive methods of extermination did not please mankind, we sought better ones. New-born children were no longer killed, but exposed to the elements, so that the gods had an opportunity offered them to save the tiny creatures. Then women had recourse to the taking of poisons, or to sanguinary operations, with the object of procuring abortion. Finally we seek to avoid such bloody business by rather preventing unwished-for pregnancy. Is not this a far higher standpoint?

We have amply demonstrated in the foregoing chapters that the preventive appliances are not contrary to nature in the sense, that they should injure health or offend morality.

In the course of time a tremendous amount of confusion has arisen from the fact that the word Nature is given a thousand different meanings. By Nature is often meant the joy of life in the country as contrasted with the town; the animal and vegetable world in contrast with the productions of human art; the series of causes and effects which proceed independently of man, or at least outside of the province of his free will; the primitive in contrast to the product of culture; the simple in contrast to the complex, etc.

One thing is certain, that is that crude Nature is often very



prejudicial to our existence and our morality, just as the teaching of the bible and the church represents Nature to us as the only corrupt thing against which man must fight. Is not all moral teaching a war against our fundamental nature, a repression of the natural reflex, an education to a higher plane in nature? Are not all our discoveries so many acquisitions in the fight against nature?

Shall we then calmly allow the sea to encroach on our shores and invade the whole land, and shall we let everything freeze in winter?

Everything which ennobles and raises us is a victory over Nature. All our customary edible vegetables, our ornamental plants, our domestic animals are artificial productions; Nature only produces weeds.

The mastery of water-power, the conducting away of lightning, protection against infection, all these and innumerable other victories over nature have brought endless happiness to mankind, and protected it from endless pain. And so also is the mastery of one of our most important functions, that of procreation; its placing under the control of our reasoning will-power is one of the greatest victories of the mind of man over Nature. In no other field can we avoid so much pain with so little trouble, or obtain so much happiness. *Only those children that are wanted!*

Do you really want to be "natural" in the sexual question? Shall your boys and girls overtake each other on the streets, according to the laws of Nature? Let us be as human beings proud of the fact that we can command Nature. That is our highest title to nobility.

And if the time comes some day that men and nations are no longer so mad as to fight each other, doing each other mutual injury, if all work together to the common good—then this fight will still be there, the struggle against Nature, which can only then be effectively carried out with the united strength of all. Everything which we have already wrung from Nature, brings us a step nearer the goal. Nature has, for her own reasons linked voluptuousness and fecundity together; but we succeed in loosening this knot, and breaking these chains.



## 20. — Abuse of the Function.

We have repeatedly had occasion to point out that injury may ensue from short-sighted, narrow-minded or selfish motives, or too free use of preventives. Is it not then the duty of the governments and of every honest man to assist in the defence of birth-control and to take care that "*ne quid detrimentum res publica capiat*"?\*

We shall obtain this impression to a much greater degree if we think of particular abuses, and imagine what tremendous propaganda preventives have had in recent times, how shamelessly they are advocated in newspaper advertisements, in novels and amongst thoughtless young people.

It is of course true, that abuses in sexual matters were formerly much greater, but as we were only children then, we did not understand or notice it all at that time.

It is a well-known fact, and is only natural, that a thing will be abused the more, the more useful it is; that a remedy may have a so much the more ruinous effect, the more successful it has proved in other cases. Contra-indications always imply the existence of indications. Barley water is a much less dangerous remedy than opium, but it is also much less efficacious. Fire, water, steel and gold have become indispensable necessities of life for us, although we know only too well how many people are led to ruin by them. We should not however for this reason seek to prevent their use, but only their abuse. So must we behave with the means of prevention.

It would be unreasonable here to wish to judge otherwise. Even he whose most adored little child had met with his death in the water, would not take this accident as a reason for banishing water, or for demanding a prohibition of publicly mentioning water in the written or the spoken word. This last condition especially would only lead to disaster and would have the effect of rendering the number of fatal cases far greater.

In another respect also any warning against use on the ground of abuse is a logical mistake and a physiological error. Our actions are individual deeds, they spring from individual impulses, from our own motives and not from the motives of

\* (That the public good does not suffer.)



others. If, for instance, I observe that my neighbor uses something wrongly, I can either silently or expressly disapprove, but it never can be a reason for me not to use the thing rightly myself. On the contrary, I might take example by my neighbor of how *not* to do it.

To recommend proper use, and to give warning against abuse—these two things do not exclude each other, but are two sides of one and the same thing. Whoever feels himself called to the one, should feel himself duty bound to the other.

We should, as St Paul says, overcome evil with good, not by prohibiting the diffusion of knowledge, as so many would like to do. Such resistance only increases brute ignorance and dulls the feeling of responsibility. We want no Catholic Index, no censure, — condemning us grown-ups to remain forever children under guardianship, with no voice of our own. Only through ripe experience will good triumph over evil.

With this we have laid down the principle as a preliminary, we shall now deal especially in the next three chapters with the question of abuse, so as to warn against it. Only then will it be clear to us to what extent the knowledge of preventives may have good results and to what extent evil ones.

But I repeat, even if the abuses were a hundred times more imminent than they really are, the abuse would never turn us against the legitimate use. Nor might we allow all honourable wives to perish ignorant and miserable, solely and simply in order that thoughtless and immorally inclined young people shall not so easily be led astray!

## 21. — Prostitution.

Is it not to be feared that with a general knowledge of preventives, *prostitution*, that miserable caricature of love, that hot-bed of infection, that blot on the female sex, will be encouraged? Is not the use of preventives really a sort of prostitution in itself? So many people ask, who have no correct idea of what is understood by the word prostitution.

Of course, if we mean by prostitution, every instance of sexual intercourse which does not aim directly at the procreation of children, or every variation from the conventional rule which one in his fancy has imagined as wholly and solely sanctioned, almost everything may be included under this name. But,



properly understood, prostitution only means submission to sexual intercourse for payment, that is to say, only one kind of extra-marital intercourse. In prostitution there is money on the one side, and the allaying of sexual appetite on the other, there is no question whatever of love.

Is there any ground for the fear that prostitution, either public or clandestine, will receive any encouragement from the knowledge of preventives?

From the earliest times professional prostitutes have always been able to protect themselves from pregnancy, either as the result of a natural sterility, or more frequently that of venereal disease, or again through the use of artificial remedies. And it is just this sterility that is the *raison d'être* of their existence. The fee that they demand, is a payment for this monopoly rather than a compensation for loss of time. Deprive a prostitute of this monopoly, because all women now can, if necessary, render themselves voluntarily sterile, and her profession, as such, is ruined. The chief advantage of prostitution exists no longer.

Thus it may appear to the superficial observer as if all other women also, by rendering themselves sterile, bring themselves nearer to the level of the prostitute, and to a certain extent, become prostitutes themselves. But "*duo quum faciunt idem, non est idem*"\*.

With some people the act can have a quite opposite meaning to that which it has with others. The one woman wishes to be sterile in order to turn her sexual slave-service to mercenary ends; the other desires unfruitfulness in order thereby to be the mistress of her own body and her fate, and in order to be able to devote herself entirely to the care of the children she already possesses.

In regard to the question of prostitution, we must take into consideration the most diverse factors, first of all the question, whether the marriageable man are single or married. From the earliest times, nothing has been so favorable to prostitution as the enforced celibacy of so many men of marriageable age. So the question forces itself upon us: has prevention a possible influence on the number of marriages? After only cursory examination it may be imagined that the facilitating of preventive

\* (Even if two do the same thing, it is not always the same.)



intercourse is so prevalent, that every reason for marrying thereby disappears, and we very often hear from the defenders of matrimony — from the advocates of matrimony, be it remarked! — the despairing cry: “if birth-control is generally adopted, who will then want to marry?” We mean: every one who is acquainted with the advantages and blessings of marriage, as long as no contrary circumstances occur to upset his plans.

But experience does not teach us that the number of marriages is diminishing in the same proportion as the use of preventives increases. The statistical records of many European countries show, on the contrary, that in spite of the decrease in the birth-rate, the number of marriages has increased! And it is especially remarkable that two countries with so decided a decrease in birth-rate as France and Holland, even show an increase in the number of marriages\*.

Indeed it may be readily understood, that many a couple would postpone their marriage for a long time, from fear of the unavoidable burdens and endless suffering which would be theirs if it happened with them as with the mother or grandmother, who had nine (or thirteen) children — while they gladly marry if they know they can regulate the number of their children at will. A host of considerations, which otherwise would have led to the postponement or even to the renouncement of marriage, tend more and more to disappear. The fiancé now faces life with a cheerful and contented mind, whereas otherwise he would have been obliged to remain single for a long time. What suffering and how much vice and prostitution will also be avoided through a knowledge of the use of preventives! Here again, knowledge is power. And

\* If we compare the birth-rate in Table II with the marriage rate in Table I, we shall find that of the 24 countries compared, 13 actually show a diminution of both rates, and two (Portugal and Bulgaria) a mutual rise in both; but on the other hand 9 countries with a falling birth-rate, show an increase in the number of marriages! These last countries are: Iceland, Holland, Belgium, France, Italy, Prussia, Bavaria and Württemberg. Also if we wish to judge the question more accurately (see end of Chapter 2) and compare the birth-rate in Table IV with the marriage rate in Table I, the result still remains the same, only with the difference that Portugal instead of being classed with the two, must be classed with the nine countries quoted.



all those who cannot or will not marry, need not on that account fall into prostitution.

In certain cases other relations, which are not registered in the registrar's office, will be preferred, but these however are always better than prostitution, because here a certain mutual affection exists. Especially are cases of conscience and free-unions coming more and more into prominence. The number of marriages will certainly continue to diminish, until the legislators find time to bring their antiquated institution into line with modern culture. The limiting of the number of marriages contracted in many European countries depends more on the unpractical provisions of their marriage laws than exactly on preventive methods. If these were absolutely not to be had, then such an indissoluble bond as that of marriage would be still more avoided. And it is just the highly ethical love-unions which do not fall into the extremes of being either life-long or only momentary, that will only be rendered possible by the prudent regulation of a probable number of children.

Such cases of conscience, even if juridically considered as extra-marital, show the sharpest contrast to prostitution, which unfortunately, cannot be said of all official marriages. In regard to these, a physician sometimes witnesses horrible things. A very large proportion of the visitors to houses of ill-fame are married men, who wish in this old-fashioned and reprehensible manner to "spare" their wives, and to thus protect them from too great an increase in the family. Birth-control is also the best remedy against these patrons of prostitution.

And how does it generally happen, that a woman falls so low as to lead the joyless, miserable, alcohol-poisoned life of a prostitute, who must submit to every man, even one who disgusts her? Prostitution is for a woman an economic question. The discarded mistress, who does not know what to take up, the girl who has been betrayed and left to her own devices, pregnant or with a baby; the thoughtless one, who gradually falls lower and lower and finds herself at last on the streets; the woman who is defrauded by too low a wage, and finally sees no other way out; the woman who is excluded from the factory by laws of protection; from this immense despairing throng, prostitution is recruited, with its loveless victims.



A woman becomes a courtesan from love of pleasure, but prostitution is only a trade, and a hateful one indeed.

But when now birth-control comes to free woman from the slavery of sex, and makes her economic equality with man an accomplished fact, the scene suddenly changes. Then a girl will accustom herself from childhood to the thought that she can maintain herself, without looking on marriage as a means of earning her bread, or taking up prostitution as a means of supplementing an insufficient wage. With birth-control the whole of hitherto existing sexual economic conditions which provoked prostitution crumble into dust. Then also disappears the marriage of interest, in which the woman does not hire herself out only for a moment, but sells herself for life, which is prostitution in the highest degree.

Sexual and economic independence will restore the wife to a place of honor. And because she can now insist on her political rights, she will soon demonstrate that the old-fashioned faulty conditions cannot be longer maintained by old-fashioned marriage laws.

## 22. — Extra-marital Intercourse.

“But if it is not really prostitution, cannot a knowledge of prevention encourage carelessness?”

Carelessness! If we understand by this a disregard of the consequences, the selfishness of the moment, then the use of preventives, ethically considered, is still an advance on former conditions. And if we are sinning against ourselves, yet we are now no longer sinning against a possible third person, who would become a victim to this carelessness. “But with such convenient opportunities all fear of consequences will be removed, and sinning will become a habit!” Ah no, not so bad as that. That which is really immoral carries its own punishment, apart from the possible material consequences. And even preventives are not so infallible that they may be relied on always and under all circumstances. He who uses them carelessly is playing a gambling game, and even formerly not every girl became pregnant when she had intercourse with men; only the risk is now much less.

Even years ago, when preventives were not known, extra-marital intercourse could not always be prevented. The des-



pair of the unmarried mother, the fear of incurable disease, all the tortures of hell, all the warnings and threats — all were of no use. Many people indeed maintain that vice was formerly much bolder and much more general than it is to-day; we have countless examples of that in history.

The ground motives of our conduct lie mostly far deeper than in a taxation of probabilities. And when chastity is only based on the taxation of probabilities, it is not genuine chastity. Those who are really chaste will in no circumstance give way to debauchery, but have a deep dread of it, even if advantages were attached to it instead of detriment. And he who is really careless takes no notice of even the most serious possible consequences, on the contrary the risk of them often lends an added charm to the risk he is running.

The knowledge of preventives is not the deciding factor in the one case any more than in the other. At the same time, we must readily admit there are border-values: persons who are more easily tempted now than formerly; but we must notice however, that the return to the straight path is also much easier now than formerly. Then the unfortunate girl had to bear alone only too often, the fatal consequences of a moment's imprudence, a draconian and unjust punishment that drove her in a moment of despair to suicide, or in chronic depression to prostitution. And these lost girls were perhaps the very chosen ones of nature, who possessed the best selective aptitudes for motherhood.

Later on, the more preventives approach perfection, the more certainly must we modify our ideas of good and evil in these things.

But through such casuistic discussions the true ethical value of birth-control may be so easily lost sight of. It is not merely the question of simply a few children more or less in a family, but of a decision as to whether the procreation of children by sexual intercourse shall be allowed to continue for ever as an accidental result of sexual connection, or shall not rather be the result of mature deliberation. The question is whether we shall extend our control of Nature to this important matter. This is a matter of vital moment for the benefit of the present generation and all future ones.

The more procreation is a carefully thought-out process, the results of which may be regulated at will, the better can we control our sexual passion, and this means a new chapter



added to our code of ethics. Instead of only one chapter devoted to the sexual life, we then have two separate divisions: one dealing with sexual intercourse, with its normal standards and its obligations, and the other dealing with the begetting of children. Moderation will be a duty in each case. And in a few years this new chapter in ethics also will have been consecrated by tradition.

Even in debauchery the modern use of preventives is to be regarded as a most remarkable progress, in contrast to the former unbridled bestial impulse.

### 23. — Abortion.

For the complete treatment of our subject we must here say a few words regarding provoked abortion, a proceeding that is always a tragic social symptom and represents a danger to health. This artificial intervention should only be resorted to on pathological or other grounds when it is necessary in order to avert a still more serious danger to life, and should be carried out according to rule\* and by an experienced hand. Every clandestine abortion menaces the health of the woman, and frequently her life, in the highest degree. The fecundity of the race is also thereby prejudiced, for such an abortion frequently leads to sterility.

Now it is quite evident that birth-control and abortion mutually exclude each other. And if there should be any fear that abortion would be resorted to in some cases as a last resource when preventives have failed, — then it becomes clearly the duty of everyone who fears this, to coöperate with all his power in the perfecting of the protective methods and to the wider dissemination of the knowledge of birth-control.

But another train of thought is also possible. If the woman thinks she has a right to deliberately control the result of sexual intercourse, will she not then become still bolder, and stop at nothing, even abortion? A psychological causal connexion.

Of course as the woman is only just beginning to act consciously in the matter, it may happen that she makes a mistake, and then in this case she will also perhaps proceed to abortion. Then having learnt by experience, in the future

\* That is to say according to the methods which are taught to medical students in the universities.



she will take greater care, so that she does not find herself in such a state as to be obliged to resort to an act of this character; and if she is no longer pregnant she can no longer practice abortion.

A knowledge of the damage inseparable from abortion will finally restrain the wife from wishing for such a thing. Wives will then in their conversations with each other recommend the use of preventives and warn each other of the dangers of abortion; which will lead to the desired ends more effectually than all the threats of the jurist.

The more our feeling of responsibility as to the procreation of children is developed, the more it will also be extended to such a crime against the fertilised ovum, and all the consequences attached to it. If only the mother impregnated to-day against her will, had known yesterday of preventives, she would not to-morrow attempt abortion!

He who endeavors to maintain ignorance concerning birth-control is morally responsible in the case of habitual abortion.

From the earliest times up to the present, legislation in almost every country has tried to suppress abortion by the most stringent laws, but always unsuccessfully. Of course these laws have resulted in an increase of the fees for abortion, enhancing the charm of the forbidden; the evil traffic is swept back into dark corners where it goes on secretly, and the risk to health and life is increased. The law will never succeed in compelling a woman to keep the ovum alive; some expert hand will always be found to perform so small an office. From poverty she may try to do it herself, which is still more dangerous; or she takes some secret drug, and that is the most perilous of all.

In the Middle Ages even the Church was not so inhuman. Canonical law did not look on abortion in the early period of gestation as an attempt against life, because at that time the embryo had not yet acquired a soul\*.

\* This date has been variously given as after the 40th, 60th, 80th or 90th day following conception. In some places (in Saxony, for instance) it was believed that the embryo became a spiritual being with a soul, only when one half of the usual period of pregnancy had expired, perhaps because it is only then that quickening is noticed. DR L. LEWIN, "*Die Fruchtabtreibung durch Gifte und andere Mittel*", 3rd Edition, Pub.: Julius Springer, Berlin. 1922.



The only logical way to suppress provoked abortion is the prevention of unwanted parenthood by means of a better knowledge of preventive methods. To popularize this knowledge would be the right step for the magistrature to take in order to suppress the practice of abortion, and the other crime which unfortunately is also still frequent amongst us:—infanticide. The authorities would then be working in accordance with the historic development: abortion had diminished infanticide, and preventive intercourse diminishes abortion. On the other hand, they who shroud abortion in darkness, encourage illicit midwifery and infanticide; and they who arbitrarily hinder the spread of prevention and class it as obscene, are favoring the practice of provoked abortion.

The saying of Hippocrates is here applicable: *πρῶτον τὸ μὴ βλάπτειν* — “we must always take care that the evil is not rendered greater”.

Finally a few words regarding the pathological cases. To prevent involuntary abortion is one of the teachings of sexual hygiene. The two chief indications are syphilis, and too frequently occurring pregnancies. That both these can be most favorably modified by birth control is obvious.

In those cases which we mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, in which the surgeon, in virtue of his office\* is bound to remove the foetus “*lege artis*” (according to the rules of his profession) when life is threatened by serious danger, in all such cases it must be considered as irresponsible, lacking in common sense and mischievous, if the doctor as prophylaxis has simply warned his patient against pregnancy without informing her of the means of prevention which may safely be used by married people.

For this purpose however, it is most necessary that the doctor himself shall be thoroughly familiar with the technic of these methods, even in difficult cases, and that he is thoroughly capable of judging of the relative degree of safety of the various methods or combinations of methods in comparison with the uncertainty of the promised abstinence on

\* The surgeon stands on the horns of a dilemma every time: either he neglects his strict duty and lets the woman die, or if he is true to duty and anyone betrays him, he may be prosecuted and go to prison.



the husband's part. If we complain, and with reason, of the carelessness with which many women resort to abortion, we must not blame the surgeon the less for his carelessness, if his neglect is the cause of a medically ordered abortion being unavoidable. It is a lucky thing for the wife, if the surgeon having omitted one of the two duties, does not also neglect to procure abortion for her! At any rate the double carelessness on the part of the surgeon does not happen so often now, because most women unfortunately no longer trust their doctors with their interests in this province.

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## SECOND PART.

### *Birth control in its social aspect.*

#### 24. — Introduction.

We have studied the question of the individual interest and the happiness of the family from many different viewpoints. We have seen how a certain limitation is useful in the one case and indispensable in the other. We have seen how this can also ennoble the higher faculties of the individual, without however overlooking the fact that, like everything else in this world, birth-control may lead to abuses. We have not drawn general conclusions, because really, each individual case should be judged on its own merits. In each particular case the parents must decide what degree of limitation is the most desirable for them.

When nowadays an ever increasing number of persons according to birth-control do not leave fecundity to blind chance, that is to say to the accident of intercourse, but limit the number of their offspring to their own liking, — what consequences will that have for the community? If it were our point of view that we regard every individual case of limitation as desired, or all birth control as injurious, then perhaps one could forthwith apply this judgment to the community. But however, as we do not take such an absolute view of the matter, we cannot here generalise.

The hygienic blessings of birth-control (and we have seen how numerous they are!) will doubtless prove to be also advantages for the community. Especially where there is an imperative indication, the importance to the community of birth control cannot be doubted. Every society prospers only through the efficiency of its members and falls to ruin through the unfit. The economic advantages, however are always relative; for in this field there may always take place a struggle between private and public interest. And no matter how advantageous birth control might be for the family, — if the common safety or the efficiency of the masses were endangered thereby, then the prejudice for the community would not only equal, but surpass the advantages to the individual.



We should not *a priori* conclude from the individual advantages those of the community, but just as in Part I we considered individual families in their various relationships, so now we should follow up the different social groups, so as to discuss the question, as to what good or harm may be expected if birth-control is brought into general practice.

Foresight in this respect is doubly necessary here, because, as we have already seen above, abuses may arise with birth control; so we must carefully consider, whether the drawbacks do not perhaps outweigh the advantages for the community.

### 25. — A popular error.

What a great mistake can be made if one hastily takes an individual advantage of birth-control as general, will be seen from the following example, which displays a logical error that has been indeed too frequently committed by the champions of birth-control and will be committed again.

Relative advantages are frequently conceded to those whose lot it is to be counted the initiators of a new discovery — a sort of precedence or superiority, which however, ceases as soon as the novelty becomes common property. This I can perhaps better explain by quoting a few instances from other fields. Everyone knows the benefits of early rising, and the special benefit to him who first starts it in a house; as soon however as the other people in the house follow his example, he ceases to be the first awake, and all that remains to him is the hygienic advantage of beginning the day in the cool atmosphere and soft light of the early morn, and of spending less time by artificial light in the evening. Another example: in trade advertising, the first advertiser has a great advantage over his rivals in business; as soon however as they all advertise as well, this superiority fails him, and only the common benefit of publicity remains.

So it is in our case, with birth-control. Here the first to practice it, reaps an immediate advantage over his fellows. One might even be afraid that it should only possess an advantage for him who was the first to exercise it. Wages for instance, for many years back were based on the cost of maintenance of man and wife, and say: six children. And he



who has only two or three children to keep can manage much better on such a wage, than the majority of his working companions. If however, many of his fellows also accept birth-control, it might happen that in the near future this salary will be lowered and will then only just meet the needs of the smaller family that has become the normal one; so the advantageous position of the adept at birth control would gradually cease to exist. It can indeed be imagined that each advantage thus acquired might again be annihilated, in the sense expressed by LASALLE, in his "iron law of wages". But this is not likely, because labour organizations always succeed more easily in preventing a lowering of wages rather than in securing an increase of the same.

And indeed experience has shown long since, that it is not where the families are large that wages are high, but that wages are high where the standard of life is high. In those countries, districts, and branches of industry in which married people are accustomed to exercise foresight and prudence, much higher rates of wages prevail than where the old patriarchal regime still obtains.

Since the time of the first pioneers of birth control, the hygienic and educational aspirations of the working classes have greatly advanced, and will change still more. The "iron law of wages" says that wages has a tendency not to rise above the cost of the necessities of existence; but these "necessaries of existence" are quite relative, and will undoubtedly constantly increase through the increased exigencies of the pioneers and the gradually extended adoption of birth-control amongst married people. And long before marital prudence shall have found general adoption, even by the less educated families, the conditions of labor will also have undergone change; for as soon as the generality of people possess the same knowledge of prevention as now do the pioneers, the present social system of working for wages will no longer be the ruling mode of production, but will have given way to the coöperative form.

But in any case we cannot disdain the temporary advantage gained by the pioneer. Indeed, it is a powerful incentive for everybody to strive to win a place in the sun, an ambition which again, is fraught with good to the community. But it



would be a fault in the demonstration to generalize this advantage of pioneering.

## 26. — A Paradox.

The opinion is often expressed that the employment of preventives would result prejudicially for the community because the poor who ought to use them do not, and the rich, who do not need them, are only too inclined to use them. So the disproportion between the classes would become still greater, and the following not very enticing picture of modern social conditions might be drawn.

Rich families as a rule have few children, which may be due to the poor quality of the hereditary constituents of the parents' families or to the inhibitory influence of such constitutional causes as alcoholism, syphilis and such like taints to which the leisured classes are prone; also in many cases because of having married late in life and without much real affection for each other, through living in separate apartments, the husband keeping mistresses or being absent abroad for long periods etc., — so partly through the use of preventives and partly owing to the conditions of their social life. Rich people have the choice of many means of prevention, even those the least free from objections, and so they remain poor in the number of their children. Through this restriction in the number of their children their inherited property is not scattered in each new generation. Thus they become still richer\*.

The proletariat on the contrary, have as a rule big families, so far as death has not weeded out the too numerous progeny in the early months of their life. They know little or nothing of preventives, and in most cases could not afford them any way, and relying rather on the help of Providence than on their own, half crushed by their daily cares, led into error by people in a higher social station who persuade them that birthcontrol is wrong, often making capital out of the children — they leave the matter year in, year out to be governed by chance.

\* In some old chronicles we may read that in the Middle Ages it was also the case that many of the burggraves had few children; it would be worth while to examine as many family trees as possible in order to prove this statement.



Because they are proletarians they have many children, and because they have so many children they sink still deeper as proletarians. The poor therefore, have full sexual satisfaction, but hunger for bread; the rich have bread, but often hunger for true love, for happiness in the married state. And indeed in this respect especially many rich women lead a pitiable existence.

Middle class people, the lesser "bourgeoisie", are threatened by two dangers. On the one hand they are in the greatest anxiety lest they should sink to the level of the proletariat or be taken for them; so they cling tooth and nail to the appearances of ease and respectability, in order to save themselves in the struggle for existence. On the other hand, in the economic sphere they see themselves constantly overridden by the powerful trusts and limited companies. If they do not accept birth-control from hygienic or ethical motives alone, they will however be obliged to do so from economic motives.

Really, this is no enticing picture of modern society! We see the economic reasons for birth-control related to economic condition of society, and even governed by it; but the error lies in the present economic situation and not in the preventives. The damage wrought by profiteering and accumulation of wealth on the one hand and complete poverty on the other, the struggle for life to which this gives rise, this is the dark side of our modern system of production. Birth control is the corollary. If it were not practised, the poverty would be still much greater; the rich man would profiteer still more mercilessly for the benefit of his heirs, for whom he wishes at all costs to guarantee a competency, even if new offices or positions must be created for them; and the middle classes would hurry still faster to their doom. One does not destroy oneself by birth-control, one takes refuge behind it in the sorry struggle. And whilst preventive methods are simply used from economic motives, in order not to split up the "property" or the "business", so as to leave a working capital to the sons, or a substantial dowry for the daughter, or for other motives of an inferior order, the hygienic advantages of birth control as far as wife and children are concerned are not excluded; only excess in this as in everything else, can be harmful.

The richer classes only lose thereby as regards their numbers;



but as with us there is no sharp separation of the classes, this deficit is immediately balanced by the less wealthy taking their place. So in the roots of society there is a kind of a more or less powerful rising of the sap, which bursts through the tree into flower; only the withered leaves fall. From the standpoint of selection we may say in regard to heredity: individuals whose germ-plasm has suffered through the anti selective influence of luxury and capitalism, are replaced by individuals who still possess the advantages of an animal selection dating back for centuries. In reference to the traditional values, it may be said that individuals who are enervated and oversensitive will be replaced by individuals who still possess full powers of resistance. For those who rise are as a rule the best elements of the lower strata of society.

As stagnant water becomes foul, as plants cannot flourish if their roots have not sufficient space, so this flow of sap comes as a healthy expression of the life of society\*.

But it may be objected, this necessary root-pressure reacts finally on the fecundity of the lower orders. At any rate the world of the "struggle for life" in which we live, is still entirely founded on the animal standpoint of the Darwinian struggle for existence, the prime cause of which is the excessive number of individuals. We shall see however, farther on, how selection and progress may be furthered in other and possibly better ways, the more the common struggle gives way to mutual understanding and combined effort.

Then the world will present an entirely different aspect, one less mournful and offering a far higher stage of development.

## 27. — Two more paradoxes.

Another paradox that has often been brought forward is this: birth-control as at present practised is folly; for reasonable folks practise it and the careless do not; so that the first named must constantly remain in the minority.

\* The Lord Chancellor Bacon in his day, sounded the warning note that rich people especially should not have too many children; this has a paralysing effect on the masses, and a strong army could never be obtained in this manner. He quoted an example from forest life in this connection: if we allow the big trees to flourish undisturbed the remainder becomes only brushwood.



As a matter of fact, this is a very flattering idea for birth control, when one admits without further consideration that reasonable people recommend it and the careless are its opponents! But the conclusion which the opponents of birth control draw from it: namely that one should accordingly condemn its propaganda, is still more childish. Should we try in some way to make the wise foolish, or vica versa?

Only one remedy can be prescribed against the backwardness of the careless, and that is that they should be made wise also. It is easy to carry this programme out. With a little bit of good will and without great expense. Even the poorest of all would be glad of help and advice regarding this subject. Is not child-bearing a heavy burden for the wife of a poor man. Do not the poor feel the cold and lack of food when the family becomes too large? My experience is that the poorest women, when they are not led into error by parsons and other advisers, but are sufficiently instructed in the uses of preventives, are more thankful for the help and salvation than the rich ladies. Everyone can be rational at the same time. Yes, indeed, every provident individual and every wise action is a means of propaganda, a focus, from which the light can beam in all directions.

It seems at present to be a Utopian idea that one day everyone will be so rational as to practice marital foresight. But the imitative impulse is great and absolutely irresistible. Our wisdom of to-day is the future wisdom of the crowd a century hence; just as the masses of to-day reflect the higher mentality of the learned people a century ago.

Who would have imagined in early times as first the rich decked themselves with clothes, and began to wear a hat and shoes, that a time would come one day when the poorer classes would also consider these luxuries as indispensable necessities?

Sexual abstinence during the menstrual period, the primordial mating time for woman, has gradually been avoided because the woman is then most receptive. This avoidance, this traditional method for family limitation has only just gradually permeated through all strata of society, until it has reached the masses, and is at present unanimously approved as a traditional postulate of morality, only very seldom disregarded. It is taken as a matter of course to-day.



But if all men really become so well informed that they deliberately regulate the number of their progeny, will not the sexual life suffer from the prominence given to mental activity? No, as little as a rational man at present lacks time and strength for sexual intercourse through his great learning. Experience teaches us that the wise man remains free through the use of preventive methods, and not through a loss of manly power.

When at last all people become so wise that they no longer breed children without thought or conscience; when no one will bring children into the world if the prospects for their future happiness are not favorable — then the time will indeed have arrived, when men will no longer fight against their brother-men, but will all maintain a united front in the struggle against nature. Then perhaps there will once more be a time when there are too few hands, and it will only be the healthiest and most efficient men who will procreate children.

And if in our days, in the meanwhile, the developed, instructed and reasonable families practice birth control, we should not consider this as a disadvantage. In the mental sphere it is still more evident than in that of material wealth and of competition, that constant renewal is needed. Our knowledge and our view of life grow rusty and out of date far sooner than our gold and silver! So that the world shall not stand still and fall asleep, we must above all constantly have fresh recruits in the mental sphere. If the most apt limit their numbers, then mankind is recruited by selection from the next underlying strata, which are still untainted and unspoilt. In the mental sphere also, ambition and advancement are the unfailing guarantees of everlasting youth in contrast to the ancient regime.

In the ethical and hygienic province we hear a similar paradox. It is asserted for instance; the teetotaller will limit his family to reasonable numbers; the drunkard will give full rein to his sexual impulses, especially when under the influence of drink. So in course of time the population will include a terribly large percentage of alcoholic degenerates.

If we then consider the question of the struggle for existence, the solution of this paradox is the following: abstainers from alcohol strengthen their powers of resistance in the struggle



for existence by a wise limitation of their families; their children will receive an excellent education, so they will be victorious in the struggle. The drunkard's children on the contrary, numerous as the sands on the sea shore, will be suffering from both hereditary degeneration and neglected education; so they will be overwhelmed in the struggle.

But everyone feels with what endless suffering this defeat of the alcoholic generation is associated, what damage is thereby inflicted on the community, and especially how much the mothers must suffer thereby.

Let us take for instance, a case that occurs most frequently: that the husband is a drunkard and the wife the victim, all the more to be pitied the higher her own morality stands, and the more she is conscious of her deep injury. Only the physician knows what such a woman has to endure\*. And how much has she already been through before she summons up enough courage to tell her story to the doctor? We men have indeed taught her for centuries that it is a woman's place to suffer in silence; and the jurist has taken care also that talking and resistance are fruitless. Deprived of her rights as a human being, she is defenceless. The only thing that she can do, is to take care at least that she bears no more alcoholic children. If you refuse to do this one thing, then you are more cruel than others! What has been said here about alcohol applies also to venereal or other diseases which have a directly prejudicial influence on the germ plasm. If only in such cases as above mentioned, we should bless preventives as one of the greatest benefits to humanity, as one of the most effective means of obviating degeneration.

## 28. — The social mechanism of production.

If now, after these preparatory investigations, we study the present mechanism of production, we shall observe that an increase in the population is an important factor of economic

\* Pelman had occasion to investigate the life-history of 709 of the 834 descendants of Ada Jukes, a drunken vagrant, who died in 1740. The official records showed that there were among them 106 illegitimate children, 142 beggars, 64 workhouse inmates, 181 prostitutes; 96 were sentenced for various crimes, of whom 7 for murder. In 75 years the descendants of this drunken woman had cost the state the sum of 5 million gold-marks. (250,000 pounds sterling).



progress, and a stimulus to social energy. Through the increase in population, all well considered enterprises bring new profits, the landrent increases and man is encouraged to new discoveries and invention of new methods. If life is thereby rendered somewhat more difficult, yet our energy is also increased. Just as in natural history the struggle for existence is the ruling motive in selection, so in mankind competition is the motive power of advance and perfection. The increase of the population is in each case a cardinal point, one must either conquer or be conquered.

But, would it really be such a terrible disaster, if the strenuous nature of this struggle for life, this competition to the death should be somewhat moderated? Life itself, and the power of endurance may be too heavily taxed. When the struggle becomes too acute, then it is a source of injustice, of disloyal competition, of unfair dealings with colonies, etc. All the higher emotions must finally give way to the instinct of self-preservation. Instead of peaceful happiness we have foolhardiness and over-exertion. It is also a great error to imagine that competition is the only cause of progress. There are also many other things which similarly stimulate energy: emulation is nobler than competition, sympathy more conducive to happiness than envy, and coöperation in work stands higher than personal greed of gain.

If men did not squander their strength in competition in which they mutually injure each other, they could the more easily become the masters of the forces of Nature. All these things, the arts of peace, and the blessings of peace will the more reach their highest achievement when the struggle for existence, competition, war and hate are all lessened. Mankind will then be able to show far greater progress than to-day.

Can you imagine yourself in a students' club with a lot of well bred young men? As students they know no competition, no cares as to where their daily bread shall come from. Do you think that among them energy is diminished, or that selfishness, langour or laziness rules? Let us imagine a case: t a rowing club: won't they pull strongly with brawny arms to train for a race? They are not driven by bitter necessity, but are animated by the love of life, by ambition; they want to do something, to accomplish something before their friends;



and doubly so if young ladies are present. There are indeed other and higher motives than the struggle for existence to stimulate our energy! Human society is actually in a transitory stage towards a higher form of mutuality in production, as a consequence of its economic development. People are just beginning to realize that the life and death struggle, the struggle of all against all, is not the highest, the most profitable form of existence. It must be admitted that not everyone feels this. And yet this new principle has been working for a long time. He who has observed the inner life, and not only that which lies on the surface, who has possibly read Kropotkin's "Mutual Aid", knows that the principle of mutual help has been a much more weighty factor in progress in all times, ever since the first cell-life appeared upon the earth.

But so long as we still have to live in this transitory period, is it not — sociologically speaking — horrible selfishness, even when the father can afford it and the health of the mother is perfectly good, — is it not awful selfishness to produce many children who will have to throttle others later on in the struggle for life? And the children of rich people are especially dreaded competitors for all those who do not enjoy the same advantages.

And even though people may look upon children as a luxury they allow themselves, yet it selfishness to claim too much of this luxury for themselves. If married people have so many children, the number of the unmarried will be all the greater later on. Their compulsory celibacy is the corollary of our excessive numbers.

#### 29. — Children as a source of profit.

I was talking once with a maker of wooden shoes, who gave me the following as his opinion: "Birth control is no good. The more children there are the better it is for everybody; if they can't afford leather shoes, they can easily buy a pair of wooden ones." Ah, all the poor little things, far too many, who needlessly die in their first year; they will never live long enough to wear a pair of little shoes at all! "But", it may be said, "the grave-digger and the insurance collector have got to make a living. And even if the little ones only live one day, it is good for the midwife".



In just such a manner the short-sighted in modern society may express the wish that others should not limit the number of their children, although they are wisely inclined to use prevention in their own families. This idea is however not justified, so soon as one glances just a little farther around. Some people would like the population to increase as much as possible so as to create more work; but this work is only required if it brings in suitable wages. And then again, in every improvement in any given calling, the chief point is that there should be less work and more pay. Let us take for instance the case of a midwife who must tire herself out day and night for a hunger-wage. And for what reason? Simply because the working-class families cannot pay more. If there is a child every year, then the smallest fees are found too high. Let us suppose that birth control comes into general use, that these same families only have a child every two or three years. The midwives would have less trouble and work, and in the course of time could demand higher fees. So it is in all other professions. Too few births would be the death of society; too many births bring cares, badly paid work and disappointment. A rational limitation in the number of children in families is the best protection for the welfare of the community.

However contemptible it may be to wish for the birth of many children in other people's families, in order to earn more money in our own trade — at the expense of the poor children who come unasked into the world — it is still more contemptible and cruel, if the parents themselves desire a numerous progeny for the sole purpose of employing them sooner or later as a means of gain. The laws for the protection of the working classes have had to be created in order to render the worst forms of child exploitation impossible. But legislation only protects the children in certain cases, and there are always loopholes enough left for a certain amount of exploitation of child labor to occur.

That this misuse of child labor through their own parents has a most unfavorable influence on the betterment of the race, is evident. We mean here the material profit of a numerous family, such as is only wished for by morally inferior or poverty-stricken people. Experience has demonstrated this in a convincing manner.



Lydia Kingsmill Commander\* visited 38 medical practitioners in New York and its suburbs, and from exhaustive enquiries she made on the subject, learnt that Americans almost without exception prefer to bring up small families, in order to be the better able to arm them for the fight in life. Only the very lowest classes, such as newly arrived immigrants from overcrowded European countries, Italy etc., who have themselves scarcely any food, live there without troubling their heads about anything and let their children as soon as they can toddle, seek their bread on the streets, shining shoes or selling papers! What good to the community can come out of this?

Too many children in the long run is good for no one, not even for the community, and only poverty can result. If they go to buy bread, it is no use to the baker if they cannot pay for it. The overproduction of children is just as great a danger for the community as overproduction in any branch. We only need to reflect how all reforms are always hindered by a too great population. Let us take for instance the board schools, the best guarantee for a future further development. If the stream of fresh children arriving year after year becomes too great, it is simply impossible to provide each year the new schools necessary, to train enough new teachers and to pay them. And the result is? Schools like many that we now have, in which the children are so crammed together that they have no room to learn properly; they are only drilled, stamped in the same mould.

Or let us imagine another case, a new source of income is to be inaugurated, a new form of industry introduced, a lake to be drained, or some other work undertaken which will provide bread for thousands. Hungry men pour in from all sides, they settle down, they marry, they have children. And then when the number of children has long since been sufficient to fill every possible vacancy in the new territory, sufficient to turn to account all the newly acquired advantages — still the parents will continue to bring another lot of children into the world, excusing themselves with the plea that they are married. The more productive the new source of industry is, the greater will finally be the poverty proceeding from it — if no parental foresight is exercised.

\* The Independent, 130 Fulton St, New York, 13<sup>th</sup> Oct 1904 p. 847.



**30. — Automatic regulation of the population.**

Now a new consideration arises. We have seen that in the interest of the community too rapid increase of the population may be as obnoxious as too slow a one. How shall it then be regulated, not to fall into the one extreme or the other?

We can perhaps imagine a commission whose duty it is to fix the number of children each individual family may bear. This commission must be entrusted with all details appertaining to the family. And so, as it gives so much work, there must be many such commissions.

Viewed in the proper light, there are in fact such commissions already in existence, indeed there is one special one for each family: the parents! These are without the slightest doubt the best acquainted with all the conditions, and furthermore, real interest in these conditions is never lacking, for they themselves are the most closely affected.

The individual families are the first to feel the effects of social disadvantages produced by a too rapid increase in the population. If there is a lack of work, or difficulties in finding a good situation, the choice of such a profession will diminish, and these causes would also have a restraining effect on the procreation of so many children. In the other case, for healthy active parents with no knowledge of preventives, the blind sex-impulse will be sufficient motive, and when they do know of preventives, the love of home and children would be sufficient stimulus for them to prefer more.

So the parents have already to hand the automatic means of regulation, preventing them from deviating too far from the optimum.

Are they in need of no correction? Certainly they are. We have already mentioned the prohibition of marriage in case of disease. Sickly children cannot in any case be useful to society. And the more sickly the parents themselves are, surely the less will they wish for children, if they are only aware in what way they can protect themselves in their married life from pregnancy.

In regard however to that economic and pathological case in the lower stratum of society, in which the parents lie in wait for the coppers their children should bring home from



begging or selling news papers or shining shoes, here it is evidently the duty of the magistrature and of society to seek healing for the sores of the people.

From the moment when these families are raised from their state of misery and suffering, those same parents will no more want a large number of children than we do. This taking care of the poor, which without birth control represents an almost impossible task for the community, would however, with a knowledge of preventive methods, become from generation to generation an ever lighter task.

Later on it will also be found worth while to inform the public by means of statistics as to the production of mankind, just as it is considered necessary now-a-days to publish learned statistics of the production of currants and tobacco. Enquiries and offers will be exactly quoted. By this means a great deal of suffering and disappointment would be avoided, as statistics see more clearly than instinct.

And if the parents should be in any doubt as to what would be the best to do in a certain case, more children or no more, they can obtain advice. If education is in question, they can consult the schoolmaster; if they fear their health is defective, then they can go the doctor; if they feel moral hesitations, to the clergyman.

But the parents have long since come of age; they are not obliged to follow the advice given them; they ought not to shield themselves behind it, for they remain always responsible for their own acts. On no account should it be left to chance, how many children should come into the world. And just as now even the most pious believer does not leave the production in his own trade or profession to the higher powers, he will later feel that he is responsible as far as the production of children is concerned.

The production of descendants tends more and more to be regulated by the parents, and so will the population question more and more be controlled by the individual families. Is it not now the task of the authorities to institute a legal regulation of these matters, and not only in the above pathological cases?

I am of opinion that one cannot be too careful in these matters. A prohibition of large families seems to me on principle, to be just as risky as an encouragement from the



authorities. Common knowledge should be quite sufficient, and all compulsion awakens resistance. Besides which, all the experience of history teaches us that all tutelage has always shown itself to be idle and void of effect in both directions. In contrast to the care with which many governments at the present time seek to hinder the publication of knowledge of preventive measures in married life, it should surely be the duty of the authorities to place the necessary hygienic knowledge within the reach of every married couple.

All the reasons which tell us that the general spreading of knowledge in the schools is to be the constant care of the state, show us also incontestably that the state is just as much bound also to take care that the instruction given on sexual matters shall be sufficiently complete.

In the elementary schools most of the other physiological subjects are also treated in a very defective manner, although hygiene should be the foundation of all well-being and happiness for every individual. In more advanced education more attention is certainly paid to human anatomy and physiology, generally however with the exception of those organs which especially require in these years such great tact on the part of the teacher. And in university education? Are there professors lecturing on the population question as a biological question? In the medical schools of the universities a thorough education is given in embryology, gynaecology and obstetrics, venereal diseases, masturbation and impotence — which are a matter of medical practice, — but the whole field of intimate sexual intercourse with its wide-bearing consequences for the psychical and physical condition of the individual is as a rule totally neglected. May not sexual abstinence be a cause of depression, and on that account, like other depressing influences, predispose to constitutional disorders?

Is not the sexual instinct one of the most powerful impulses of our life, at least as strong if not stronger than other physiological instincts? Nothing is mentioned of all this. This is incredible, but true. Similarly birth control, which Dr Mensinga in his wide experience has concluded to be in many cases a therapeutic means of the first order, is almost never mentioned, excepting in the most cursory manner. A thorough acquaintance with the technic of *abortus provocatus*



is regarded as indispensable in the young doctor's final examination; but he is never questioned as to his knowledge of preventive methods.

Are we not right when we state that the authorities perform their duties in this respect very badly?

31. — Will not many geniuses remain unborn?

We must now briefly discuss the question of the genius; I do not mean some doctrine proclaimed to the world by a genius — on the contrary — but the endeavor to produce geniuses, which is very praiseworthy in itself; is it not? We meet with many such objections as the following: "If you neomalthusians prevent the birth of so many children, does it not occur to you that possibly amongst these unborn children there might have been many geniuses? How many geniuses in human history would never have been born, if their parents in their day had been such stubborn neomalthusians as you are at present?

Quite apart from the fact that this objection might with equal justice be applied to chastity and all sexual continence, both in and out of the married state, the whole argument is founded on the idea that geniuses arise quite independent of circumstances and environment, either spontaneously, (that is by accident) or through inborn qualities. The theory of accident requires no comment, and the theory of inborn qualities is logically very contestable and empirically unfounded.

It was also taught back in the Middle Ages that the life of man was pre-formed, pre-ordained, pre-destined; but science has never been able to reconcile itself to such an interpretation of fact\*. But it is always "ignotum per ignotius", to try to explain the unknown by the still more unknown. This pre-formation of genius seems in particular to be quite incomprehensible. He who believes in it, must indeed regard it as a fortunate accident that Andreas Hofer was born in the Alps and Columbus at the sea-side; that Luther happened to live

\* In this connection reference may be made to MAX VERWORN, "Allg. Physiologie. Ein Grundriss der Lehre vom Leben". Jena, G. Fischer 1897, 2. Ed: Page 540 etc.



at the time of the Reformation, and Alexander the Great at a period when the surrounding nations were falling into decay.

If we take up the position that great minds and great characters with favorable dispositions would be educated and polished by the surrounding circumstances, that they develop genetically; that Saint Augustin was converted, not through the germ-plasm of his mother St Monica, but through her tears and prayers, her deep mother-love, — then there is only one unique method for bringing forth as many geniuses as possible, and that is — to create ideal surroundings for all who are to be born. It is amongst the plants which bear big flowers that we find the greatest possibility that they will also one day bear unusually large or even double blossoms. This method is only practically realisable if too many children are not produced. Surely one should not be so immoral as to wish to produce a genius through the despair which might so easily be called forth by unfavorable surroundings, — as formerly many English manufacturers eagerly took into their service the mothers of large families, because being so terribly harassed by the worry and despair of poverty, they got through such an incredibly large amount of work. Otherwise indeed in regard to this matter one might intervene to render all circumstances worse, so that through resistance to them good might result.

But even if the community could really nourish the hope, that amongst an increased number of births more geniuses (of sickly constitution or not) would be found, this could never be a reason for the parents to run such a risk. What married couple would like to play in this lottery with such slight chances of drawing a lucky number and such certainty of backing an unlucky one? Is it not in the highest degree immoral even to wish that the parents should be so unwise?

That is the theory regarding geniuses! Was I not right when I said that it has not been preached by geniuses?

The objections raised to birth control in the interests of geniuses can only proceed from the brain of a man who has a very peculiar idea of what a genius is, and would explain it somewhat as if a genius was an "ens sui generis", an accidental freak of Nature or a predestined infant prodigy. This is however at variance with all experience, which teaches us



that that which we are in the habit of poetically calling a genius, is a specially happily talented individual, who attains success in some *one* special point, in connection with particular circumstances, and relying on everything which has been afforded by bygone centuries. Such success is unattainable by those around him, (whose dispositions and circumstances were different) and astonishes us. Sometimes it has been developed by a surprising combination of circumstances which we term "accidental". But inspired gifts have never been shown without contact with the outer world, or exclusively of the endless chain of causes and effects.

As we have already had several times occasion to remark, that birth control may have a very favorable influence on the circumstances under which an individual grows up and develops, so it will be recognized without difficulty what importance the restriction of the family may have in bringing out and developing predispositions to genius, which under less favorable conditions and defective training would have been nipped in the bud.

But the purpose of this consideration has further also a great practical significance. If we really desire to apply ourselves earnestly to the production of gifted people, to bring individuals endowed with unusual abilities to full development, then we must first of all begin by providing better care for the illegitimate children, who so often owe their origin to extraordinary unions, to unusual combinations of the fates, to interesting experiments. Amongst these children we should find all extremes: some will be suffering from alcoholic degeneration or serious venereal taint; some will be quite ordinary, begotten by persons who yielded in a cowardly manner to their bodily passions at the first temptation. But in others we shall find powerful initiative, and a free bold glance, as the fruit of unions in the accomplishment of which all barriers were overcome by indomitable energy; combinations of the very rich and the very poor; of very active and very passive natures; of the highest mental culture and brute instinct, etc. In any case, if we are seeking to breed gifted people, here we have the very individuals who deviate the most from the ordinary, the every-day sort, as far as their origin and circumstances are concerned.



And then these children could be temporarily brought most easily under specially chosen favorable circumstances. They do not groan under the tyranny of a stern parent; the community can organize their training and education on the most ideal plan, by which they would not be spoilt but all the slumbering talents in them would be awakened. The orphan asylum of Paul Robin in Cempuist (in contrast to our orphanages) shows what success is obtainable in this direction, and has even been already obtained. No longer "institutions" but a broad, free world.

Or rather, if we wish to adopt a plan by means of which no gifted child will be lost sight of, let us see to it, that *all* children who are born, whatever they are, shall receive a careful bringing up, and that those who show the most favorable dispositions, should also be afforded opportunities of developing their talents to the best advantage. Make no exceptions, do not exclude any children whatever, neither the foundlings nor the children from the workhouse, nor those of vagabonds and tramps. Keep them under observation, and help every child in every rank of life, village children and town children, boys and girls alike, from every race and sect. The school teacher can easily point them out to you, the diligent scholars who are blessed with unusual gifts. Who shows genius for mental work should receive further mental training; he who displays aptitude for art or a hand-craft should be trained to perfect himself in it. So we should make room for genius and see that it is not stifled.

And if then after these experiments you have not material enough, then — and not till then — should you beg and pray of the parents to bring more children into the world!

### 32. — Overpopulation.

Does overpopulation exist? This question has already occupied innumerable writers and speakers. And the one declares with just as much zeal as the other, that at least in the old countries of Europe we stand too much in each other's way already, while the other deplores that the number of people — at any rate capable people — is still always too small. But the question cannot be answered in so undecided and general a manner. "Overpopulation" is a relative expression,



and it can be spoken of from the most widely different points of view. The answer to our query will accordingly depend on which conditions one has especially in view. In the days when the means of communication were defective, overpopulation could only be local, as for instance in Malthus' day. He asserted that if one day the harvest should fail, it might be possible to feed the coast towns with imported grain, but that such help could not arrive in time to save the inland places. In parts of the world where the state of business and traffic is still so primitive, of course only local resources can be relied upon.

Present day birth-control is principally concerned with house overcrowding through those big families, which we referred to in Part I. General Brialmont was one of the first to devote attention to a possible future crowding of our planet. In an essay "*De l'accroissement de la population et de ses effets dans l'avenir*", Paris, Fischbacher, 1903\*, he shows us how it might occur in the course of time that the planet on which we live bears too many men for them to exist happily on its surface; a prospect which at least should bring sociologists and statesmen to exercise prudence in their ideas for increasing the population. For although presumably, such a state of things could not occur for a long time, that is no reason for steering direct towards it. And long before it reaches that stage, the approach of the evil can be felt as a dark shadow, even if the lay public does not understand the more deeply lying causes of the evil. Unfortunately the squandering of life in the recent war has given us a slight foretaste. And especially the feeling of uneasiness since the war makes us realize how difficult it is to guarantee everyone hygienic and appropriate working hours as producer, and a comfortable existence as consumer.

What may be termed overpopulation at the present day, is in principle often an unhealthy overcrowding of people in the big towns, in which men squirm and hurry like ants in an ant-hill, where people live above and beneath each other and deprive each other of light and air; a wilderness of bricks

\* Also in a German translation: "*Zur Bevölkerungszunahme*". Zürich Grütliverein. 1904.



and mortar, overcast by a cloud of dust and smoke. And in the country? Oh, where there are heaths and wood, but nothing to eat, there is plenty of room to be had, and sunshine, that can also be made profitable. But everywhere where there is a bit of arable land, men have established their dwelling places, and lead an existence often more miserable than that of folks in the towns.

It is a certainty that some other repartition of landed property might greatly ameliorate this state of things, that much ground might then be laid under cultivation which is not at present available. Also the improved and accelerated traffic facilities will constantly contribute to the decentralization of the towns. But all this does not help us now. Of course, it is possible that electricity will bring small industries again into favor; that in the future there will be less amassing of riches and less overcrowding, that big farm lands will give way more to garden cultivation — but all this does not prevent the fact that nowhere in western Europe can we say that the population is too small for the means of existence provided and available on the spot. On the contrary. No matter where you go and with whom you speak, you will always hear from the parents of big families that it is very hard to find everything they need. It is hard in the towns, and still harder in the country districts.

The fact that no people or almost none live where the means of existence are nil or almost nil, has sometimes led people to reverse the thing and to say: in such and such places (and even in such historical periods) in which the population is scanty, conditions are worse than with us; the thinner the population the worse the conditions. That can only be understood in the following manner: there exists, within certain limits, a mutual causal relationship, a working of exchanges going on between the quantity of food produced and the number of human beings who have to share this production.

But, especially if we are aware of this mutual proportion, we must be careful not to insist on a too rapid increase in the population; for the production will surely require a certain time before it can adapt itself to the increase in the population. The difficulties connected with this are not always so easily



surmounted; one must on that account always keep within certain reasonable bounds.

In addition to these various geographical varieties of overpopulation we must now also turn our attention to the economic forms; the question of overpopulation in its relation to industry. KARL MARX was the first to employ the term overpopulation in the sense of unemployment when he said: relative overpopulation is the consequence and the condition of existence of the capitalistic method of production. (Karl Marx: "Das Kapital" 4th reprint, Vol I, pp. 593—613). He says that if there were no unemployed the capitalist could not own so much surplus-value.

Here we see the connection of the overpopulation question with the economic question set before us, and the problem must then be set forth in the following manner: "is there an overpopulation in proportion to the actual economic situation, or in proportion to the prevailing system of production?"

A reserve army of unemployed can only reduce the wages of the working man and give the capitalist a better opportunity of plundering the masses. Although the number of unemployed is very variable, the more frequently and the more completely hand labor is replaced by machinery, yet it is indisputable that this number nowadays, and even in summer, is always regrettably large, and I for my part am under the impression that it has been steadily increasing for many years.

Consequently we may speak of a constant overpopulation in this sense. And in those localities where the necessity of additional hands is felt in the highest degree, such as Surinam for instance, the conditions of labor and living are really of such a nature that I would not willingly send my dog there.

There is still another criterion by means of which we may arrive at an opinion regarding overpopulation in the economic sense, the same method that is employed if we want to know if relatively much or little of a valuable article is available, namely — the *price*. The proportionate rarity or superfluity of every valuable article can be ascertained from the position of its market price. The rise or fall in its value may be observed in comparison with that of gold or of any other customary unit of exchange. If modern wages is expressed in gold-value or reckoned according to the cost of corn, for



instance, — then indeed the price of labor has risen considerably in comparison with former times\* but in comparison with present day requirements wages is still very small, and furthermore most uncertain. I do not mean that the wages would be insufficient to provide small luxuries for the workers; I mean that as a rule it would not suffice for the physiological requirements, not to speak of providing enough for the physiological optimum. With this fact before us we ought not to advocate a more rapid increase in the population. It would appear to us much more desirable at the present moment that the market should be less flooded.

There is further another manifestation which may have its significance in connection with overpopulation in the economic sense. I at least have always been under the impression, that in former times prices of goods were first and foremost regulated automatically by the amount of *labor* which their production had required; but that, since mechanical aids to industry have come to such perfection, the prices of goods are rather calculated from the quantity of *material* used to produce them.

In comparison with that of raw materials the price of labor appears to have fallen. For instance, formerly, that was cheap which was bulky and heavy; now are cheap things which are ornamental, fine and light. Because the price of labor has been so greatly reduced in comparison with that of raw materials through increase of the population on the one hand and machinery, mass production and automatic installations on the other, foresight in regard to overpopulation is doubly recommended.

Whether after all, in respect to the available means of nourishment overpopulation exists or not, will be dealt with in the next chapter.

### 33. — Is the food supply sufficient for all?

More prosaic, but not less important than the inquiry about genius, is the question whether everybody who is actually

\* Certainly this rise in the last decades stands in harmony with the restriction of the number of births in this period, and more recently with the great waste of human life in the war.



living, has enough to eat. Of sufficient clothing and housing we need not speak.

At any rate there is enough to eat, or enough — not to die of hunger. If there were not enough to live upon, then the people would already be dead. If the food supply runs short, a portion of the population begins to perish; if the want becomes acute, then the death rate rises. So we pose the question thus: is there for everyone living, sufficient to enable him to maintain his health and working capacity? We should wish of course to reach the optimum.

I have before me an essay by GABRIEL GIROUD, "Population et Subsistances", Paris, Schleicher Frères, 1904, an attempt to give world statistics, at least for those countries in which statistics are obtainable whether in Europe or elsewhere. He chose the figures given for the year 1887, because the most exact figures obtainable were for that particular year, and it was a remarkably fruitful year compared with previous ones.

The entire production of the year 1887 was divided: 1. by the figure of the total population of the countries in question, (calculated according to the consumption of adults), 2. by the figure 365 (number of days in the year), in order to see in this manner whether the quantity of foodstuffs physiologically necessary per head and per day is available, even in case of an even distribution. In making this calculation the author in doubtful cases, has always taken the highest figure for the food production and the lowest for the number of adults. He included the domestic animals both on the debit and credit sides.

From his statistics it appears that there was per head and per day:

	Grammes weight	Albumen	Fats	Carbo- hydrates
Bread	274	19,4 Gms	2,3 Gms	143,9 Gms
Indian Corn	115	10,9	6,3	73,6
Rice	87	5,	2,	70,9
Meat (bones included)	137	27,4	15,	0,7
Peas, beans, etc.	49	11,5	0,9	2,3
Potatoes	321	4,8	2,9	6,1
Cheese	13	3,4	4,	2,
Butter	9	0,2	7,5	
Total in Grammes:		82,6	40,9	299,5
				6*



To the above must be added a trifling quantity of fresh vegetables, fruit, milk and less important substances: yet not so much as to bring the total albumen content up to 90 grammes.

If we now consult an academical work on physiology, as to what quantity of nutriment an adult requires for his daily physiological needs, we find the following figures given: (Landois-Rosemann, Physiology, 1916, p. 360).

#### The Adult Requirements for 24 Hours

Foodstuffs in Grammes	At rest (Playfair)	In moderate work (Moleschott) (v. Voit)		In heavy work (Playfair)	(v. Petten- kofer and v. Voit)
Albumen	70,87	130	180	155,92	137
Fats	28,35	84	56	70,87	117
Carbo- hydrates	310,20	404	500	567,50	352

We can now see what a shortage is shown by Giroud's figures. In albumen for instance, there is a shortage of about  $\frac{1}{3}$  in moderate work alone. Although we may be aware at the present time that the capability of mankind to replace one kind of foodstuff by another is greater than was formerly imagined, — here it is in every respect too little if men have to furnish productive work. As far as these statistics go, and they are most carefully drawn up, there is only just enough albumen to provide two-thirds of the population with the quantity they require in moderate work. Giroud subsequently prepared the same figures for the year 1908. From these it appears that since 1887 the production of food stuffs has considerably increased, but that meanwhile the population has increased still more. And so the state of affairs remains. The production of luxuries is easier and more remunerative.

Indeed much more food might have been produced, so much that there would have been plenty for everybody and to spare. But it is evident from these figures that this condition is not actually the case; and we have only to deal with actual conditions.

We can eat yesterday's bread, but not to-morrow's. The fairy-tale of our good mother the earth, who stores enough bread in her lap for all her children, if it were only honorably



shared out, has one thing in common with other fairy tales, and that is it must not be taken literally. The knowledge that this too limited production of food stuffs depends closely on the modern capitalistic methods of production, in no way changes the sorrowful fact itself. And that furthermore the distribution of the products is so constantly unequal, makes the state of affairs still worse.

If we but glance around in the circle of our own experiences: as physician, as employer, clergyman or guardian of the poor, — what do we see? Many, very many who do *not* get enough to eat. Look at the workmen who have just left the factory, at the farm-hands going home from the ploughed fields, look at your servant girl; what a haggard, pale, sickly creature she was, when she first came to you, and what a vigorous young woman she has become when leaving your house because she is looking higher, — provided of course that she is not engaged for half-days only, and can go out as soon as everything is set ready for you on the table. Look at that boy, who goes as indoor apprentice or to a boarding school, where he can get all he wants to eat, and notice if he does not increase in weight, strength and power of resistance. For there are countless families where the nourishment is habitually deficient. The quantity provided is not too little to keep body and soul together, but is not enough to satisfy the physiological requirements of the body.

Have we in contrast to this deficiency on the one side, overeating in rich families? There are certainly some rich people who habitually or occasionally eat too much; but in my professional practice I have met a fair larger number who through their tit-bits and delicacies, through their occasional excesses, through an idle, lazy life, lying in bed too late, etc., eat really *too little* from a physiological point of view, — especially amongst the ladies. The answer to the above question must consequently be a decided “no”. We do not obtain the impression that the shortage of nourishment among the poor might possibly be compensated by that which the rich eat in excess of their requirements; but we rather see evidence everywhere around us of the truth of Giroud’s statistics, viz: that the total production of food stuffs at present is not enough to thoroughly nourish the existing population.



Of course colossal stocks of the products of industry are amassed in shops and warehouses, a bewildering number of articles of luxury are manufactured, which represent a regrettable amount of work; but the production of food stuffs is insufficient in proportion to the number of the population. Or in other words: there are too many people in proportion to the actually available amount of food. But the disproportion is still as a matter of fact far greater than shown in the Giroud statistics. He forgets the worst of all: he includes indeed in his statistics all those who must perish either from too much or too little nourishment; but he does not include all those who have already been eliminated, who have already overstepped the boundary of the minimum. The voices of those who have already perished from want, will no longer be heard.

The death rate is, physiologically considered, still always much too high, especially in the families of the poor, which shows so distinctly that want, want of light and air, of proper care and attention of proper food, gives them the final blow. This is seen in the most striking manner in the children of the poor, as it is just these children who are the most lacking in powers of resistance.

From the mass of statistics bearing on this question, I will only refer to those of Bertillon. According to his report in the "Bulletin de l'Institut International de Statistique" the following people were found still living out of 1000 born on the same day:

Living after	from 1000 Rich	from 1000 Poor
5 years	943	655
10 "	938	586
20 "	866	486
30 "	796	408
40 "	695	396
50 "	557	283
60 "	398	172
70 "	235	65
80 "	37	9

Thus we see that one half of the children of the poor died between their 10th and 20th year, whereas this only occurred with the rich between the 50th and 60th year.

It can still more evidently be observed how intimately this



high rate of mortality is connected with economic conditions, through the counter-test with which vital statistics provides us. As soon as the number of children in these families falls, the prospect of a further lease of life for the survivors will be far more favorable. A restricted number of births always goes hand in hand with a low death rate.

In the vital statistics of the last decades\* this comforting fact is evident from all sides, and that with a disconcerting pretension of being accepted as a law. It is Dr. C. V. DRYSDALE in particular who has drawn attention to this relationship, and laid the greatest stress on this law.\*\*

It may be seen from our Table II at the end of this volume that 25 of the 28 European countries show at the same time as a diminution of the birth rate, an improvement in the death rate, indeed 17 of the countries show so great a decrease in the mortality that as a consequence not only is the diminution in the number of births thereby compensated, but over-compensated, and on this account in these countries in spite of a falling birth rate, the excess of births over deaths has shown an increase.

Only in 8 of the countries was the latter not the case and the excess of births decreased more or less, but still there was some excess of births remaining over in these countries also. Only in France we frequently came across a year in which the excess of births was negative, i. e. with more deaths recorded than births; but we shall refer to this more fully in Chapter 42. The 8 countries in question are: Sweden, Norway, Finland, England with Wales, Scotland, Ireland, France and Belgium.

In the three other countries (Portugal, Bosnia with Herzegovina, and Bulgaria) the birth rate has increased, the mortality decreased, and the excess of births over deaths has increased.

The objection may now be raised, which has been already discussed in Chapter 2, as to whether this diminution of the death rate may not be simply attributed to the natural conse-

\* that is to say prior to the war; see the statistical remark at the end of Chapter 2.

\*\* See his "Diagrams of International Vital Statistics" with description in English and Esperanto. London. Wm Bell, 1912, price sixpence.



quence of a change in the composition of the population through the lessened number of births.

Let us therefore refer to Table III, in which we are not dealing with the total death rate per 1000 inhabitants, but with the child mortality\* per 10,000 infants under one year. And this should be regarded especially in connection with Table IV, in which the births are not calculated per thousand inhabitants, but per 1000 women between the ages of 15 and 49. Then we are guaranteed on both sides against the self-deception in question.

But so we also come to the same conclusion. In 22 of the 25 countries here considered, a decrease in the birth rate went hand in hand with a diminished infantile mortality; only 2 countries (Luxemburg and Spain) showed a falling birth rate but not a falling infantile mortality so far and in Bulgaria alone simultaneously with an increased birth rate there was a certain diminution in the infantile death rate.

These statistical particulars bear witness in the most signal manner to the fact, that no matter how much may be said against birth control, still our modern culture with its forethought in the procreation of children and its care in bringing them up, stands on a higher level, and gives rise to better economic conditions than the much vaunted state of nature, in which children were thoughtlessly bred and perished in enormous numbers in the first year of their existence!

This foresight and carefulness belong mutually to each other, independently from the question, which of the two should be statistically established first\*\* Medical experience indeed teaches us also every day in the most decided manner, how inseparably the one is dependent on the other: how much more carefully children are tended if they are wished-for children, and how true it is that such scrupulous care can only be economically possible where the number of the children

\* It is the infantile mortality i. e. amongst children under one year, which is the most delicate test. Infantile mortality is also further the controlling factor which rules the figure of the total mortality. If there is anyone who would still contest this latter statement, let him consult Table III and compare the two columns.

\*\* In some of the European countries, (about half of them) the decrease in the death rate, in others that of the birth rate was the first to be observed.



is limited. The combined effect is visible in every particular case; both virtues strengthen each other mutually.

The transition to this higher stage in puericulture exhibits the same happy reformation that we have already experienced in gardening and the breeding of high class animals. Formerly there was a great deal of sowing and breeding; what was too much was weeded out or killed off. Certainly, a most irrational economy!

How *very proportionately* the infantile mortality rises and falls with the birth rate, appears still more clearly to us when we compare not whole nations, but small districts with each other. In these smaller districts the causal connexion of this phenomenon with the economic situation and with the cultural stage can be still better judged.

I will take the various Dutch provinces as an example. If we arrange these provinces in numerical order, *firstly* according to the extent of the fall in birth rate, and *secondly* according to the fall in the infantile death rate, then it is immediately evident that the sequence of the names in both tables is almost identical.

A. According to decreased birth rate.

Province	Births per 1000 Inhabitants			That is fewer births per 1000 Inhabitants
	1875—1879*	1911		
North Holland	38.4	— 23.80	=	14.60
South Holland	42.3	— 28.46	=	13.84
Zeeland	39.6	— 27.61	=	11.99
Utrecht	37.5	— 27.16	=	10.34
Groningen	36.4	— 26.62	=	9.78
Friesland	34.6	— 24.97	=	9.63
Gelderland	33.3	— 27.93	=	5.37
Overysel	33.6	— 28.39	=	5.30
Drente	34.1	— 32.14	=	1.96
North Brabant	33.7	— 31.81	=	1.89
Limburg	33.1	— 33.05	=	0.05
Average for the Kingdom	36.9	— 27.83	=	9.07

\* as a yearly average.



B. According to the decrease in infantile mortality.

Province	Infantile mortality in first twelve months			That is fewer deaths per 1000 Births
	1875—1879*	1907—1911*		
North Holland	258.6	— 91.4	=	167.2
Utrecht	232.2	— 115.6	=	116.6
South Holland	208.6	— 102.9	=	105.7
Zeeland	221.9	— 132.2	=	89.8
Friesland	140.6	— 72.0	=	68.6
Groningen	150.8	— 97.6	=	53.2
Gelderland	150.7	— 116.6	=	34.1
Overysel	145.0	— 112.3	=	32.7
North Brabant	122.6	— 105.1	=	18.5
Drente	206.1	— 173.6	=	31.5
Limburg	157.3	— 171.5	=	+ 14.2 (increase)
Average for the Kingdom	179.0	— 116.2	=	80.8

Both demonstrations run proportional to each other and strictly in harmony with a higher state of well-being and education in the first-named provinces, in contrast with the more primitive conditions of life in the latter-named ones.

The example of the Netherlands is all the more instructive, because here the instruction of the masses as to birth-control has not been so discouraged as it is almost all over the world. Here also the disadvantages of birth control should be evident in the worst degree. What do we see however? If we consult the international population statistics, we shall immediately recognize that the Netherlands shows in a conspicuously favorable light in every respect. And this is absolutely the best proof that a public and unrestricted popularization of the principle of birth control does not lead a nation to its ruin, but quite the contrary. Only under such conditions will the comparative relations between the amount of food stuffs available and the amount of nutriment required be more favorable as a matter of fact, and the whole standard of living be a superior one.

With this object, although there may be a limitation of the births, a general increase of the production of food-stuffs

\* as a yearly average.



should nevertheless be aimed at. Unfortunately we are not all producers of foodstuffs; but we are all consumers, and in this respect also we can work together towards the same goal. The following may be said of food consumption.

There have been times when the question of the equilibrium of our foodstuffs had quite a different aspect. When we were still cannibals, men could either fulfil the part of food or of consumer. But it is not likely, if we take the animal world as a comparison, that cannibalism ever was in general vogue; or evidently not many of the human race would have survived! Cannibalism was surely always an exception, either as a dire necessity or as a special festival. In later centuries man has always been constantly more inclined when eating the flesh of animals, to cover its insipid odor and taste by roasting and spices, and to conceal as much as possible, by a changed external appearance the fact that meat represented parts of animal's bodies. Indeed in modern cooking and meat canning it is scarcely noticeable that we are consuming flesh. Whole slaughtered animals are nowadays rarely exposed in the better class shops.

Among the educated classes we often find people of advanced views who eat no meat or flesh derivatives at all on principle: the vegetarians. This custom also indicates great progress in the direction of the equilibrium mentioned; for if an acre of land, planted with peas and beans produces a certain amount of albuminoids for the nourishment of a vegetarian, the number of cattle required to produce an equal amount would need 6 acres of pasture land. Furthermore it must be observed that pasture land absorbs much useful manure, whereas peas and beans, by the intermediary of bacteria borrow the greater part of the nitrogen which they need from the air around them which is so cheap and plentiful, and contains four fifths nitrogen to one fifth oxygen.

The vegetarians are thus people to be praised, for not only do they "live and let live" as regards animals, but practice this motto also towards their fellow men.

#### 34. — The Economic Evolution. The working man.

Let us now see how the principle of birth control interferes with our economical progress. Does it indicate an advance



or a step backwards, or is the movement to be regarded as indifferent?

A popular idea finds expression sometimes as follows: "The question is extremely simple, you must realize that: the fewer people there are the more everybody has to eat, and the better will their social condition be!" So birth control is often advocated as a remedy for poverty, as a panacea for all the ills of society. Therefore famine, sickness, war, etc., would be nothing but the results of the *one* evil, a too great increase of the population.

But the question is not quite so simple: for although the disproportion between the available food-supply and the numbers to be fed is primarily one of the most profound causes of the misery of mankind, through which want, selfishness and a struggle for the mastery are rendered still more acute, it does not by any means follow that if the cause were removed the consequences would also disappear. Many other primary causes of the evil besides this also exist: accidents and disasters, inimical forces of Nature, indolence, overwork, sickness and death. They may all exercise their influential effects, even when there is the greatest abundance of food stuffs and the smallest possible number of consumers.

Neither would the principle of economic exhaustion disappear with a large or a small number; for on the one hand a small community of people is more easily kept down than a larger one, on the other hand an excessively large mass of people who are badly provided for might prepare disturbing revolutions, but they are lacking in the strength needed for a reorganization of society. Other things are also required for this, firstly a well conducted movement of the working classes, and here it is not the number but the quality that spells success.

In contrast to this over-rating, and perhaps indeed led to do so by it, people often commit the opposite error, by considering the number of births as of no consequence for the economic development. Sometimes even the most radical reformers do this. And while they are fighting capitalism, they have neither eyes nor ears for other most important vital questions.\* Thus

\* Capitalistic production takes advantage of human fecundity in its own way, just as in former times feudalism and still earlier slavery did,



they only half fulfil their task, and are unaware that by so doing they commit the same errors of logic — although in an opposite sense — as many capitalists who practice birth control, and regarding the importance of the limitation of the population they forget the claims of justice. These social reformers appear to think that if other methods of production were adopted, if one day there should be room found at the table of life for every man born, it would suddenly be a matter of indifference, how many companions were sitting at table with him.

It appears however to me, that in such a future state of things the question of numbers will prove quite important, even so that the realization of this ideal will only be practically possible, when we no longer proceed to increase the population so thoughtlessly.

It is still worse as regards the big employers of labor, who are indeed still to-day the leaders and controllers of modern industry. Many of them seek by means of trusts and rings to keep down *industrial production*, while others as shipping companies or factory owners want a great *overproduction of men*, because the rich are their customers while the poor supply them with cheap labor.

But they only too easily forget, that there also exists a limit, which cannot be a matter of indifference for them. If this limit be exceeded, then there arise the greatest anxieties for them: for when too many men are unemployed and desperate, it soon happens that no rich man feels his life in safety. A certain amount of restriction is therefore desirable also for the sake of the ruling classes, and that was never so true as at present. Do we not see that the claims of the times have become quite different?

Once upon a time hundreds of slaves were required only to row one ship over the waters. For monotonous and heavy labor even as late as the Middle Ages hundreds of poor people were indispensable. But nowadays in an ever

and as in pre-historic times the fecundity of domestic animals was taken advantage of by the nomadic peoples. It is not capitalism that is to be blamed for our excessive fecundity; fecundity is a phenomenon of nature which is quite as worthy of general attention as the production of food stuffs and other necessities of life.



increasing number of industries all the monotonous and heavy work is performed by machinery; every year the electric and automatic machines go farther and farther, and now only need a reasonable amount of controlling and looking after by skilled labourers. The crowd of unskilled proletarians, who formerly represented an indispensable link in the chain of society, become more and still more a useless remnant of production, an insupportable burden and a danger. If we really give all this fair consideration, we should the earlier recognize the value of birth control. And we shall learn to observe a great deal more besides.

Also the captains of industry must now recognize in an increasing degree the necessity of the striving of the workmen, no longer to be a herd of beasts of burden, but to organize, to regulate the conditions of their labor themselves, and gradually, in their striving after the physiological optimum, to convert production into a mutual function of all those taking part.

That the regulation of the number of workers is an important point in this connection is evident, as has been recognized by the struggling workmen for a very long time in some well organized industries, e. g. diamond cutting. A restriction in the number of apprentices has long since been one of the points in their programme. But long before this knowledge had become general, it must have been evident to everybody that it was not the workmen who had the largest families who represented the best supporters of the labor movement, but that it was often just these who hinder the movement in the most fatal manner because they are forced to accept any work offered them without choice. And in a strike where it is of the greatest importance to be able to hold out, they are generally the first to give in.

Moreover the children who spring from such numerous families, are generally brought up with insufficient care, so that they cannot have any other influence in the struggle than a mass-effect; and we have already seen that the brute force of the masses is nothing as compared with the superiority of intelligence.



### 35. — The Economic Evolution. The Working Woman.

All this applies not only to the working man, but in a still higher degree to the working woman, because her life is more directly governed by the care of children. Her economical condition depends solely and completely upon the question whether she passively and helplessly awaits the possibility of pregnancy, or whether she is in a position to control this eventuality so momentous for her. Not every husband is inclined to shield his wife effectively from undesired pregnancy. It is however the crucial point of modern feminism, that now for the first time since the earth has revolved on its axis, — the woman herself can exercise her veto, if her husband should be inclined to inflict a pregnancy upon her against her will. With the former helplessness, continually increased by law and custom, all is now over! The curse of sin was "with pain shalt thou bring forth children". Now however, the woman can reply: "I will not bear them, if I do not think it necessary and desirable." If the serpent brought a curse upon her, humanity has released her from it; the science and truly pious humanity of DR. MENSINGA and many others.

Nor will she longer remain the double slave of the employer and of her husband in the economic sphere, but she will rather join with her husband, and with a united front they will fight for better living conditions. Then the wife will not have to work for a smaller wage than her male comrades, a disproportion which is still bolstered up to-day by the so called "protection" of the wife, by law and by a supplementary income from prostitution. She will also demand for herself full working hours and full wages, and no longer run in unfair competition with the men. Instead of being a great hindrance in the way of the labor movement, the wife will be a true comrade of man, a fighting companion, a sharer of his fate, and we know this for certain: when Brunhilde steps into the fight, it will be waged with redoubled strength.

"Then at last will mankind really be shut out from Paradise" says many a one, whose ideals lie behind him, "there will be an end to all poetry. The gentle wife who timidly looks up to her husband, the ivy and the oak, the Madonna of the Middle Ages — all this will disappear". Yes indeed, these



sickly ideals will be lost forever, but it happens to you who speak like this, as it did to the painter who was so sad at the thatched cottage on the heath having to give way to the house of bricks, which however was infinitely more comfortable for its inmates than the old rabbit hutch half underground.

He who really wishes well to his fellow man, and gives up his own rights freely if the common good requires it, he who does not look on unmoved at the cruelty of slavery — will notice the signs of the times with pleasure. And the new order of things is not to be suppressed, no matter how much some may sigh over it! A better knowledge of nature, and of the human body and its sexual functions can no longer be prevented; and we have always seen at last that those who fought for freedom and knowledge have been branded as heretics during their lives, and later on acknowledged as the greatest benefactors of mankind.

"But will not the wife neglect her wifely duties?" many may ask, shaking their heads, as if they already could see mankind dying out, instead of approaching the ennoblement of the race. "It will mean a strike of love, and the ruin of motherhood". My good people, don't worry about the frequency of motherhood, let it drop a little if it will, and that will offer only the more opportunity to many other women who want children to attain their ideal.

If we only could properly appreciate the self-sacrifice of woman in forming the new life, we should be far more ready to offer the wife real help instead of empty flattery in questionable taste. Efforts should be made first of all to avoid the traditional suffering in child-birth, by encouraging a hygienic mode of living by both girls and women. But what have we done to make this function a purely physiological one? Have we duly taken care that children should not be obliged to sit so long, or have we declared the so-called lady-like waist to be a disgrace? Are we living according to Nature's decrees? In this sphere there is still practically everything to be done. Indeed the more the woman ceases to be a slave in the economical sense, the more she will understand herself what she ought to do. And *vica versa*, as soon as the wife, conscious of her own dignity, refuses to drag any longer the slave yoke of



her sex, all reason for her economic thralldom will have disappeared. Then only will woman cease to be "weak".

The liberation of woman is a tremendous step forward in the evolution of mankind. Prior to this, the stamp of her slavery, of her inferiority and her superstition, was impressed by the mother on her offspring in its tenderest and most impressionable years; so that every new generation had first to shake off the old traditions; but henceforth the sound and healthy generation created deliberately at an opportune moment, will be able to start out from the stage at which the previous generation has arrived, and the woman will no longer lag behind. The development will therefore show in the future a constantly rising curve, instead of a zig-zag-line. Experience of the past has taught us: if a child has exceptionally a highly developed mother, its success has generally been most brilliant. Highly distinguished men have been as a rule the children of superior mothers. If therefore in the future the standard of culture, freedom and development rises in all women, what brilliant success we may then expect!

### 36. — The Era of the Child.

With a certain pride our period is frequently called "the era of the child", because as a matter of fact a great deal is done for the children and because we are studying them much more than formerly, and trying to understand them. For there are children who are surrounded by the most tender solicitude, who are received with open arms, and were long before their birth the object of the most studied care; who pass the first few months of their lives in carefully tempered light, who are never startled by sudden inharmonious sounds. They are never picked up too quickly, nor suddenly spoken to, and thus they attain that untroubled peaceful joy of living, the impression of which is never overshadowed. And later on they see only order and good behaviour around them, and they have also plenty of room for play and free movement. They can stretch their little limbs, and unhampered by too tight clothing can exercise and strengthen their muscles to their heart's content.

But what about the great, the vast majority of children? They are conceived in want and born in misery. The day



thye came into the world they looked plump and rosy, and their skin was also like a peach. But look at them now in the streets, in school, in the factories: what a bringing up, what surroundings! And it is frequently a fortunate thing for them when they are not at home, for there their surroundings are sadder, still more miserable, a still greater scorn of all hygiene. And this is what we call the "era of the child".

We know very well: once they are grown up, we can no longer make them healthy or happy. The hardness of their fate has hardened them too. But while they are little children their bodies and souls are as soft as wax. We are well aware that they retain all good and all bad impressions; we know, that everything in them might still be turned into good — and we do not do it. But we ought to do it, not only for the children's sake, but also for the sake of the community. Day by day, even now, children are being born for whom the needful care is not available, not even the most indispensable. Yet these little things have done no wrong, they have not even asked to be brought into the world. What a responsibility this is for us all.

If however, being not able ourselves to cure this evil, we draw the attention of the parents to their responsibility, then we are branded as moral criminals, because we dare to take a stand against bad morals and bad customs. We have already experienced this in Holland in 1904 at a Congress for the Protection of Children; only from polite respect to the clergy, in order to prevent that they should be in any way offended. For the Church has still always the monopoly of morality; the Church which always mortifies itself in its self-love and feels itself wounded in its respectability if others say or do, what it ought to have done or said itself long ago. We could sing many a little song about this: the first men to denounce slavery, the first missionary societies, the Salvation Army, the first temperance advocates, the first reformers in the treatment of the poor, the first defenders of woman's emancipation — each and all of them has been looked upon by the church in his time with mistrustful eyes, and not without reason. Only when the improvement could no longer be hidden, when it began to be in a certain measure sanctioned by tradition — then it was suddenly declared that we must thank one or the



other of the sons of the church for it. Therefore, — “honor to whom honor is due”! It’s all the same as if it should be declared “to the glory of God” — when it is only done for the betterment of mankind, in the striving after the physiological optimum.

The era of the child will only dawn when not the parents alone, but also the community are thoroughly convinced that children are the most precious, the most beautiful gift. Then and then only will the whole race of men become strong and happy. If however, thoroughly selfish motives for this must be mentioned: — well: the trouble for the sake of the children will be richly rewarded, for the adults will be more capable than at present of being left to their own devices.

At first they must be brought up in strict discipline; later, according as they grow up, they can be allowed so much the more individual liberty. Phylogenesis is ontogenesis: the child has not yet run through all the stages of development. After the unicellular stage the fish-gills stage and the amphibian stage in the mother’s womb, the dog- or monkey-stage persists for a long time after birth. Then the whip, that is to say, strict punishment must be used. That is better than monkey-love, and in the long run also much better for the child; for the dog also loves a strict master the best.

The era of the child! Everywhere, in towns and villages, we are producing a race of savages and half-savages in the midst of superfine culture and of the glorified, self-satisfied “Higher” Mankind!

As long as the children we have and those who will be born to-day or to-morrow are so greatly neglected and ill treated in a bodily as well as a spiritual respect — do not, for God’s sake go on breeding still more on top of the others! You have not room enough in the schools to give them all even a scanty portion of mental food, while the school child’s hungry stomach often cries for bread in vain. And still fresh children keep coming to swell the number! It is a crying wrong towards the children to bring them into the world as they are only too often brought to-day. And there can be no improvement until the public conscience, where it is still sleeping, be awakened, and indeed awakened in a compulsory and merciless fashion, so that the parents see at last, what mischief



they do when they bring a child thoughtlessly into the world. It ought to be preached from the house-tops even if all the world rose indignantly against it! The little child cannot speak, still less the germ before it is fecundated, we must take its interests in hand. All selfish motives and considerations in this book and in a hundred other books from a hundred other authors are of no importance compared with the child itself. And in regard to it only one question is of consequence: is there for the child about to be born a prospect of sufficient development? Has it a chance of happiness? Will it not remain too far below the physiological optimum?

For the time being the number of children must diminish to a remarkable degree, before the value of this jewel rises to such an extent that the community comes to recognize its duty. But when the time does come, when the child no longer occurs accidentally, something like blades of grass of between paving stones, when it will be tended and brought up with care like a selected plant, — what a happy childhood it will have, how well cared for it will grow up, not like grass, but like the full-eared corn. Our descendants will not be like green-house plants, nor will they resemble the cheap seeds which the gardener wastefully scatters, with the idea of only saving the best of the too numerous shoots appearing. Then we shall have to devote more financially to the careful bringing up and education of children from infancy, and especially to elementary education, for that is the most important and is the highest task of the pedagogue.

Improved systems of education will also be found. And not only the will the parents and the professional teacher take part, but every friend of children will also help occasionally, in the games as well as the lessons. Not within the four walls of the school room alone will useful knowledge be imparted, the school room that is too much a relic of the convent, where the boys are made pedantic and the girls affected; but also in field and forest, on the heaths and moors, on the sands by the sea, and often in the water during the summer. By example and exercise they will acquire the first notions of a trade, later improved in the workshops; in foreign countries foreign languages and foreign methods of business. And the child will be received with open arms every-



where, with mutual readiness to help. Are we not all interested in all children (another selfish motive!) Or shall a child be less dear to us because we have not begotten him ourselves?

The era of the child has not yet arrived!

### 37. — Is Birth Control a necessary Evil?

Many people find preventive measures in the circumstances mentioned quite necessary and useful, but only employ them as a necessary evil, i. e. under protest against the prevailing situation which just now renders such a proceeding necessary.

It is a great advance compared with former times that we are now able to prevent conception with tolerable certainty as we wish. Let us stop to think for a moment how laboriously such means were sought after in former times, and with what meagre success, so meagre that all the old remedies appear to us now as good as worthless.

What a tremendous variety of herbs and decoctions women were obliged to absorb either regularly or occasionally, and with what scant success!\* If we compare this vast collection side by side with our mechanical appliances, we see in the latter greater safety, less cost, greater convenience. With a brief explanation and a little practice one becomes rapidly expert in their use. Of course it would be still more convenient if Nature had so arranged things that the parents only had to utter a magic word: "Open Sesame!" or "Close, Sesame!" to hold the result in their own hands; but things in this world are not quite so simple. But the use of preventives can scarcely be called an evil. And it seems to me to be an entirely false principle to complain of the state of society because such a remedy may be necessitated.

Let us imagine ourselves for a moment in an ideal society; where only the word "Sesame, open" is still lacking. Birth control would then be entirely unnecessary, you say; everyone would be able to produce freely, and would seek to produce useful things and not only for sale to the rich. "More men" would then be synonymous with "more food."

\* See the epoch-making work of Dr Felix Baron von Oefele: "Anticonceptional Drugs", a contribution on the question of Malthusianism in ancient and modern times, published in the "Heilkunde", monthly medical journal, Vienna 1898. Editor: Dr Julius Weiss: Administration, Vienna, L. Schulerstrasse 18.



Because each man produces more than he needs, there would then be a constantly increasing "surplus", but with the difference that it would be placed to the credit of the community and not disappear in the pockets of the dividend hunters. The more workers there are, the greater the "surplus" and the shorter the working day.

Well, some "surplus" will certainly then also be needed by society: for the children's education and the care of the aged, the sick, the weakly, who cannot produce anything. Neither are our professors and officials direct producers, and yet they find a direct way to their mouths as well as we. So an increase in the population will not be pure profit in itself.

But let us still think of the sick and the weak. In the new era no one will want them to produce children; nor should we have children from the very young or the very old. Neither would one wish to beget a child when on the point of starting on a long ocean voyage, or other troublesome journey. Nor when the wife does not wish it, or has already many children and desires no more for some time. In short, there may be 1001 other circumstances in which only the one function, the benefit of sexual love, would be sought, and the other, fecundation, must be postponed, at least for a time.

One fact stands out in its importance, that in the future the procreation of children will be much more the subject of selection and choice. It may happen for instance that husband and wife are living happily together, but that their children have not shown a happy combination. How often it happens, that e. g. handsome parents have ugly children, gifted parents stupid ones, good parents bad children etc. We will leave quite out of the question, how far this result is to be attributed to influences prior to or after conception; but the fatality may persist. In all such cases preventives will be desired, but not more children.

Preventive methods will all the more surely occupy an honored place in the temple of married love, the higher the development of the man, and the greater the claims he makes on himself, and above all the more heart he has for his children.

"Then people will avoid sexual intercourse entirely", perhaps you will say, "they will in the future be so highly developed



mentally that abstinence, even when continued for years, will be but a trifle."

Of course, he who prefers to do so, will abstain; but it is tolerably certain that abstinence will not be always preferred in that ideal society. In concluding his well known work on "Woman", Bebel writes the following which we should do well to take to heart: "In all periods up to the present mankind has dealt with the questions of production and distribution and increase of the population without an understanding of their laws, consequently in ignorance; but in the new order of society, it will deal with them intelligently, systematically and with a full knowledge of all their laws."

Many will long for children, many will give the preference to abstinence, and others to other methods. And just as now temporary abstinence is often practiced in order to artificially enhance the charm of enjoyment, so will there also be preventive appliances which increase sexual enjoyment in various ways. But by following this path we shall lose ourselves too far in details. And such enjoyment is a sin, isn't it? I already hear the anathema: "Habemus reum confidentem. You see very well that here only the gospel of sensuality will be presched! The wife will become only the instrument of lust for the husband, and the husband for the wife."

But we were only just discussing whether the necessary evil should be so greatly condemned. And whether one ought not to welcome it as a means of salvation.

The higher mankind rises in the development of its sympathetic feelings, the more care will be devoted to the efficiency of those organs which in our physical and mental life are the true organs of sympathy, whereas up to now they have almost always been looked upon as simply reproductive organs, because only the possible material consequences of their conjunction were considered. These organs have a decided influence not only on our descendants, but also immediately on our family life in itself. Science therefore calls them organs of copulation and not only organs of reproduction.

The sympathies and antipathies which proceed from this sphere, are exerted in far wider circles. They govern the



greater part of our humour and personal disposition. They lend a cavalier distinction to the youth, sprightliness to the maiden, and a special charm to conversation. They are the most powerful means of training to altruism and to common humanity. All the details connected with them are not unclean, not filthy, not lowering or repulsive, if sympathy really predominates. The small and necessary appliances are often just as indispensable as the details are in the preparation of a friendly repast to which one has been invited, which are really sometimes very trying, and frequently give the lady of the house a lot of pains and trouble. But in this case also, one does not speak of the necessary evil, but thankfully accepts what is offered.

### 38. — Cui Bono?

How can it be explained after all that, — while everything speaks in favor of a voluntary birth control — there are so many people who in spite of this, struggle with all their might against a propaganda of marital foresight? They certainly want to know all about preventives for themselves, and to use them when necessary: they like it also very much if their relatives and privileged dependents are also instructed in this respect. But when the knowledge shall be vulgarised "among the people" then they are indignant and cry: "Oh! but the poor won't use preventives any how!"

Now it must be admitted that this is a contradiction! If the poor will really not use preventive methods, what harm can it do to talk to them about them and to send them explanatory handbills? There must be something behind all this! What can be the secret reason for this attitude? What interests are here brought into play?

In an ideal construction of society birth control must be admitted to be good, or even if no sympathy towards it be expressed, it can at least be appreciated. If we however, notice the less ideal motives of society, on the reverse of the medal, then we see the struggle of conflicting interests lie hidden like the snake in the grass.

Cui bono? Who reaps the advantage? Who profits by the ignorance of the masses? Who benefits by a great



number of poor people who, driven by hunger, are ready to accept any kind of work at any rate of pay?

The rich. The head bookkeeper must have few children, so that he may still play the gentleman on a starvation wage. The "skilled labor" class must also not be too crude-looking. But the mass of "unskilled labor", the people who have not been fitted for any special trade, the contrary holds good in their case. They must only be *cheap* and be there, ready for use when wanted.

The "crowd" which is called for to-day has grown smaller, much smaller than formerly, through modern tendencies, and on this account there is no longer the demand for those herds of slaves and bondmen which were then to be found; but modern pauperism is and always remains the "*conditio sine quâ non*" of our cheap industry of the present day. There are two sides to the same question. Our whole system of society is so arranged that everyone tries to shift the work which he finds unpleasant himself on to the shoulders of the man beneath him. The "lady of the house" no longer performs the muscular work at home, she has a maidservant for that purpose. In order to spare her, the very rough work is handed over to the charwoman, generally a half-starved widow. And this person, — if a creature whose services are so lightly esteemed can be termed a person —, leaves on her part the dirtiest work to a lot of "municipal employees".

Just as the poor are parasites on the comfort of the rich, so are we, the rich, parasites on the bodily strength of the poor people. The poor move into the towns, because there at least something may be earnt, and the rich move into the towns because only there can they find a certain amount of luxury, and only there can they be properly served.

So also in the mutual relations of the two sexes. What can be more flattering to the rich man than the fact that he can find ten girls to choose from on all sides? This is the abasement of woman on principle — woman is not allowed to be a full human being, she must be curtailed. The maiden shall remain inferior; the married woman *shall* be hindered in her economic independence, so that she can then be "protected". In any case woman must always remain at the beck and call of the rich: as wet-nurse, as maid-servant, as



waitress, as prostitute, or as the wife always obedient to her husband's will. And therefore there must be many of them, and all inferior.

Whoever wants to limit the number of children is a spoilsport, a crazy-pate, an "enfant terrible".

So long as we occupy a vast number of the proletariat in the production of our luxuries, so long will such be continually bred in a kind of mass-production. History teaches us that the height of luxury and the acme of wealth of nations has always been contemporaneous with the greatest poverty and the deepest misery of the masses. And so it is still.

For this there is only one remedy. Every man who wishes to help in the general salvation must consider the results of his own deeds. The rich man should not seek his profit from so great a number of suffering people. We should first of all restrain our desires and requirements; thereby diminishing at the same time the birth-rate amongst the proletarians, and that would then react in a beneficent manner upon ourselves. For we cannot say that he who can obtain everything he wishes for, the moment he thinks of it has plenty, for that is limitless; but he whose desires are modest. Without this reform, all other reforms are vain.

True happiness for us all is only realisable if other people also are happy, and a community can only really be a community when each one works towards the others' happiness, that is only too frequently forgotten.

If the question "cui bono" is not understood in too narrow a sense, then the answer must be: it is indeed good for no one if children are thoughtlessly begotten.

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### THIRD PART.

#### *Birth Control in its National Aspect.*

##### 39. — Church and State.

When we are working together with others, in an association for instance, we usually acquire a distinct feeling that the association is better served by the quality than the number of its members. In every society we prefer to mix with well bred, affable people, and no matter how enthusiastic we may be for the objects of the society itself, we shall not forget that it is after all a means and not an end. If the aim and object of the association or society required it, we should be quite ready to amalgamate it with a sister organization, or to split it up into various branch societies if necessary.

There are however two very old-established institutions which are of a character differing from the general rule, institutions to which one does not usually belong from free choice. It may be partly on this account and partly because of their great age that in them the end and the means are not kept very distinct from each other. *Church and State* — both appear only too often in our consciousness as the end, which however could only be correct in the poetical sense.

First of all the **Church**. Theoretically the rendering of mutual help stands out strongly in the foreground in all better known religions: Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The woman and child are glorified, domestic happiness is praised above all things, and loving care and respect in every way made a duty. We should really imagine that with such mentality and from such a disposition birth-control would be welcomed with joy.

In this connection, however, there come unfortunately other considerations into question through which this expectation will not be fulfilled. The teaching that we should piously await what a transcendental power shall ordain for mankind,\*

\* The beginning and end of life were formerly tabooed from sheer ignorance. And on that account preventive intercourse should be prevented forever as suicidal!



may have as a consequence that all initiative, every individual attempt at the improvement of one's own fate and that of the race appears as a misdeed.

The fact that this passive waiting for the unknown — in this case the conception or non-conception of the wife — has no sense for him who thinks medically because, he regards the factors of conception or non-conceptions much the same in principle as whether a train would arrive safely if a bridge is turned round or a signal wrongly placed — is here not of the slightest importance, for a priest does not think medically. And the period in which priest and doctor were one, now lies far behind us in the evolution of the division of labor.

As for the Roman Catholic Church, categorical and inflexible as ever, she simply forbids birth control as a mortal sin. One must ask oneself if she does not take the prevailing circumstances into account? Yes, perhaps more than other religious bodies — but in a different manner. She ignores *secret* violations, as far as these do not undermine her authority, only frank and honest resistance founded on principle she cannot endure.

In catholic countries birth-control flourishes very comfortably, but in the same secret obscurity in which the whole of the sexual life is enveloped in those countries. This is the same attitude that old fashioned parents generally adopt towards their children; they fix a few categorical rules as absolute morality, and the exceptions then become practice. They say: "you mustn't tell lies" and then insist on their always saying "polite things" when they are in company. This farce they find necessary to maintain their principles. And as a matter of fact this method is more convenient than a correct laying down of the principle.

As soon as the practice of birth-control has continued for a sufficient length of time, and has at last won the approval of public opinion to a sufficient degree, as soon as this custom is sanctioned by tradition, then the Catholic Church will be the first to examine it and to turn it to its own advantage. We can already see that in France. Here the Catholic Church has long submitted to the usual preventive means adopted by men, at least the oldest of these means, the so-called "French



method"\*, but she still cries anathema against the much less known appliances for women.

Among protestants this form of hierarchy is unknown. Here birth-control is rejected, not from fear of the parson noticing it, but from fear of the reproach of one's own conscience. As soon however as the necessity for birth control makes itself sufficiently felt, so deeply felt that intelligence overcomes traditional resistance — the conscience will also feel that it stands before a higher duty and that the making of an exception is justified. Although people may still remain conscientious objectors, they use preventives all the same as an exceptional measure.

Amongst the Israelites the gulf between the strict ritualists and the freethinkers is so wide that we may declare with tolerable certainty: the one still holds fast to the commandment: "Be fruitful and multiply!";\*\* the other does not understand what reason there is for a reasonable man to act in this matter unreasonably.

It is remarkable that, no matter how widely their religious convictions may differ from each other, the priests and representatives of the various sects — so disunited amongst themselves, and hating each other mortally — on this one point they should all agree in so striking a manner: they all present a united front against birth-control.\*\*\*

\* In the Vatican Council held at Rome in 1870 a secret memorandum was received, (published by Dr J. Friedrich in a voluminous collection of documents: *Documenta ad illustrandum Concilium Vaticanum Anno 1870*), the report of a French priest, who recommended indulgence in the case of confessions of the so-called French method. It appears from this report that French confessors were already instructed to ignore this sin. The report went on to say that an *officially valid* prohibition had never been pronounced by the church, and that all the various grounds on the strength of which the aforesaid custom had been condemned by the clergy — which grounds were thoroughly dealt with one after the other — were not convincing. Lack of time was unfortunately the cause of the report not having been further dealt with by the Council of the Vatican. The day would come however, when the church could no longer postpone dealing with this subject. Otherwise it might very well happen that the women would no longer find the time to go to confession.

\*\* At any rate it is not written: "Multiply *as much as possible*".

\*\*\* There are but a few parish priests in Holland who are members of the Birth Control League of that country, because they have seen for



What can be the reasons for this? Let us first of all examine the lofty, ideal motives that they themselves bring to the foreground. Like every method of protection, a preventive method is not at all ideal. If I have a loose tooth tightened up, or I smear a paper with goose-grease and lay it on my chest, or stick a corn-plaster on my foot, these are very prosaic private means of providing for a prosaic and private need. We do not speak of these things; in company or in reading a book, any mention of these things would be thought disgusting. But their employment when and where necessary is in no way offensive, — on the contrary it bears witness to great care. It is a small sacrifice which one makes very willingly in order to avoid something worse. But the clergy feels itself now called upon to proclaim ideals and nothing but ideals.

Inseparable from this lofty conception of life is the fear that people may be led to abuse the privilege. The higher the ideal is fixed, the more likely is the reality to clash with it. From a "superspiritual" standpoint even the carnal desires are sinful.

But besides these sublime and super-sublime motives, there are possibly other less ideal but more material motives, perhaps unconscious ones. Might it be to some extent a deep-rooted fear of any innovation, an instinctive impulse of self-preservation? Or the fear of an inconvenient independence on the part of woman, and thereby the loss of the final influence of clericalism? Or a desire to strengthen the majority against the knowledge of other things. Or all these reasons together? Who can tell?

In the Catholic Church the celibacy of the priests surely leads to a disregard of the rights and duties of married life, and makes the priests so irritable and mistrustful about sexual questions, that they only see abuses everywhere.

However the church no longer takes the standpoint that all preventive means are a sin. The most important of all the means of prevention, abstinence, finds just as much favor in the eyes of the catholic Church as among the protestants. That this remedy should also be sinful, is an ideal no longer themselves in their pastoral functions how very necessary parental prudence and foresight are in the bringing up of the masses.



held by any one except by fanatic Israelites. Abstinence during the menstrual period, that is to say during the time which fundamentally represents the rutting and breeding period,\* and which later has come to be avoided, perhaps just because the woman is most liable to conceive during those days, — this oldest of all preventive measures, not only finds general approval, but was especially stipulated as a sacred duty in the Mosaic law.

To extend this circumspection a little farther, for instance over the fortnight following menstruation, so as to restrict in a deliberate manner the possibility of conception, has been frequently recommended to exhausted mothers by somewhat humane catholic priests, as well as an extended time for suckling the child.

We have already seen in a footnote some pages back, that French priests had orders not to insist on confession of the French preventive method. But with the mention of this exceptions, the indulgence stops. Who dares to go farther; who thinks he ought to go farther; who prefers other and perhaps better means to the same end?

Yet there is one consolation for individual freedom, — no one can be compelled to obey the priests' orders. So it is only the mentally indolent and careless, who only too readily shield themselves behind the church's pronouncement, in order to excuse their reprehensible conduct.

It is not so easy however to get rid of the State, the other organ of authority. Here there are also two sides to be considered. Firstly the ideal viewpoint, which is expressed in the word "Fatherland". And here also the theory of mutual help is brought well to the fore: every one should answer for his neighbor, each one should have the other's happiness in mind. Thus everything indeed which may further this purpose, including reasonable birth-control, should be welcome.

But besides this, the State also represents the most perfect

\* In the same way chastity between brothers and sisters and between cousins, who in the earliest prehistoric times were obliged as the next-of-kin to copulate, is an extremely important factor in the limitation of the population. So can we also consider the elevation of the marriage rite to a sacrament, and the claim for extra-marital chastity, all restrictions of the numbers which are nowadays sanctioned by every religious body.



centralisation of power — it is a *military* state. And as such, its competition with its neighbors and other nations comes strongly to the front and is raised to a national pride. What is more elevating than the consciousness that we belong to a great nation?

Rulers and despots have sought in all ages to increase the number of the population by laws and by force. Every thousand and every million more people meant a new source of renown. Just as the farmer who in the winter time has 80 head of cattle in his stables is greater than one who only has 12, — that is to say if there is pasturage in summer and stabling in winter for them —, so is a king or emperor with 4 million subjects greater than one with only 3 million. In just the same way in writing the biography of a prince it is generally mentioned as one of the greatest glories of his reign, that the population during this period had increased from  $x$  to  $x + y$  "souls", even if the prince had only brought very few children into the world himself.

There would be some grounds, of course, for this celebrity if the souls were all "happy souls". But the flight of fancy of a zealous journalist or historian does not go so far. Such a reflection made in a speech or brought into a toast would really be quite uncalled for. The idea "vive le nombre!" must be a relic of the good old feudal times, because the "country children" were then more or less the property of the country landlord.

There is of course, some truth in it, that an increase of the population allows us to presume favorable conditions, and vica versa. The increasing of numbers always depends to a certain extent on the better or worse conditions of existence; as for instance in Surinam, where the excess of deaths over births, frequently enormous, (instead of births over deaths), indicates the most deplorable hygienic and economical conditions. We are however not here concerned with the question as to whether an increase as such is desired, but whether the theory, the greater the increase in number, the better — is right. This may be correct sometimes in a newly-founded colony; but it is only quite exceptionally so in old countries already thickly populated.

But figures are easy to procure and we have statistics of



population but not of happiness. As far, however, as we possess statistics regarding physiological well-being, the colossal misery in our great cities, and the example of the thousands in London who have no place to sleep, the hundreds of thousands who have scarcely any air or light in their dwellings, and so on, must make our hearts ache. And in the country the want is often even greater, and the lack of strict necessities still more marked. Pride in numbers is really the most naïve form of pride imaginable!

The old motto: "As numerous as the sands on the seashore" is a typically oriental, hyperbolic expression, which dates from a period in which this ideal still had a healthy material basis. In the days when mankind was still in a savage state, the first necessity for the preservation of the family was numbers. Thus there was a negro king, the viceroy of Fida\* who with his sons and nephews (exclusive of the deceased children and daughters) could place 2000 men in the field, and his tribe thereby acquired a high degree of guarantee for its existence.

So one could really think, that no matter how great the individual sacrifice might be, the greatest possible increase in numbers should be the first of our duties to the nation, in order to maintain the State in a position to hold its own against other nations.

Yet in the last great war, on which side was the greatest number of soldiers? Not on the side of central Europe with its high birth-rate, through which the need of expansion was so greatly increased,\*\* but on the side of France with her numerous and mighty allies. For the same caution which had led France to voluntarily limit her population had also led her politically to conclude treaties with effective allies before it was too late.

In Part II we have already seen that as a rule mutual help, and not competition stands higher. Does that also hold good

\* WESTERMARCK, "*Geschichte der menschlichen Ehe*", page 492.

\*\* See DR J. RUTGERS, "*Les guerres et la densité de la population*", Étude pacifiste. Thèse soutenue le 8 Août 1907 au Cercle International à la Haye. Der Haag, van Stockum & Fils 1907. Also translated into Spanish.



for the mutual relations of the nations? Is the struggling of the one against the other, is the waging of war here higher? Will there always be international strife? What has been the trend of history during the few centuries with which we are acquainted?

In the animal world in which ants and bees for instance, live in communities, the individual freely sacrifices himself for his companions belonging to the same nest or group, but behaves in quite a warlike manner towards the denizens of "enemy" nests. Savages give their lives for their own tribe, but are foes to every other tribe. Later we see the lord of a castle defending his own dependents, but always conducting feuds against those other lords who are not his allies. Towards the end of the Middle Ages these feuds also included great political associations with powerful leaders, who united to give battle to the enemies by whom they were surrounded; and so far as they were afterwards united into one greater province disagreements and fights still took place, but no open warfare.

Through increased organization, better means of communication and similarity of interests, after a time various districts were induced to combine together to form one state; and although the different provinces often glowed with envy of each other, interprovincial wars were finally put an end to. There will always be fighting and hatred and conflicting interests; but this whole province now comes under police control and before the forum of justice, the decision will no longer be left to brute force, to duels, to bloody feuds and to war.

Among educated people the narrow-minded presumption of superiority over neighboring countries has long since disappeared. Only in the board schools is this principle still preached sometimes, or in a Hunnish speech to young soldiers now and then. People who are well off and well educated like to spend their holidays in a foreign watering place and to spend their money in foreign enterprises. For post and telegraph, for world-commerce and world-trusts, the old frontiers have been entirely swept away; for science and literature, for humanity and art they scarcely persist at all. And as provincialism has had to yield to the consciousness



of nationality, so must militarism yield one day to cosmopolitanism.

But even before we have advanced so far, it appears that in whole groups of states, confederations and customs unions (Zollvereine), war between the members is out of the question. And just as a trust has developed as an association of capitalists, who formerly fought each other eagerly as competitors in one and the same branch, and have now united to form an organic entity, — not from sentimental love of their neighbors, but from sheer necessity and in the hope of increasing their profits — so in the future the different states, countries and empires will more and more combine in political leagues, so that an official international state of war will gradually be self-obliterated. Just like the international postal union and international railway traffic, the international political union must soon be recognized as a necessity of the present age. We must indeed wonder why this necessity has not long since forced itself on our conscience; for its fulfilment promises a far greater development of power and much more profit for everybody, than has been possible up to the present, under the existing organization of our political relations.

The circle of solidarity is always widening, the more our horizon widens and our longing for influence and power grows. Expressed materialistically: world-production furthers world-organization.

Of course now and then there will be attempts at violence, but a well organized police force will protect us from this, or if necessary, the united intervention at appropriate times of the different local police forces. The public well-being is assuredly better guaranteed by the ministry of justice than by the ministry of war. That all nations should henceforth go armed to the teeth, in order to play an international game of chess, is surely too primitive, — and too ruinous for all. And with such an association of nations only for the maintenance of international rights, there is no need to wait till all are ready to declare their adherence; but as soon as a sufficient majority has agreed, disarmament can begin.

Then we shall not need to breed such a host of children as cannon-fodder; and the boasting in the newspapers over such a vast contingent will then be superfluous. A great temp-



tation to do wrong on a large scale will disappear with it, and public opinion will no longer be artificially demoralised by selfish speculators. Only then will a changed attitude of the nations towards the population question be rendered possible. Public reference to this subject and the recommending of effective preventive means will no longer be officially hindered and thereby thrust into a shameful obscurity, through which the great public is kept in ignorance, and the richer folks driven into the hands of quacks who only in return for fabulously high fees, manage to circumvent the law. The state however should now cease to foster a stereotyped longing for increased population; because by encouraging the increase, it is encouraging international rivalry and preparing competition and war.

The most flourishing states to-day are those who can show, not the most numerous citizens, but the most energetic ones. And the more consciously reproduction proceeds by selection, the greater will the welfare of the state become. The citizens can steel themselves in the fight against nature; that is better than in war to turn to wild beasts like cannibals.

#### 40. — The Yellow Peril.

The economic condition of Europe is governed to-day in an ever increasing degree by the contact of our Indo-germanic race with the Mongolian. As the Roman empire, after a struggle that had lasted for centuries, had at last reached a certain stage of comfort, its culture was overwhelmed as by a flood, by the migration of the nations that came from the East. And since Europe, after the dark period of the Middle Ages has at last attained a similar stage of prosperity as Rome had formerly, the cheap labor of China threatens once more to deluge Europe. England's manufacturing industry has long since begun to remove to Asia, and the present state of things by which the raw materials from Asia are sent to Europe to be worked up and then returned to Asia as manufactured goods, will not last much longer.

What we have to consider in the matter, is first of all the population question. The frontiers of different countries may represent a wall that hinders for a certain time the equalization



of a difference in the density of populations; yet with improved means of communication and increased traffic there finally comes a time when this wall can no longer stand the pressure. The difference in density of population, in wages and the standard of living may become too great.

Must we not see in all this a most impressive warning of danger, as soon as the increase in the birth rate with us drops too considerably? Does not the "Yellow Peril" consist in the fact that in China perhaps too many, and amongst us indeed too few children are born? Most surely, if we had multiplied as rapidly as the Chinese, we should long since have been as poor and miserable as they. In that case the Chinese coolies would no longer be in competition with our labourers. But if we sought to avoid a diminution in the number of our children only for that reason, we should simply be behaving like the rich man, — who began by destroying all his treasures — from fear that he might be robbed of them.

That poverty and hunger are at home in China must be the first warning to us, that we might realise to what a state a nation may come, when it remains true to its old habits and goes on continually increasing without a reasonable restriction of its numbers.

In this conflict of interests, the beginning of which we are only commencing to experience, we must conquer by our better quality, we must conquer because we stand on a higher plane of development, while the others have only their number and their hunger as driving impulses. It would be indeed of no advantage for us, to bring ourselves down to their level, — quite the contrary! The more we reside in their country and they in ours, the more will they adopt our higher requirements and our advantages, and will also learn to control their birth rate. The Chinese need not become Europeans like ourselves and we do not want to be Chinese; from the mingling of both races however a higher culture might arise, that would also agree with our ideals. Then only will the time come when culture and humanity will no longer be threatened by savage hordes, like hungry rats. The more brotherly intercourse there is between the nations and the races, the sooner will the frontiers disappear, and the barriers which hinder the spread of our knowledge of Nature fall away.



Then there would be no longer such tremendous differences noticeable in the local density of the populations as at present.

Since HENRI BOREL wrote his prophetic book ("The dawn of day is coming in the East!") much has already changed. Not only in China but in all Asiatic countries there is a revival. The masses are awakened and show an energy, an impetuosity, an *élan*, that contrast sharply with the lethargy and depression that have come over western Europe. For many centuries these countries had resigned themselves to a contemplative civilisation, whilst the masses lived in misery; just the same as it was with us in the Middle Ages. But once awakened, they will surely overtake our parental prudence more quickly than we have done. Mrs MARGARET H. SANGER, the birth control pioneer from New York, has recently preached the gospel of womanhood in Japan,\* in China and in India; and how eagerly her words were received!

And for the immediate future? Even the bitterest opponents of birth-control should realise how greatly at present, much more than formerly, parental foresight is urgently necessary in Europe, for so many industries are being transplanted in other parts of the world.

#### 41. — Ancient Rome.

That which we have said in the last chapter concerning modern conditions, raises at the same time another consideration which is sometimes brought against birth control, and that is the following:

The period of the decline\*\* of ancient Rome displays an

\* In Japan, elated as was the nation some years ago by their victory over the Czar of Russia, a wave of militarism and reckless procreation provoked an immense access of misery; only these last few years democracy has swept away these calamities, and now the birth-rate will also decline in that country.

\*\* What we generally term the "decadent" period of ancient Rome, might be more rightly described as a transition period. It is a pity that the then flourishing science of jurisprudence and the economic conditions did not succeed in weathering the storm, and reaching a new and a higher plane of development, either in a peaceful or in a revolutionary manner. The historians of later times might have blessed this "decadence" as the "preparation" for a new birth, just as we are accu-



extraordinary similarity to our present sins and errors, especially in regard to birth control. This example should, so people tell us, serve as a warning to us, and by no means be imitated.

It is the fact that the analogy between the ancient Roman "period of decadence" and our modern conditions is surprisingly great, sometimes in the smallest details. Just as with ourselves, we see in ancient Rome through an economical exploitation of colonies and annexed provinces the luxury prevailing in certain circles, and the misery in the other strata of society extended in a frightful manner. Whilst in still older times people produced everything for their own use only, so that every house had its own slaves, now the necessity of wholesale production for the purposes of sale arose, — a demand that could not satisfactorily be provided with the prevailing social system.\* So slave labor no longer sufficed for the new requirements, just as in our times the wage system is no longer the most desirable form of production. Just as at present in Europe, the entire race was then threatened with immigration from another race which had become strong and vigorous through exercise of the primitive virtues and through the result of natural selection.

The cultured nation should indeed have taken care in time, that the inherited virtues of the irown germ-plasm should also have been cultivated with care, because the natural animal selection was gradually thrust into the background by culture. People ought not to have allowed themselves to be led astray by the profits drawn from the conquered colonies and plundered provinces. They ought to have adjusted themselves in due time to the new conditions, the methods of production should have been adapted to the new requirements of the times, before it was too late.

stomed to bless the "pioneers" of the Reformation and the "forerunners" of the French Revolution. Unfortunately a solution to the question was brought in from outside, which for the moment meant a falling back to a lower stage of culture; but the advantages once gained were thereby spread over a wider area. So it was a geographical progress after all; such a solution as is often encountered in the world's tragedy.

\* As long as war decimated population, this was a sure, if somewhat drastic solution of the population question. The disproportion only became enormous as soon as a period of peace and individual safety had been reached.



But when once the disproportion had become so great — do we then really believe that the evil could have been prevented by the irresponsible breeding of children? On the contrary, the misery would still have increased; that would indeed only have been putting the cart before the horse.

It would be still more erroneous to think that a diminution in the number of births was the cause of the evil.

Juvenal had already complained: "There are scarcely any mothers now among the higher classes." But indeed, Rome did not fall for the lack of wealthy people. The whole mighty organization had always possessed officials in plenty; there were high priests and augurs enough to satisfy the religious aspirations of the people; rectors, knights and praetors enough and to spare to occupy the highest offices of state; there were proconsuls, procurators and "publicani" enough to gather the taxes in the provinces. The question is rather whether if the rich had had more children, abuses would not have been still greater: if there would not have been still more imposing on the superstitions of the masses, still more amassing of riches still more draining of the provinces!

The fate of the children of the poor is thus described by Professor J. HUBER:\* "The poor were in the habit of either throwing their unwanted babes into the Valabrish lake, into which the sewers of the city emptied, or to abandon them in the plains and woods, on the banks of the Tiber or in the streets, especially in the vegetable market, and even — it seems like a mockery — near the "Temple of Piety". "How many there are amongst you, especially among the judges," cried *Tertullian* to his compatriots, "who murder your children? You drown them, let them die of cold or starvation, or throw them to the hungry dogs!"

Those of these abandoned creatures who did not perish, were reserved for an existence worse than death, for they did not often find a merciful foster-father. Some people made a trade of collecting these wares, and brought them up to sell them as slaves. The boys were trained to be gladiators, and the girls for the most scandalous traffic, by which it may often have happened that a father abused his own abandoned

\* Prof. J. HUBER, "A glance at Antiquity", Sociaal Weekblad 1897\* p. 284.



daughter without knowing it. Many of these unhappy creatures were cruelly crippled, so that through their miserable appearance the hearts of the charitable could be touched, and the children could bring home a rich harvest of alms for their masters.

SENECA the orator, who lived under Augustus and Tiberius, draws a hair-raising picture of these pitiable unfortunates, who in order to fill their masters pockets, were often blinded, and obliged to crawl about on crutches, often had to exhibit the stumps of amputated arms, twisted joints, broken legs, etc., and who were thrashed until the blood flowed, if they took too little money home. Only after Nerva's time (A. D. 96—98)\*, did the emperors begin to provide proper institutions for the reception of these poor little foundlings.

Who is there who does not think of the sensational news items which appear from time to time in our newspapers relating cases of the beggar children on the boulevards and of special places\*\* where newlyborn infants are crippled for the purpose of selling them to the proprietors of circuses and variety-halls, which even our members of parliament and other dignitaries are only too pleased to pay to see.

But what has this all to do with marital prudence? What relation have all these facts to the reasonable use of preventives in the families, when the object is that of the better education of the children already living? — Simply this: these horrible facts which happened so frequently in Rome (and unfortunately happen amongst us too), are the clearest proof of how indispensable birth-control is for married people. Rome would not have been happier (nor should we), if the number of these poor little things had been three times greater!

The cruelties here depicted and the state of depravity here described, should rather be a terrible example for us, a dreadful warning that the time has at last come for marital prudence so that only the wished-for children shall be born.

When ancient Rome had fallen into ruins, the earth once again offered room enough for mankind to multiply freely in

\* That is more than 200 years before Rome accepted Christianity.

\*\* I remember two cases of such places being discovered by the police, once in London and once in Petrograd or Moscow. And yet the exploitation and exhibition of such cripples is still tolerated by the police!



all directions. The state of war that continued all around and the dreadful hygienic conditions only too thoroughly prevented all overcrowding for the next few centuries. Germany for instance, become so depopulated by the Thirty Years' War, that in some German states polygamy was again allowed and legally tolerated.\*

The next country in which at first a relatively too great increase of the population was observed, as Malthus declared in his time, was the country which stood at that time at the pinnacle of culture: France. And it is easily comprehensible that this relative over-population was one of the deepest-lying causes of the French revolution. It is a shame, if such wholesale slaughter of mankind is rendered necessary, as was represented first by the revolution and later in a still greater degree, by the reaction.

How much blood has had to be shed in France, before people there would learn through it, to restrict the ever swelling flood of human beings, before it is too late!

#### 42. — France.

So at last we are led to talk of France which has so long been held up to us as a shocking example, no longer to see in her a shocking example of overpopulation as in Malthus' time, but now of an ever shrinking birth-rate!

For people of a strictly conservative tendency, that is to say for those who would like to hark back to the times prior to the French revolution, France is the modern Babylon. And neither words nor figures can be made eloquent enough to truly describe the state of moral corruption, depravity and the ruin of this nation, in contrast to the people of our fathers — who, unfortunately also begin to be infected.

That this description, this scorning of our neighbours, does not agree with the facts, we shall convincingly show in this chapter.

As an example of the effects of typical neomalthusianism, this "shocking example" is not very well chosen. Preventive appliances for men have indeed been long in use; the modern appliances for the use of women, which possess the greatest eugenic value both from a hygienic and educational point of

\* PLOSS, "*Das Weib*" 5th Edition, Vol I, page 489.



view, are however, very little known in France. The knowledge of these appliances has only been disseminated since 1896 by the "Ligue de la Régénération Humaine", under the leadership of the Eugenist PAUL ROBIN, and particularly for the purpose of ensuring an improvement in the bringing up of the *existing children*; for even in France thousands of unhappy little creatures are brought into the world every year through the brutality of the father and without the agreement of the mother.

Hence it might very well be that a certain one-sidedness in the motives for birth control and perhaps, special disadvantages were evident in that country, which otherwise were not to be feared, or at least not in the generality.

It appears to be all the more erroneous to hold up only France as an example of a falling birth rate, as this is by no means to be observed in France alone, but is seen at the present day in almost every country. If we just glance at the figures for the births quoted in Tables II and IV, we shall see that in most of the countries mentioned, the fall in birth-rate figures during the last decades has been more serious than in France itself during the years in question.

That this decrease in birth-rate figures amongst the cultured nations is not a sign of a degeneration of the race, in the sense that it ought to be taken as a diminution of the natural fecundity, we are taught by simple experience, and that will be admitted without reserve.

If now the opponents of birth-control wish to show us how ruinous are the consequences of birth-control to morality and national welfare, they must first of all demonstrate that the same failings in morality and economics do not exist in countries with a higher birth rate; that in China, for instance, conditions are much more favorable than in Europe; that there is plenty in Java, etc.

But indeed the diminished well-being and the depravity which conservatively minded people ascribe to France, do not exist in reality, but only in their imagination. The fact that France was, during a very long period the only country in which culture had reached a high level, that she had long possessed the hegemony over Europe, and that she has been caught up and even surpassed by other nations in many respects — this fact speaks rather *for* the other countries than



*against* France. It shows that France has been a good teacher who is nearly excelled by her pupils.

But on that account the present position of France is in no way inferior, or fallen in comparison with its previous state. On the contrary; every one knows that France, in the fields of freedom, of art, of taste, of its arrangements for the comfort of its people, still occupies a remarkably prominent position amongst the nations. For a long time also, the wages in France have been high in comparison with other countries, and France was one of the first to reduce the hours of labor by law. A certain amount of comfort was early quite general here, in striking contrast with the times prior to the Revolution, when almost all freedom and happiness was the exclusive privilege of the nobility and the clergy.

But how much blood and what floods of tears were shed to buy this freedom! And so we ought to reflect on this, when we speak of the density of its population. How many thousands at that time in France nobly laid down their lives in the struggle for the rights of man, and then what hecatombs were caused by the reactionaries! We and all the other nations are reaping the fruits of this.

It is our duty to remove the discredit which this reactionary party, now celebrating its Bacchanals, has so long heaped on the efforts of the pioneers to dishonor them and hold them up to scorn.

For all that in this connection is written and alleged every day by our antagonists in public discussions, is lying calumny and stands in direct contradiction to the truth. When however, a lie is repeated often enough and loudly enough, it becomes almost an axiom; but still will never come to be the truth. Let the reader judge for himself.

As a matter of fact, five different complaints have been brought against France, which should be most damaging for the principle of birth-control, for which France stands as the prototype.

*First complaint:* The population in France is decreasing, — “la dépopulation de la grande nation.” But the population of France does not show a diminution: on the contrary it is increasing. That the population in some other countries may



be increasing more rapidly, does not alter the fact that in France it has steadily increased, except of course by the loss of Alsace-Lorraine.

Here are the complete figure of the French census, from the first one down to the outbreak of the last great war.

Jan. 1801	=	27,349,003
Jan. 1806	=	29,107,425
Aug. 1821	=	30,461,875
May—June 1831	=	32,569,223
May—June 1836	=	33,540,910
May—June 1841	=	34,230,178
June 1846	=	35,401,761
April—May 1851	=	35,783,170
May—June 1856	=	36,039,064
May—June 1861	=	37,386,310
April—May 1866	=	38,067,064
April—May 1872	=	36,102,921
Decr 1876	=	36,905,788
18th Decr 1881	=	37,672,048
30th May 1886	=	38,218,903
12th April 1891	=	38,343,192
19th March 1896	=	38,517,975
24th March 1901	=	38,961,945
4th March 1906	=	39,252,245
5th March 1911	=	39,602,258

So we see that although this country was so thickly populated a century ago that anxiety was felt regarding too great an increase, yet the population still increases, only the increase becomes somewhat less each time. That this phenomenon will lead in the course of time to a decrease in the population is at least improbable, that is to say as long as the food-supply is not diminished. And if in the course of time we should observe the arrival of a period in which the state of the population remains stationary, — we can only say that for every nation a period will come at some time or another in which a certain stability in the population figure will rule for a while. But this is all shadowy theory. In fact the stream of France's population is steadily advancing.

Let us now consider more closely the excess of births over deaths in France year by year during the last decades,



as a more detailed complement of Table II. The actual excess of births was as follows:

1876 + 133,000	1889 + 86,000	1902 + 84,000
1877 + 143,000	1890 — 39,000	1903 + 73,000
1878 + 98,000	1891 — 11,000	1904 + 57,000
1879 + 97,000	1892 — 20,000	1905 + 37,000
1880 + 62,000	1893 + 7,000	1906 + 27,000
1881 + 108,000	1894 + 39,000	1907 — 19,000
1882 + 97,000	1895 — 18,000	1908 + 48,000
1883 + 97,000	1896 + 94,000	1909 + 15,000
1884 + 79,000	1897 + 108,000	1910 + 71,000
1885 + 88,000	1898 + 34,000	1911 — 35,000
1886 + 53,000	1899 + 31,000	1912 + 58,000
1887 + 57,000	1900 — 26,000	
1888 + 45,000	1901 + 72,000	

This table means that in 1896 there were in round figures\* 133 thousand more children born than there were men who died; in 1890 on the contrary, there were roundly 39 thousand more deaths than births. The negative increase of these isolated years is more than compensated by the united excess of births over deaths of the other years, and in fact far surpassed by it. The total population figure increases over and above this by the excess of immigrants over emigrants; (see Table VI.)

So we can only say in regard to this perpetual complaint as to the depopulation of France, that is not justified by the true state of things.

To what extent this increase of the population is due to an excess of births over deaths and how far it is produced by the excess of immigration over emigration may be seen at a glance, from Tables II and VI. In the ten years from 1901 to 1910 the total of the yearly excess figures of births over deaths was roundly 484 thousand, and of deficits 19,000; the net gain in births was therefore 465,000 to which must be added an increase from immigration of 213,000. surplus\*\* The

\* That is to say round thousands; the tens and hundreds being considered negligible.

\*\* These two totals added together thus gives the united increase population for the ten years mentioned, calculated from the 1st Jan. 1901 to 1st Jan. 1911, a figure that has not been obtained statistically. From



next period of ten years following was entirely governed by the war losses, which most certainly will make themselves felt for many years yet. The whole of this latter period cannot therefore be utilised here as evidence; and we cannot blame the French for their losses in the war, because they defended themselves as bravely as possible! What the future will bring forth, and whether her pride will lead to her fall, only the course of events will show.

*Second complaint:* the infantile death rate is very high in France.

Table III however bears evidence to the contrary. Child mortality is lower in France than in most other European countries. Especially is it lower in France than in the neighboring countries: England, Belgium, Luxemburg, Germany and Spain. Of all its neighbors Switzerland is the only one with a rather lower child mortality.

*Third complaint:* the number of marriages in France is falling of.

But Table I bears evidence to the contrary: the annual figures of the marriages solemnized in France is decidedly on the increase; even in a percentage proportion. As a matter of fact the marriage rate stands higher in France than in the majority of European countries.

It must however be a thorn in the side of the catholics and antirevolutionaries that the percentage of married couples who divorce is greater in France than in most European countries (see Table I). According to our modern ideas it is just the curse of our antiquated and unpractical marriage laws, that they often hold together by force what has become an unbearable union. And ought we not then to look with the deepest contempt on Switzerland, in which country the annual number of divorces is more than double that of France?

the census statistics just quoted we know the exact increase of population from 24th March 1901 to 5th March 1911; it was 39,602,258—38,961,945 = 640,313. We also know the estimated increase in the population (population évaluée) from the middle of 1901 to the middle of 1911; it was in round figures 39,623,000—38,980,000 = 643,000.



*Fourth complaint:* illegitimate births take the upper hand.

From Table IV it may be seen that there is no trace of illegitimate births having increased in France. And on comparing France with the other 29 countries of Europe enumerated in Table IV, 14 show a higher and 14 a lower rate for illegitimate births. What remains then of this reproach, as though carelessness and debauchery were an innate symptom in France?

If during a short stay in Paris we wander along the boulevards of a night, and there obtain an impression of carelessness and levity, — who are the people we notice there? They are ourselves and thousands of other tourists and foreigners; one no more finds the peaceable stay-at-home townsman on the streets of a night in Paris than in Berlin or London.

*Fifth complaint:* the average length of life is decreasing in France.

Table V again, shows that in France just as much as in the other European countries, the average span of life (*l'espérance de vie*) has considerably increased. If we compare the latest figures concerning France in Table V with the statistics of the other countries for the last few years, we shall notice that the length of life both for men and women is longer in France than can be claimed by the other countries with the exception of four of them.

The romantic statement that carelessness and debauchery should prevail in France therefore may be entirely dismissed.

The first evidence has not yet been produced, that marital foresight is an evil for France. In this as in every other respect France has become a model for the other culture nations.

If at the same time a cry is raised in France for more children (the cry of distress of the “répopulateurs”), that only shows, no matter what sort of an article or newspaper one has in the hand dealing with this subject, that militarism is wholly and solely the ruling motive; that militarism which in the hands of the reactionaries is at this moment casting such a reign of terror over the whole of Europe!

It is however not the people who want to bring up a lot of children themselves who are called the “répopulateurs” in France, it is those who express the wish that *others* should



do this. Just the same as the enthusiasts for the military spirit and for the military love of the fatherland do not often fight in the front rank, but sit at home comfortably at their writing desks. If we study the contents of literature of this category, we soon get sick of it. They are crocodile's tears that are shed over the evolution of mankind, which cannot be prevented either by the curses of the priesthood or by state compulsion. The desperate efforts of the French law-makers to incite parents to thoughtless behaviour fail entirely in their object, and have at the most a comical effect.

#### 43. — Australia.

In recent years birth control has made such strides in the different provinces of Australia, that is amongst the white population, that the decrease in the birth rate has become more marked than in any other country of the world.

The commission which was instituted in New South Wales in 1903\* by King Edward VII for the purpose of investigating the causes and effects of this diminution in the birth rate in comparison with other countries, arrived at the following statistic: (the third column has been added by the writer)

	<i>Births per 1000 inhabitants:</i>		<i>Decrease shown:</i>
	1891	1900	
South Australia	33.9	25.8	8.1
Victoria	33.6	25.8	7.8
N. S. Wales	34.6	27.4	7.2
Queensland	36.4	30.2	6.2
West Australia	35.6	30.7	4.9
New Zealand	29.0	25.6	3.4
Tasmania	31.9	28.2	3.7
Italy	37.2	33.0	4.2
England	31.4	28.7	2.7
Hungary	42.6	39.6	3.0
Portugal	31.7	30.0	1.7
Scotland	31.2	29.6	1.6
Sweden	28.3	27.1	1.2
German Empire	37.0	35.6	1.4

\* See: Legislative Assembly, New South Wales. Royal Commission on the decline of the birth-rate and on the mortality of infants in New South Wales. Sydney, William Applegate Gullick, Government Printer, 1904.



	<i>Births per 1000 Inhabitants:</i>		<i>Decrease shown:</i>
Belgium	30.0	28.9	1.1
France	22.6	21.9	0.7
Austria	38.1	37.4	0.7
Ireland	23.1	22.7	0.4

Partly by the elimination of other causes, and partly through the explicit declarations of witnesses which the commission had called, knowledge of the fact was arrived at that the decrease in the number of births is principally the consequence of the use of preventive appliances, partly imported (as shown by customs records) and partly of home manufacture. References are made to three different varieties of preventives without a precise description of them being given. (See Vol I of Report, page 15, No. 76/77.)

In the report of the enquiry the following are quoted amongst the reasons given for the birth control movement: desire for a better enjoyment of life, better education for the children, over burdening of the mother with house-work through having to bring the children up, convenience, poverty, (Vol I. enquiry, pp 21—22).

It was further mentioned that in 1893 a great financial crisis occurred in New South Wales, the consequences of which were still to be observed in 1904, and which were so serious that the commission directly attributed the increase in the number of cases of insanity to it. (Vol I. Report page 20).

As to the effects of the decline in the birth-rate, Mr W. Mc Lean, the government statistician of the province of Victoria, certified that the decrease in the birth-rate in Australia was more than compensated by the low death-rate, so that after all the excess of births is *still higher than in most European countries*. (Vol I, Report, page 54.)

Similar figures are also quoted by the chief opponent of birth control, the witness J. B. Trivet, actuary of friendly societies in New South Wales. In answer to a question from the Chairman of the Commission he admitted that the average annual death-rate in Austria is 27.06, and in N. S. Wales only 12.49. (Vol I, Enquiry, page 5.)

If we compare these results with the conclusions arrived at by the Commission, the following statement appears most worthy of quotation. It runs as follows: "From time to time



in recent years public men, seeing in the establishment of the Australian Commonwealth the first step in the construction of a great nation, and anticipating therefrom a rapid increase of national prosperity and progress, have referred hopefully to the day when Australia with her teeming millions will hold a commanding place among the peoples of the world. The patriotic ardour inspired by this hopeful anticipation is, however, destined to be cooled in the contemplation of the fact that, while Russia and Japan, prospective rivals of Australia for supremacy in the Western Pacific, are already seeking outlets beyond their own borders for the energies of their ever-growing people, it will be forty-six and a half years before Australia, with her three and three-quarter millions of inhabitants, and dependent alone on her natural increase (even if this be maintained at its present rate), will have doubled her population; 113 years before she will have twenty millions of people; and 168 years before her numbers will have reached the present population of Japan." (Vol I, Report page 53.)

And therefore Birth-control should be damned!

This report is of the highest importance for the cause of birth-control. Just in that particular part of the world, in which during the previous 20 years the decrease in the birth-rate was the greatest, a commission supported by the rich statistics of a man like Mr Trivet, and subsidized by the state, sought arguments to prove the injurious effects of birth-control, and did not succeed in finding any argument which had not already been refuted a hundred times elsewhere.

The commission declared: "The reason almost invariably given by the people for restricting procreation is that they cannot conveniently afford to rear more than a certain number of children." (Vol I, Report, p. 16.) But in spite of this the commission dared to say that they saw in birth-control only selfish motives, (id. page 17); and the fact that formerly this desire for birth-control was not evident among the people, they explained as being due to the "religious feeling" and "ignorance" which prevailed at that time, (id. page 17).

In the opinion of the commission, the "Collins case" in 1888, a prosecution against birth-control propaganda, had been the opportunity for a general spread of birth-control in New South Wales, (id. page 17); following upon which there occurred the



greatest drop in the birth-rate which had been hitherto observed. (Id. page 7.)

The commission maintained that birth-control would undermine the morality of the nation; (Vol I, Report, page 52); it appeared however from the enquiry, that the number of marriages (independently of a diminution caused by the crisis mentioned) had increased since 1894 from 6.25 to 7.53 per thousand, and that the rate of illegitimate births was decreasing, also if this latter was calculated according to the number of unmarried women of marriageable age. From 1861 to 1886 we still find an increase from 15.29 to 18.35 per thousand, but from 1886 to 1901 a decrease from 18.35 to 16.21 per thousand. (Vol I, Report, pages 10—11.)

What is still worse is that the Royal Commission, in the resumé of the results of the enquiry (Vol I Report page 13) shows its fanaticism in the most important point of all — the question as to how far the infantile mortality had decreased together with the decrease of the birth-rate. — The resumé alleges an *increase* in the infantile mortality, whereas the witnesses who were specially called in this connection declare a distinct *decrease*. Mr Ayliffe, registrar-general of South Australia (Vol I Enquiry page 34), gave evidence that infantile mortality itself had *not* increased in his territory. Mr Fraser, registrar-general of West Australia stated that infantile mortality there was continually on the decrease (id. p. 39), with the exception of *one* year. Mr von Dadelszen, registrar-general of New Zealand, certifies a considerable diminution of the same (id. page 22). Mr McLean, government statist of Victoria, handed the commission a report which proved that the falling birth-rate in Australia was also accompanied by an extraordinarily small infantile death-rate (id. page 54). Even the details from Vol I. Report, page 36, which were issued by Mr Trivet, actuary of friendly societies in New South Wales and a man of the greatest authority within the commission, bear evidence to a decrease in the rate of infantile mortality.

This final report which was issued by the commission as though it represented a true resumé of the enquiry, is consequently a very curious "report". It is always a questionable statistic, if only a few, deliberately chosen years are compared with each other, as in the commission's report. Only a complete



far-reaching comparison can allow of an adequate judgment; but through which we might come to an entirely different result to that which is to be read in the report.

I will here reproduce in extenso the two following supplements to the enquiry (plates 118 and 119 in Vol I).

Infantile mortality per thousand births:

Year	New South Wales	Victoria	South Australia	Queens- land	West Australia	Tasmania	New Zealand
1892	106.02	106.08	96.9	106.7	140.7	99.1	89.2
1893	114.99	117.7	116.5	117.5	118.4	104.7	88.0
1894	109.06	104.1	93.9	97.9	126.2	90.3	81.3
1895	105.90	102.4	94.9	91.2	143.3	81.6	85.4
1896	121.49	110.0	101.4	104.6	184.4	89.1	77.3
1897	102.05	103.3	109.1	94.6	183.5	87.8	72.3
1898	129.97	134.1	139.9	110.5	166.1	115.9	79.7
1899	118.73	114.2	111.6	109.4	139.9	116.2	95.9
1900	103.27	95.3	99.6	98.4	126.1	80.0	75.2
1901	103.74	102.9	100.1	101.9	128.9	89.0	71.4
Average for the ten years:	110.62	109.0	106.0	103.2	146.1	95.3	81.4

We see from these figures: 1. — that the infantile mortality in Australia is remarkably low. Compare these with the figures on Table III respecting the European countries; and 2. — as the most important point, that in Australia also a diminution of the birth rate (since 1888) taken altogether is accompanied by a lower rate of infantile mortality.

Furthermore the commission itself supplied one of the most distinct examples, expecially referring to New South Wales, of how birth control must always lead to better care and chances of existence of living children, just as this has been proved in all European countries by a diminished death rate among children. Impelled by the diminished birth rate the commission itself made a series of highly practical recommendations, so as to facilitate better care and attendance for the preservation of both the young mother and child. By these measures infantile mortality will be still more reduced in Australia also. Indeed, we have every reason to *learn* from Australia in



Birth Rate and Infantile Mortality:

Year	New South Wales		Victoria		Queensland		South Australia		West Australia		Tasmania		New Zealand	
	Birthrate	Infantile Mortality	Birthrate	Infantile Mortality	Birthrate	Infantile Mortality	Birthrate	Infantile Mortality	Birthrate	Infantile Mortality	Birthrate	Infantile Mortality	Birthrate	Infantile Mortality
1871—1875	39.05	104	35.69	125	40.81	123	37.24	158	31.30	—	29.72	102	40.02	107
1876—1880	38.53	115	31.43	120	36.72	135	38.28	141	32.97	—	31.54	107	41.32	96
1881—1885	37.65	124	30.76	122	36.37	137	38.52	134	34.57	—	35.02	109	36.50	91
1886—1890	36.36	115	32.72	131	38.81	119	34.48	105	36.88	109	34.59	103	31.22	84
1891—1895	32.93	111	30.93	112	35.15	103	31.54	99	30.77	130	32.84	94	27.66	88
1896—1900	27.98	113	26.22	111	30.40	103	26.59	112	28.73	156	28.28	98	25.74	80



respect to her low rate of infantile morality, instead of exclaiming in Pharisaical manner of our Antipodean friends: "I thank thee O Lord that I am not as these others!"

But unfortunately even in Australia marital forethought still leaves so much to be desired that the practice of abortion and advertising of the same appears almost as frequent as with ourselves, and with just as dire results. The commission did good work in this respect inasmuch as it severely reproved this and similar abuses; but if they want to go even so far as to wish the prohibition of the sale or recommending of preventives, this shows that the commission forgets that it is precisely such legal repression that causes secret attempts at abortion to be practised more than ever. Moreover the Australian people will surely see in the legal prohibition of the sale of preventive appliances, measures, the ultimate result of which cannot be foreseen. In 1900 Bishop Julius and other church dignitaries brought all possible pressure to bear on the New Zealand government to prevent the sale or propaganda of preventives, but the government was too rational to comply with their request.

How untrue it is to state that marital foresight has a prejudicial effect on well-being and morality, may also be seen from the fact that Paul Robin, who became one of the best champions of birth control, based his convictions entirely on his observations during many years residence in New Zealand.

There is still another reason why Australia, like France, is affording such favorable evidence as to the benefits of birth-control. In every country in which birth-control has made distinct progress, the people living in it have been able to obtain better conditions of labor, and especially better working hours. These two last-named countries are amongst the first in which a limited working day was actually established by law; even if this was only a first step in the right direction, it was the herald of subsequent progress. The Millerand law of March 30th 1900 decreed the working hours in all trades and industries in France in which men and women worked together, at 10 hours per day, and in New Zealand the Factory Acts prescribed not longer than  $8\frac{3}{4}$  hrs per day or 48 per week.



44. — The Rise and Fall of Nations. — Race Suicide.

The first period of growth of a political or social group is always a period in which the energies of the members are taxed to a surprising extent, whereby an increase in their numbers is often a most important factor of success. In the further course of their history they must adapt themselves at every stage to the conditions of their existence, in which according to circumstances there may be successively manifested a necessity for increase or decrease of their numbers.

In the course of time the individual groups may split up into two or more groups, or amalgamate with other groups, — if no military or natural catastrophe intervenes, complete extermination is not likely to occur.

When we see savage tribes or entire races die out, we may in most cases say that the cause has been the introduction of spirituous liquors, or the occurrence of syphilis or some other morbid condition, only too frequently imported by the white race, evils which can be only aggravated by political oppression and economic privation. This often happens to nomadic peoples or hunting tribes, who through our colonial occupation of their territory are driven inland, where they are almost entirely unable to find their customary means of existence. Such gradual dying out necessarily goes hand in hand with a diminution of the population; but it cannot therefore be said that the diminution of the population is the cause of the evil. It would be a similar error in logic, if when sick, we made the rise of the thermometer responsible for the fever. Indeed with diminished means of existence a restricted population can live better than an increased one could do.

But does not nowadays the falling birth-rate in nearly all the countries of Europe show, at the stage of culture in which we are living, the beginning of internal ruin? Does not this fall in the birth-rate reveal a lack of courage, a loss of fecundity?

Well, the courage to procreate unwished-for children is a poor kind of courage anyhow, and as for fecundity, we shall have to be very prudent in the use of this expression. This word may be used in two very distinct meanings: 1. — for the number of children that one has really borne (prolificacy), 2. — for the potential capacity to procreate children when they are desired (procreative power).



Restricted birth-rate would only bear evidence of diminished procreative power, and would mean a symptom of decadence, if it was not the result of deliberate avoidance of conception. But it is precisely the latter eventuality which we find everywhere around us, and must be generally admitted. We as physicians see it in all its details. And also as a matter of course, so striking and spontaneous a sterility would in itself be taken as rather improbable.

We are fully aware how little the power of procreating children is dependent on external influences; and even pernicious influences must exceed a considerable maximum before their effect manifests itself in this sphere. Even the minimum limit of the means of existence can scarcely suffice to keep natural fecundity within bounds.

A few idealists who are reluctant to employ preventives in their married life, have expressed the hope that through higher intelligence and moral uplift, human fecundity would spontaneously be restricted. But we should have to wait a very long time for that to happen, for a healthy woman will easily remain fruitful to the extent of being able to bear a child every year, or if she suckles her babies herself, — every two years. Just as in the whole history of evolution, prolificacy diminishes in the higher stages of evolution, so also as soon as mankind arrives at a higher degree of mentality, prolificacy becomes restricted. That happens however, not through impotence and sterility, but because the procreative power is guided by the mind; and the mind will control this according to circumstances, either with or without mechanical appliances. But the mind will rule. Prolificacy thus controlled signifies a higher stage of culture, it is not a symptom of decadence and does not therefore lead to race-juicide.

Every chapter of this work bears evidence of it, and in the concluding chapter the whole question will be summarily reviewed.

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*FOURTH PART.*  
*Birth-Control and Heredity.*

45. — Introduction.

Every time that we have a burning question to decide upon, our judgment is liable to be disturbed by such accidental motives as disinclination or prejudice, individual profit or disadvantage. In a much higher degree we are guaranteed against these influences in a theoretical consideration of the question, because in that case the problem is placed before us in a general manner and the pros and cons are only theoretically dealt with. Indeed we may thus be led to make mistakes; but these can afterwards be eliminated, because by the practical application of the rules discovered, we shall always adapt them anew to our special conditions; for finally every individual decision is governed by individual motives.

So practical experience and theoretical foundation should mutually complete and compensate each other, and therefore, since we have in the foregoing pages discussed the practical side of the birth-control question, we will now view the same question theoretically, in order to consider what importance for race-improvement birth-control may possess; that is to say to what extent our offspring and the world of the future might possibly be made the better or the worse for it. This indeed should represent the decisive factor in its highest potency.

In order to obtain a clear exposition of the whole controversy, we will connect it with the three great historical figures of DARWIN, LAMARCK and WEISMANN, and enquire to what extent birth-control, in the particular point discussed, may be regarded as a favorable or as a detrimental factor.

46. — Heredity since Weismann.

The great success that WEISMANN obtained with his teachings lay in the fact, that he came so soon after DARWIN with his precisions relating to the question of heredity. Germ-plasm alone\*, as it is contained in the reproductive cells, transmit the hereditary qualities of the individual, and forms

\* AUGUST WEISMANN, "Das Keimplasma", 1892.



an unbroken chain, which is constantly renewed, from the ancestors to the descendants; but the *soma*, (the body of the individual) returns to dust every time with the individual's death, and is only capable of influencing the germ-plasm in an indirect manner\*. Our acquired peculiarities are therefore of quite secondary importance for our heredity; the conjuncture of the paternal and maternal germ-plasms is the only decisive factor.

In the hypothesis of pangenesis, timidly advanced by DARWIN\*\* all the reproductive cells are supposed to contain germs proceeding from the various parts of the parents' bodies. According to WEISMANN, the germ-plasm should contain in similarly theoretically imagined units (*ides*) reminiscences of all ancestral peculiarities.

Of recent years, especially since the epoch-making discoveries of OSCAR HERTWIG\*\*\* and others, the attention of scientists has been more and more directed to the protoplasm of the germ-cells. While the „germs” of Darwin's pangenesis hypothesis and the “ides” or “units” of Weismann's were only hypothetical carriers of the hereditary qualities, now we know from observing the splitting up of the nuclei, what is the significance of the chromosome-fibres. Their number is a constant for every species of plant and animal in all the usual cell-divisions; in the sexual reduction-division this number is reduced to one-half, in fertilization however, by the union of two such reduced cells, their number is restored to its original figure. These chromosomes are now considered to be the

\* In Nußbaum's Embryology a sharp line of demarcation is anatomically drawn between the fundamental sexual cells and all other bodycells. (MORITZ NUSZBAUM, “Zur Differenzierung des Geschlechts im Tierreich”. Archiv für mikr. Anatomie, 1880).

\*\* DARWIN says: “. . . I venture to advance the hypothesis of pangenesis, which implies that the whole organisation, in the sense of every separate atom or unit, reproduces itself. Hence ovules and pollen-grains, — the fertilised seed or egg, as well as buds, — include and consist of a multitude of germs thrown off from each separate atom of organisation. “The variation of animals and plants under domestication.” London 1868. Vol II page 357.

\*\*\* OSCAR HERTWIG. “Lehrbuch der Entwicklungsgeschichte” 9th Ed. 1910, pp. 83—101. And idem “Allgemeine Biologie” 4th Ed. 1909, pp. 291—322.



expression of the typical characteristics of the species and of many species-variations, frequently also of the difference in sex.

The doctrine of heredity has now so to speak, left the realms of phantasy to become a reality, and we have the most wonderful perspectives before us. Successful experiments have been carried out, by artificial intervention, whereby some external influence has been brought to bear on the number of the chromosomes. So we can no longer maintain that external influences are non-essential to the continuity of the germ-plasm.

The newer biology, since MAX VERWORN\* regards all the vital manifestations as an interchange of stimulus and reaction, a mutual adaptation of the cell to external influences; just as reciprocally the outer world is influenced in multifarious ways through this cell-life with its tendency to development.

In my latest work: "*Sexual Life in its Biological Significance*" Pub. Giesecke, Dresden; 1923, this is more thoroughly discussed in chap. 40. The whole evolution of the cell in the series of generations is the expression of an endless multiplicity of external influences to which the cell-life must continually adapt itself; and inversely the moving beauty of our earth is produced first and foremost by the marvellous plasticity of the cell.

Neither is the germ-plasm passed on from one generation to the next uninfluenced by external causes. Vital factors may make their working felt, even if indirectly. An unbending doctrine of continuity of the germ-plasm can no longer be maintained. In our studies of heredity we can no longer turn proudly away from the environment of the growing individual. Eugenics and social reform can no longer be separated, such separation having too long crippled the progress of eugenics.

And so in this work we must once more bring to the order of the day the question: "what has birth-control to do with the eugenics of germ-plasm?" The ideal of all eugenic strivings after all is a leading of the masses to take upon themselves the responsibility of caring for the future happiness and well-being of their children. And birth-control is not only a striving in this direction, but actually carries the banner of

\* MAX VERWORN: *Allgemeine Physiologie*. 2nd Edition, 1897.



this ideal. And it would be so readily accepted, even by the poorest women, if it were not purposely hidden from them.

You who call yourselves Eugenists, you may grumble over this bungling in the first steps of the people's schooling, but only so will every one pay more attention to hygienics in the future, and so it will be easier to lead the masses one step higher in the eugenic school. Only so will every one the better judge of the value of his own germ-plasm and that of his partner, and will also consult his family tree, the archives where everything is recorded. It often happens however, that one or two children are born, before the inferior condition or the unfortunate conjunction of the married couple is evident; because it is for the time being, very hard for the attending physician to form an exact estimate beforehand of the efficiency or inferiority of the germ-plasm. In all such cases of tardy unfavorable diagnosis, the only practical and sovereign remedy capable of excluding worthless germ-plasm for the future, is to prevent all further conception by birth-control.

Let us now go further into detail, and consider those pernicious influences which we know from experience to be obnoxious not only to the *soma* (the body) but also to the germ plasm. The most weighty of all are the constitutional diseases, first and foremost of which is *syphilis*\*, this greatest of all destroyers of the race, which quite apart from all possibilities of further infection, spares none of the organs of the affected person, and damages also his germ-plasm long before there is any question of a possible conception. But all other constitutional diseases, whether infectious or not, all constitutional disorders must also be considered here, because with the constitution in general, the germ-plasm is also sure to be more or less involved. I need only refer to: tuberculosis, scrofula, and all anaemic and cachectic conditions in general, called forth as they are by poverty and exhaustion. In all these cases, procreation should be put a stop to in the name of the germ-plasm; which can so easily be performed by the help of birth-control, and in no other way.

\* And yet this greatest of all race-poisons has not yet so far been fought with energy, like other infectious diseases. We have indeed inspectors of hygiene, but they are not yet enabled to carry out their functions as efficiently as our modern school-doctors.



We would rather like even to prevent all these dangerous cases if possible, but this also can only be attained by birth-control. Only by birth-control can we adapt the number of children early enough, to the circumstances. Especially we must be careful to prevent the bringing of children into the world too quickly one after the other, or by people too advanced in years; so that only strong and healthy germ-plasm is allowed to perpetuate.

In the second category I mention all constitutional intoxications as factors detrimental to the germ-plasm, for they also form an emphatic contra-indication whenever the question is raised of increasing the number of children or not. Some poisons are notorious in this respect, as: alcohol, lead, phosphorus and arsenic.

Here again it is most important to do everything possible to avoid such poisonings beforehand, and here again birth-control can be most helpful. I would also draw special attention to narcotic drugs such as morphia, cocaine and alcohol. Alcohol especially is taken too often, either diluted or concentrated, to drown trouble and to counteract the depression and the worry frequently caused by a too numerous family. How often the father abandons his once comfortable home in order to seek recreation or quiet in the public house; and often the overburdened mother also falls a victim to the taste for drink. In my own practice, I have seen two cases of a young wife whom I had known as lively and neat and punctual, lose all heart after recklessly repeated child-bearing, and sink into poverty and despair by immoderate drinking.

But what effect has it on the germ-plasm when people use preventives in order to allow themselves a certain amount of luxury in their daily life? In modern culture and the luxury it brings in its train, there are many things that make for a damaging effect on the germ-plasm; besides the fact, that in most of these cases natural selection is lacking.

So for instance when one has fewer children, he can afford to drink more wine and to smoke to excess; he is also in a position to spend more money on prostitution, which means increased risk of venereal infection; he lies in bed later mornings, and evenings sits up later and perhaps by gas-light,



breathing more vitiated air; canned foods, which frequently contain poisonous compounds, are more used, etc. But on the other hand modern hygiene has created many economic improvements: central-heating prevents dust and smoke in our rooms, electric light gives off no noxious fumes, bathing and swimming excites the energy of our metabolism in the body as well as in our germ-plasm; and with a certain amount of comfort and luxury and a higher education people are more exacting and learn to carefully avoid all kinds of pernicious influences.

Let us now on the other hand consider the lot of those who are not so well off, the children of the poor, and let us realise how unfavorably their germ-plasm must be influenced in their close and crowded living-rooms and bed-rooms. What an unhealthy atmosphere is continually breathed by the child, not only at home, but in the schools and later on in the workshops. As these young people have a careless bringing up and a comfortless home, the boy flies to the cheapest amusement, — the drink-shop, and the girl is driven to prostitution. Then there are special dangers of poisoning in various trades, from lead-dust, phosphorous and mercurial vapours, the fumes of bisulphide of carbon, and so on. In all these cases, if only the necessary degree of birth-control had been exercised, the welfare of the whole family would be on a higher level! And when disease and contagion have occurred, and not only the body but the germ-plasm are threatened with evil consequences, — which families are the more amenable to the blessings of modern medical treatment, — those who are economically exhausted through excess of numbers, or those which have been reasonably restricted?

So no one will dispute that it is birth-control alone which allows of a better and more careful bringing up of a family, and of an education which teaches the individual to guard against all evil influences on moral grounds, to avoid alcoholic liquors and sexual excesses, to be conscientious with himself and to breathe an atmosphere that is ethically and hygienically clean and pure.

And now we come to the question of feeding. The nourishment of the body is also that of the germ-plasm, and we have seen how greatly it is neglected in the chronic state



of insufficiency which is the lot of the children in our proletariat. This state really means a physiological deficit, the hygienic ruin and impoverishment of the race or of our masses! Whatever projects of reform have been or may be made by the state or by philanthropists — it will never be possible to attain the desired result, unless a stop is simultaneously put to the disproportionate increase of the population among the proletariat.

If we have brought forward the greatest existing misery, we do not wish to exclude the conditions in those families which are a little better situated, in which, although the nourishment is not wholly insufficient, it is still far from the physiological optimum, and only relatively satisfactory. Here also we must be struck by the thought that with more discretion in the procreation of children a much higher level would have been attained. It is a special progress of our times that sexual hygiene is steadily more recognized, an improvement which will also be evident in manifold cases in its action on the germ-plasm.

And it is certain that many portions of our globe in which the soil is too unproductive and the climate too severe, and where only a poor race of men can be procreated, scarcely worthy of the name of men, would have remained unaccustomed to the benefits of our human race, if the original inhabitants had been able to find a place in the sun on a more favorable spot.

These few considerations will have sufficed to demonstrate that for the most varied reasons, birth-control is of the greatest possible importance for the avoidance of a degradation of the germ-plasm as well as for its improvement, and that every physician experienced in the question of heredity should eagerly encourage a further popularization of the teachings of birth-control among the masses of the people, just where it is still most needed.

#### 47. — The Theory of Natural Selection since Darwin's Time.

Darwin's theory of natural selection\* is founded on the general experience that all species of plants and animals have a tendency to increase their numbers faster than the means of existence permits. Darwin showed that in consequence of this,

\* CHARLES DARWIN. *"Origin of Species"*. 1859.



many individuals must perish in the struggle for existence, and how, because this fate befalls the weaker individuals first of all, the stronger and more efficient thereby leave a relatively more numerous progeny behind. So it is evident that this means an important factor of evolution.

Then one fine day it occurs to the malthusians and the neomalthusians to offer a check to this course of the world with the express refusal to share further in the struggle for existence. One should, so they tell us, decimate his family in anticipation, in order that some of them may not have to perish later, and in order to save himself the trouble of struggling — without stopping to think that we should then also have to renounce the benefits of selection!

These malthusians behave like the owners of race-horses who could so far sacrifice their self-respect as to agree with their competitors not really to contest the races, but to share the prizes and awards between them. All mutual emulation would then cease, and there would no longer be any necessity to breed the best race-horses. No matter how sincere and kind the neo malthusians may feel towards mankind — their teaching betokens the annihilation of all energy, and a cowardly running away, instead of facing the fight. Thus our race would be given over to the utmost deterioration in the future ... and still they dare to talk of improvement of the race!

The foregoing lines practically express the chief argument against birth-control which is vaguely felt by some, and by others more loudly declared. The principal point however is thereby lost sight of: that Darwin's selection is indeed one of the principal factors, but not by any means the *only* one. Darwin himself never said that it was; on the contrary, he says in his "Descent of Man": "Important as the struggle for existence has been and still is, yet as far as the highest part of man's nature is concerned, there are other agencies more important. For the moral qualities are advanced, either directly or indirectly much more through the effects of habit, the reasoning powers, instruction, religion, etc., than through natural selection." (Descent of Man, 2nd Ed. London. 1875, page 618).

Mankind has long been convinced that altruism, love of one's neighbour, devotion to the public good, can all exert a powerful influence in urging us along the path of evolution.



Religion and poetry have a thousand times honored this truth throughout the ages, and Kropotkin has noticed this factor of evolution in his book "Mutual Aid, a factor of evolution" (London 1902). Only the discovery that the struggle for existence also represents a most important factor of evolution was new in Darwin. In this chapter we will now let all other factors of evolution rest for a while, and deal only with the Darwinian selection theory.

It is very usual to look upon selection as being on the one hand a weeding out of the unfit, and on the other an increase in value, as a profit for the survivors. Both aspects are frequently right, but it is very clear that the destruction of the vanquished is much more of a certainty than the increase in a victor's efficiency through his victory. He does not always issue from the fight unscathed. Let us imagine this struggle for existence as it may occasionally be observed, as a fight between two individuals; perhaps two English game-cocks going for each other with the greatest energy and perseverance and determined on life or death. One of them soon falls half dead to the ground, then it is the turn of the other; the blood streams from gaping wounds in both champions. At last it is seen that one of them is really dead. As to the conqueror? Of course he lives to propagate his kind; but he is no longer the lusty, uninjured cock that he was the previous morning; through exhaustion, loss of blood and strain on the nervous system and the heart, his germ-plasm will have suffered; and any chickens he may engender, which have also to live and to grow up in the same environment, will become just as irritable and nervous game-cocks as their father was.

Or we may consider the struggle for existence as one against the forces of Nature, for instance against a continually cold climate, or where available nourishment is constantly scanty. All the individuals suffer, their muscles waste away, from time to time one of them dies; finally only a few of them are left. Are these any better off, because they have survived in the struggle for existence? Has the reader by any chance experimented on frogs in a physiological laboratory after their hibernation, or winter sleep, which is for them a hunger test? Those surviving come victoriously out of the test, but they



have scarcely any muscles left. And how is it in epidemics? Have the survivors increased in strength or value because they have issued from the trial? Or would it not have been better for them after all, if the fight had not taken place? He who has got over a bad case of typhoid fever, or who has been attacked by cholera, is generally no longer the man he was before the illness. This goes to prove that although in Nature the old saying "Woe to the conquered" is true enough, the victors are often to be pitied as well.

A lightening of the selective struggle may thus be of advantage for those taking part; the blessings of the struggle for existence may prove a terrible disappointment. Only think of the families of the poor, of the thousands of children who literally and morally live in a pestiferous atmosphere. Theirs is indeed a masterly struggle for existence, this hunger test with lack of light and air, which makes them all pale and scrofulous!

But even in those numerous cases in which through struggling and striving the victor has gained in energy and muscular strength, this acquisition only signifies an advance in development in the sense of Lamarck's teachings, i. e. through exercise of the organs; they are acquired values, which can only be of hereditary worth as far as they favorably influence the germ-plasm. Selection means only the weeding out of the inferior, just as the gardener plucks out the sickly little plants and lets the taller ones grow; or to continue by Darwin's prototype, just as the cattle breeder allows none of his animals to take part in reproduction except a few strikingly good examples. So basically, selection is only a negative term, and can only yield a negative advantage for development (although that may be very great), inasmuch as the inferior and inapt individuals will be reproduced in a lesser degree or not at all.

Sometimes too, people get an erroneous idea of selection from another point of view. They think that in the world of wild animals and uncultivated plants it is always the fittest individuals who are the victors. This however is absolutely not the case. Here also the so-called accidentals, i. e. the non-selective influences, frequently play a predominant part. When two stags meet in battle it may be a pure accident if



one of them standing on higher ground throws the other over. Then again, two animals may be driven by shortage of their usual green food, to try the leaves of trees unknown to them, one of them by chance may first eat poisonous leaves and succumb. It is a known fact that selection does not rule in infectious diseases. Anti-selective influences too exist, even in the animal world. So sheep-breeders have observed, that when two rams fight on a smooth piece of meadow, the bigger and stronger of the two falls back with a broken neck first, which may perhaps be explained by the manner in which the smaller one directs his attack.

Chance plays a great rôle in selection in the animal world, and among men it is really not much better. Here we have the accident of birth. The weakest child of rich parents is surrounded by all the helpful accessories of culture and science, and so has a good chance of being able later to procreate with his degenerated body, while many a workman's child must perish from a trifling cause in the cradle. In the majority of cases however, it is the fittest who survives and procreates. But it is evident that this struggle for existence is a two-edged sword, a factor of development which is the cause of much that is good, but also of much evil. It represents the evil out of which good may come. We should then not be sorry if this struggle could be made a little less severe, or if it could be combined with other factors of evolution, not subject to these disadvantages.

Thus it is noteworthy that the higher we ascend in the scale of evolution, the less we see Darwin's theory of selection prevail in Nature; and the higher the place in the scale occupied by a species, the smaller is the number of its descendants. Just as if Nature had judged it less necessary to subject its creatures to this painful means of perfection, the less they stood in need of perfecting. The higher the beings are differentiated, the more highly differentiated also is the means of evolution; while low down in the scale, selection rules uncontrolled. So we see that in mankind, and particularly in men of the higher civilization this Darwinian selection has been reduced to a minimum. And while we find many factors inimical to selection in wild plants and animals, mankind is rich in anti-selective factors. War, formerly one of the greatest



selective factors, has become in modern history still more an anti-selective factor, as it takes away the youngest and strongest men without mercy. Private property, originally the crown of fighting or working, becomes more and more the privilege of birth.

Some selection still rules among men; but it is no longer the brutal, animal form of selection of former times, and now this factor of evolution is more often accompanied by other, higher motives. According to his wish or as circumstances compel him, the modern man may consciously further the evolution of the race. In the same degree as man rises above the level of the animal world in his procreation and in the education of his offspring, the selection will be a wise one. Still the struggle for existence will always be hard enough for him, even in civilized countries where birth-control is gradually winning its way. We are still living in the age of competition, which is only a refined sort of struggle for existence, for in competition the least fitted have every chance of going under and thus being excluded from continuing the race.

And what does world-history teach us in this respect? It shows us periodic oscillations of two factors: mutual dealings and individual rivalry, in other words: solidarity and individuality.

When in the Middle Ages the guilds, formerly born from the need of unity, threatened to stifle individual initiative and restricted too greatly the exercise of trades and crafts, then, in opposition to this the striving for greater freedom in individual work arose from the needs of the times; and the result was free trade and free competition. That was one of the most important results of the revolution, a rebirth of the struggle for existence with all the advantages of selection, a new lease of life. Then was heard the classic war-song of Darwin's, a consecration of this struggle for existence, through which he became the Homer of the 19th century. And to-day, well into the 20th century, there is once again an ebb and flow, while the competitive struggle of all against all begins anew to prove unbearable. The competitive system has brought production to an undreamt-of height, and taxed individual endurance and efficiency to the extreme; but as is always the case when a principle is allowed to run on unchecked, — the dark side of the picture is now apparent: hereditary im-  
po-



verishment of the masses and chronic crises in almost every branch of industry. It will be the task of the 20th century not to increase competition, but to moderate it, through trusts on the part of the employers, and through co-operation, trades-unions and socialism on the part of the workmen; both employers and employed uniting in social laws and socialistic principles. The keeping of procreation reasonably in check through birth-control is to be regarded in this connection as one of the most effective methods not only of preventing a lamentable recrudescence of this competition and of despair, but of producing in the course of time a healthy equilibrium.

This much we have learnt from the history of the past. In the more distant future, when mankind has proceeded far enough or perhaps too far in the socialistic direction, in communal institutions, then, as formerly, the necessity of individual competition will again be felt, and the people will be forced to fight a way out for themselves. Will anarchy be called into service for this?

Just in the degree that the individual in the future behaves with more consciousness, and exercises prudence in parenthood, so far will the maintenance of an equilibrium between the two factors named be possible.

How then will this problem be affected by birth-control?

The principle of selection is one of the laws of Nature, and it is obvious that it cannot be abolished at one blow. Of course, when the number of competing individuals is kept within certain bounds, the mass of difficulties which the individual meets with on his path will be lessened, but selection is thereby not abolished nor even always restricted. We should not think for one moment, and Darwin does not say so, that the greater or more numerous the difficulties, the more surely does selection operate.

Again let us think of a steeple-chase with hurdles here and there on the course; it is not a case of the more obstacles the better! If the obstacles are too numerous the race becomes impossible. So also the density of the population in a country, the number of children in a family may increase to such an extent that the members of it cannot develop at all; then the fight for existence would not be fought, and selection would



not be exercised at all. Moderation in the interest of selection itself is thus indicated, so that the individuals may develop in the proper manner.

But, we must ask, will not human society easily go too far in this direction? Would not an excessive restriction in the number of births lead us finally to wish to keep the sickly and inferior members alive? From pity and good-nature the weakly and sickly would be artificially maintained and carefully tended. These then would in the near future procreate quite unhindered, and perhaps even more recklessly than the apt members of society, and this would herald the downfall of the race.

DR. ALFRED PLOETZ has published a very exhaustive sociological work on the subject: "Die Tüchtigkeit unserer Rasse und der Schutz der Schwachen" (The efficiency of our race and the protection of the weak) — pub. S. Fischer, Berlin 1895, in which he gives as a solution of the problem, that the socialistic-humanitarian tendency should be combined with the practice of eugenics and birth-control. He says: "to brand birth-control as immoral as is so often done, is simply to open the door wide to unhealthy contra-selection". (p. 235). "The *alpha* and *omega* of this hygiene (marital hygiene) is of course the practice of preventive intercourse, which allows the separation of the weighty moment of reproduction from the frequently uncontrollable sensual desires postponing it to a time when it can take place under the most favorable conditions." (p. 235).

We have already noticed that it is birth-control which enables us to properly care for the weak and sickly, together with prohibiting their reproduction. Considerations of humanity will constantly urge upon us the duty of no longer abandoning weak and unfortunate individuals to a melancholy fate, even if it at first appeared that this would deteriorate the race. And we can see how it often happens in self-denial, just when one thinks that, following one of the higher commandments he must sacrifice himself, a new blessing arises from it, not only for the individual but also for the community. Knowing that we in this way are contributing to the common good, mankind will more readily listen to the commandment that we should only perpetuate happily constituted individuals. And



this certainly means a higher stage of evolution than had hitherto been possible to reach by means of animal selection. Thus artificial selection is of a higher order than natural selection.

Which individuals appear after all as the fittest, who according to Darwin generally carry off the palm of victory and should reproduce their kind? We have already shown that accident plays a great part in the outcome of the struggle, and that the victor does not always issue from it unscathed. Let us now imagine a most favorable case — which individuals will then be crowned victors?

Let us think of one of the most frequently occurring cases. A too prolonged drought in the spring time has caused a terrible struggle for existence among the growing things in my garden, then a nice rain falls; — now which plants do you think have survived? The finer seedlings have all perished, only the weeds will flourish. So does Nature behave, and so it will always happen if we leave selection to Nature. She chooses according to *her* own ideals, for *her* own ends. If we abandon eugenics to Nature alone, she will only produce wild plants, wild animals and savages. These are they who are best fitted to natural wild conditions.

We ought not to leave selection to Nature alone. We want to learn all about selection, just as we do about the other laws of Nature, so that we may turn her laws to our own uses. So we must learn to take selection in hand ourselves, and that we have already been doing. Marriage between blood-relations has been against the law since pre-historic times; marriage among children has long been prohibited amongst ourselves; and it has been sought for a long time to proscribe marriage between hereditarily tainted persons. If the birth-rates continue to fall, the time will probably come in which carefully selected women will be chosen as the honored mothers of a new nobility and will set themselves the task of breeding and nursing the finest children for the community. Not only should the inferior be discarded, but the very best and most worthy should be chosen with human foresight. What an infinitely higher stage of evolution might thus be reached!

Yes, we also appreciate selection, but we want to be the members of the jury ourselves! We want "human selection"



not "natural selection" that is to say: conscious and not unconscious selection.

An entirely new point has been reached in the selection of mankind inasmuch as it is now not only the husband, but also the wife who can decide whether a child shall be procreated or not; this question is no longer left to the often somewhat crude answer of the father, but the mother can also exercise her veto. This is one of the greatest benefits of the birth-control movement and is of an importance never hitherto reached in the evolution of the race: *selection through the mother!*

From this time forward woman will no longer groan under her fruitfulness as under a curse from Paradise lost; through physiological knowledge she is once again mistress of her own body, mistress of her fate; whereas formerly just the most passionate women used to perish in the most tragic manner. And once married, a woman will wish for the more children, the fitter and stronger she feels herself to be. If however she feels delicate and fragile, she will abstain from procreation, from choice, from her own selection. Maternal selection is the most hygienic and the most efficient of all.

Darwin also mentions *sexual* selection, to which we must refer now with a few words. As Westermarck points out in his „Geschichte der menschlichen Ehe“, (History of Marriage) Jena 1893, chap. XI, this sexual selection should only be regarded as a special variety of natural selection. Good! Here also it is evident that with a thoroughly careful education, such as is only possible with birth-control, the young people will be brought up from childhood under more hygienic conditions and with a thorough knowledge of hygiene, so that when they come to choosing a life partner, not only *he* but *she* also will have high ideals, hygienically as well as ethically. And it is almost impossible to estimate the great importance of such a higher standing for the happy evolution of the human race.

Thus from all the foregoing it is perfectly clear, that birth-control, far from spoiling the principle of selection, will vastly improve it and broaden it. The weeding out through the excessive number of individuals, this blind, animal mode of selection will be replaced by conscious selection, and the *real* selection will only then commence.



48. — The Doctrine of Evolution since Lamarck.

In the 46th chapter we treated the actual value of birth-control for the improvement of the germ-plasm; improvements which surely are hereditary. In our last chapter we have dealt with the theory of selection; and although values acquired through selection are not strictly hereditary ones, yet in many respects they are very nearly so. But now we come to the acquired values. We are anxious to discuss in this chapter to what extent these values, even if not hereditary, may still be of importance for eugenics. Lamarck's principle of evolution will here point out the way.

Over a century ago, long before Darwin, who fully appreciated him as his predecessor, Lamarck, the great Parisian zoölogist\* rightfully recognized the now living creatures as the result of a succession of organisms of a constantly more highly differentiated character. According to him it was a certainty that the increased differentiation of the organs was the effect of their exercise of the organs in conformity with the surrounding circumstances. But his contemporaries did not understand him, which must not surprise us. His inspired theory was far too daring for people with a transcendental view of the world. Besides which his manner of expressing himself was not very clear; it is not easy for instance, to discover on reading the introduction to his "*Histoire Naturelle des Animaux sans Vertères*" that when he uses the words "universe" and "Nature" he means about the same as we do by "matter" and "power". The material that was known in his day was also far less rich than in ours, intuition played too great a part with him; consequently, although his discovery was all the more meritorious for it, his conclusions were not so convincing.

When Darwin came forward later on with another, a negative factor of evolution, the disappearance of the unfittest, demonstrated in such a wonderfully clear manner and illustrated with such a wealth of evidence, the scientific world no longer

\* J. B. A. T. MONET, Chevalier DE LAMARCK, "*Histoire naturelle des animaux sans vertèbres*", Paris 1805, and "*Philosophie zoölogique*", Paris 1809. He was the pioneer of the idea of evolution, in contradiction to LINNAEUS, who regarded every species as having originated at the creation, as described in Genesis.



felt any need of settling the weighty problem: by what causes the first occurrence of a noteworthy variation was produced. In the Darwinian doctrine of selection it is only stated, that if individuals are existing with well adapted organs along with other individuals with ill adapted ones, the latter will disappear. How these organs came to be so adapted to their uses, was left an open question. To make only chance responsible for it, — the structure and mode of life of the most elementary creatures, even of the unicellular algae are much too complicated for that. Darwin himself constantly felt this hiatus in our knowledge, and mentioned it.

Things got worse for Lamarck later. He regarded it as empirically established that a differentiation through exercise of an organ became hereditary; but this view has been quite abandoned since Weismann's time. Apparently Lamarck's ingenious theory was then thrown on the rubbish heap. But more recent observations widen our views, and open up new perspectives for the doctrine of evolution. The biological discoveries of our days in the realms of chemotaxis, phototaxis, thermotaxis, etc., show us with wonderful distinctness how all forms of life, even the bacteria, which apparently have no reasoning judgment and not even the slightest trace of nerve-substance, have a distinct tendency to flee from injurious influences and to move towards favorable ones. This fact has been proved by ample experience, although the deep-lying reasons are far from being satisfactorily explained. This manner, in which each living cell reacts to stimuli, seems however to be the primary condition of life, the foundation of all evolution.

In the lowest stratum of animal life, in the amoeba, the moving away from harmful influences or towards favorable ones, appears to be occasioned by the contraction of the albumen, which is occasioned by the effect of highly prejudicial excitants such as alcohol, cold, heat, the electric current, metallic poisons, etc.

For it is evident that if a tiny contractile mass of protoplasm shrinks on one side (that of the harmful influence), while the other side has as usual a tendency to expand, the cell must move, and can only do so in an opposite direction to that of the harmful influence. That there is no contraction in the side of the cell farthest from the irritating influence, is due to



the fact that albumen belongs to the class of substances which are poor conductors of such harmful influences.

In a higher stage of development, amongst the micro-organisms which propel themselves by means of cilia or flagella, the effect of the same influences may be observed very accurately on the delicate processes of the protoplasm, these primary differentiated organs of movement. Such a ciliated organism may be compared to a rowing boat propelled by one or more oars. The organs of propulsion will always be stimulated on the side where the harmful influence makes itself felt, and this being so the longer axis of the body will turn in such a manner, as to present its hinder end to the harmful influence; and if now, stimulated by its own energy acquired from stored-up nutriment, the organism moves, its direction will be away from the influence in question.

Even among the most highly differentiated organisms, with organs still more strongly differentiated for the albumen contractions (our muscle fibres), we find the same principle obtains. Moved by some external stimulus acting on the organs of our senses, we take up a position turning towards agreeable influences and away from disagreeable ones; and in this direction, according to the structure of our bodies, we are set in motion by the stored-up energy derived from our food. A little child looking for flowers in a meadow, if left to itself, unconsciously turns from the direction of a cold wind and towards the friendly sunshine; the latter after the same law of positive phototaxis which we may observe in bacteria, which sends moths into the flame, and cattle back to a barn which has caught fire, and from which they can only be driven and saved with difficulty.

We find everywhere in Nature that every cell, every organism and every individual always seeks the physiological optimum or flees from a harmful influence according to a fixed law, although not always with a happy result. When we do the same with the aid of our complicated nervous system, and seek and avoid pleasure and pain, this is but a finer variant of the habit which has been inherent to every unicellular creature from all time; only thanks to our higher development we do it either better or worse than they.

This striving after the physiological optimum, established



as a fact by general experience, although it may still be insufficiently explained in its deeper causes, must represent the foundation of all evolution, the positive side of the problem.

However important for the individual the values acquired in this manner may be, the question arises in connection with eugenics: are these values also hereditary? Was Lamarck right to build his system of evolution on this idea, as a series transmitted from generation to generation, from species to species?

That the individual by continually reacting to favorable and unfavorable influences acquires a certain practice and dexterity in the course of time, and adapts itself to a certain extent, agrees with all that we know of the growth and development of our tissues; the energetic use of our limbs and internal organs is the physiological massage necessary to their growth, just as every lesion is a stimulus to new formation. But it is questionable if these acquired qualities will be transmitted to the descendants.

Possibly not through the channel of heredity. But there are other ways and means by which the qualities of the parents may be transmitted to the children. Even *after* conception the influence not only of the mother, but of the father also, can be exerted; not only does the series of influences of the parents on the child not cease with the moment of conception, but is only then that it really begins.

In its intra-uterine life, first as embryo then as foetus, the unborn child partakes of all its mother's experiences; in the body of an idle mother it is lethargic in its movements, and in a bright and quick little woman it is quite lively. The composition of the mother's blood is that of the child's also; from the third month of pregnancy it is the same blood that flows in the veins of both. The state of nourishment of the mother is also that of the foetus, and when the mother suckles the child, this community of nourishment including toxic matters and defensive proteids, persists long after birth. Every little fright, every nervous excitement of the mother, reacts secondarily on the foetus, and always in the same measure with which she reacts to them.

Then after birth, it is striking how the little child sees,



hears, smells and feels the same as her mother; besides which the child observes in what manner the father and mother react to these various stimuli. All these things produce new influences day and night, and, compared to these, all hereditary ones remain far behind in the background.

Thus are the values, individually acquired from the parents, transmitted a hundredfold to the children, even if not hereditarily, i. e. if not transmitted at the moment of the conception. That which is not transmitted through the continuity of the germ-plasm, is conveyed to the child by the continuity of external conditions, in other words through the solidarity of the species. For the child grows up under the same conditions as the parents, and under the same immediate influences which affect the parents and the relatives of the family\*.

So the more our individually acquired qualities are perfected, the more will each succeeding generation grow up under more favorable conditions than any of the preceding generations, and will have better educational methods and means of working at its disposal. Quite independent of the question of heredity, the course of evolution according to Lamarck's principle appears to us as a constantly rising curve, from generation to generation and from species to species. Apart from the continuity of the species, there is a continuity of external conditions, a continuity in the use of the organs.

Eugenics and race-improvement have never really been looked upon as a question of pure heredity. The cultivator of plants, the breeder of animals has never been content merely to endow his favorites with good ancestors; still after conception he goes on avoiding all harmful influences for them, and maintains his protégés under the most favorable conditions possible. By a reasonable limitation of their numbers he provides them with an optimum of light, warmth and nourishment, and allows them free space for their development. He knows that with plants and animals all this will surely either directly or indirectly benefit the coming generation. So also the horse-breeder for instance, knows very well when placing his young animals

\* So now we understand what Kropotkin means in his book, "Mutual Aid", when he represents the principle of solidarity historically as a factor of the first order in evolution.



with older ones of noble breed, that the noble movements and qualities will be transmitted to them.

In regard to this we must not lose sight of the fact, that the persistence of heredity is often only relative. In cultivated plants for instance, the more highly cultivated qualities frequently only persist from generation to generation to long as they are raised on artificially fertilised soil. No sooner are they placed back in their original dry poor soil, than they rapidly revert to their original and inferior condition. Thus what was apparently continuity of the germ-plasm, shows itself to be principally a continuity of external conditions.

So also it must be one of the most serious tasks in the improvement of the race of men, to maintain the individuals of each succeeding generation in the most favorable circumstances of life possible. And this can never be practically effected without a certain amount of birth-control. Only through reasonable birth-control will it be possible to so order the conditions for each new-born infant, that it shall have a sufficiency of light and air, nourishment and attention, so only we can speak of a striving after the optimum. The realisation of these improved conditions for the individual is then not only an individual gain, but its beneficial effects will still be felt in the following generation, because it will be better educated and brought up under better conditions. In this sense birth-control is a preliminary condition of all eugenics.

This fundamental principle is confirmed by the practical experience of the centuries. All our finest fruits and vegetables, all our valuable domestic animals have been improved in the course of the centuries with endless patience through human care with an enormous limitation of offspring; all according to the principle of birth-control, a principle that has become an axiom for the breeder. Only so have they become what they now are, and we enjoy all the advantages of their improvement. Our opponents, the enemies of birth-control should be consistent, they should disdain these products of modern culture such as our finest strawberries and content themselves with the sour wild berries which have been strewn before them by the gentle hand of Nature without this artificial limitation of numbers.

But, alas! it is only in the procreation of the human race,



blinded as we are by animal instinct and traditional superstition, that we have scarcely dared as yet to bring our higher reasoning faculties to bear.

**49. — The minimum, the maximum, and the physiological optimum.**

Darwin in his doctrine of selection, and Malthus in his efforts to moderate misery by limitation of numbers both keep in mind an avoidance of the minimum limit, in which a lack of the requisite means of existence renders life impossible. To avoid this lowest limit, is surely the first duty of all biological effort and all eugenics. But our horizon will be much wider, all appearances of life much more comprehensible to us, if we do not limit ourselves to this lower level of the scale, but if we make the attainment of the physiological optimum the object of our endeavors.

This principle has already been referred to in chapter 3 of this book. The crucial point of this entire study, the leading motive of the symphony, the criterion of all our accomplishment up to the present is the physiological optimum. From Lamarck's studies and through the newer biological discoveries in regard to chemotaxis etc., we have seen that we men, just as much as all animalculae and the "invertebrate animals" seek the physiological optimum.

With this ideal before us, our perspectives of a higher evolution become more comforting and cheerful, than if we are constantly living in fear of falling into the utmost misery, and all manifestations of life will henceforth be appreciated at their true value. Instead of a continual fight against death, we shall see a striving towards life everywhere; and the greatest object of this life will be a stronger impulse for betterment of all living conditions, an impulse for perfection — a fire burning in the souls of every young man and woman, just as in the commencement of this book we observed in the newly married, with the ideal of life lying open before them.

This is the positive impulse, the "Excelsior" of all cell-life, the ideal of mankind. Compared with this, the fear of sinking to the minimum limit is only one side of the problem, a special case\*.

\* In the richer families the seeking of the optimum is in the foreground, while among the poorer ones it is the avoidance of the minimum limit which troubles them.



This ideal of the physiological optimum should in the future determine the standpoint taken up by the leaders of mankind: ethical and political leaders, educators and rulers. This criterion of all our doings and relations, the physiological optimum, is something real, for it can be measured, counted and weighed in an objective manner with approximate exactitude. Only so we shall be able to bring even the so-called theoretical sciences back to their physiological foundation, and to raise them to real sciences.

Before this aeropagus, before this highest of courts, birth-control appears in all its beauty, in its full significance; just as we have amply demonstrated in the foregoing chapters its utility for the individual and the family, for the good of the community and for the improvement of the coming race.

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The other extreme, the maximum limit, has not yet been discussed in the course of this study; the maximum limit in which life is rendered impossible not through too little, but through too great abundance. In many cases the same is true here as well as in the avoidance of the minimum limit. Just as for instance, creatures living in one of the glacial epochs may be destroyed as soon as the minimum temperature is exceeded, so we may perish in a prairie fire or in a volcanic eruption, by which the limit of maximum temperature is surpassed. The individual can just as easily perish by heat as by cold. So we usually associate both ideas, and speak of harmful influences in general. But there are also cases in which the contrast between these two extremes is very sharply shown.

It sounds quite different when one falls sick or dies from eating too much, to when it occurs from hunger and misery. It produces quite a different impression if a man ruins his health by over-working or through idleness. The suffering of poverty awakens our pity, the vice of extravagance our antipathy.

Both extremes, the economic opposites, should be purposely avoided, the one as earnestly as the other. Usually of course, it is not done. Many, misled by one-sided experience are afraid of the minimum limit, but wish nothing so much as to approach the maximum as nearly as possible. Luxury and



excess are looked upon by many as the highest ambitions of life. We have already had occasion to warn our readers of falling into this error, for especially where eugenics is concerned, it can be very dangerous. Just as a flower which withers because it has not enough water, freshens up when sprinkled, while on the contrary a plant suffering from too much water cannot be cured as a rule, so also is a family which suffers from insufficiency of nourishment more easy to restore, (and their descendants will inherit even superior powers of resistance owing to the period of privation) while a family suffering from too much luxury is generally beyond salvation.

Yet we find in many easy families the mistake of too greatly restricting their number only for the sake of luxury. We cannot too strongly warn people against this, and as often as our opponents sound the same warning, they are doing something very useful. But it would be very unwise to blame on that account the principle of birth-control in all cases.

We may represent the three criteria here in a rather old-fashioned example. A human family is like a boat gliding a short way down the surface of a broad river, the river of the centuries, the river of evolution. In the middle of the river with its mighty bends, the stream flows freely, there the bark goes along safely and surely, there is the physiological optimum. One must avoid the two banks, so as not to be wrecked. What wonder is it then when the boatman standing anxiously at the helm, his eyes turned to the bank on the leese, where most of the small craft come to grief, driven by the wind — loses sight for a while of the other bank, and thus brings his boat into danger on that side. The watermen standing on the shore see his danger and call to warn him of it. One very clever person offers the well-meant advice that it were better to blindfold the steersman with the cloth of ignorance, so that he should not run into this danger!

While it seems to us at the present time that it is more urgent to avoid the minimum than the maximum, because we know only too well, what a great number of people perish before their time from lack of the most indispensable requirements of life, — we learn from literature, the mirror of the century's life, that there was once a time when mankind fell into the opposite error and only understood the avoidance of



the maximum limit. Up to shortly before the French revolution men were almost exclusively warned against the exceeding of the maximum limit in the high-class literature of the day. It was in a period when literature was only written for the rich and the mighty of the earth. In Florian's fables for instance, Death chooses a prime minister: "Elle choisit l'intempérance". And Molière's characters were all suffering from a plethora of good things, and merely needed cures of "clystare, purgare, signare". Only with the broadening of views after the French revolution did the masses cease to be a "quantité négligeable", and since that time their misery is noticed in literature; though the old-fashioned rhetoric of the preachers of religion and morality still always finds its greatest pleasure in an overwhelming condemnation of luxury and pleasure in this poor world, in which unfortunately most individuals are lacking in both.

If the French revolution had had no other consequences than to cause this change of ideas, this broadening of our views, it might unquestionably be called a blessing. This new era in literature was brilliantly opened in elegant France, by Victor Hugo, and in stern England by Malthus. The latter who appealed to cold reason, was much less favorably received by the public than the former, who aroused the warmest feelings.

I mention this literary revolution not only as a curiosity, but as an ethical event of quite high importance. We have constantly seen in the foregoing parts of this work, that birth-control indicates a higher stand-point in the scale of ethical evolution than that on which mankind formerly stood. It may be that many a reader has shrugged his shoulders at the expression "ethical evolution". But the event I have mentioned here signifies in an empirically incontestable manner a step forwards on the path of ethical evolution, which started also in France. The French revolution tore down many barriers between man and man, radically reformed the political and economic distribution of power, and broadened the sphere of our sympathy. And while this sympathy was not a sentimental fancy, but represented the ethical correlative of a mighty material change, we have to reckon with it as a permanent manifestation which will only broaden with the course of time; though



unfortunately our feeling of sympathy is often too cruelly disturbed by the most lamentable manifestations of old fashioned Chauvinistic or imperialistic reaction.

The sphere of our sympathies is continually widening; we can see this from the study of all periods of history. Ethical evolution goes necessarily hand in hand with our material evolution. The principle of all cell-life, the seeking of the physiological optimum and the avoidance of the two extremes must lie near to our hearts from ever broader views, not only for ourselves, but also for all mankind.

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## FIFTH PART.

### *Birth control and the population question.*

#### 50. — Historical Outlines.

The following short historical sketch is to show, not how the limitation of the population has been produced in the course of the centuries as an ineluctable fate through natural events, disease, war, slavery and unhygienic conditions, — for which we should not have space enough; but only in what manner this question has been dealt with theoretically in the course of time, and what motives have been advanced to justify it.

With the same spirit of sacrifice with which the higher animals rescue their young from imminent danger, they also kill them when they find them in chronic misery, for instance when they are held in captivity. Wild and barbarous savages, driven by the restricted area of their islands or the shortage of food in time of famine, not only kill off the dying, the aged, and prisoners of war; they also check, either privately or publicly (enforced by ritual or by law, the otherwise too exuberant growth of new lives among them, by which the existence of the community would be threatened. In other spheres we find all varieties of checks, from a pious restraint under the prevailing idea of morality, to the refined arts of the courtesans in the harem of some oriental despot. In other times and other conditions, we see people wishing by the number of their soldiers to overcome their enemies; thus looking upon the commandment: "Be fruitful and multiply" as an expression of the highest statesmanship.

It was in democratic ancient Greece that the population question was first theoretically considered from political motives; it was considered that it should be the care of the state, to regulate the number of its future citizens. Plato and Aristotle, although their view of life was fundamentally different, both wanted to proportion the number of citizens to the number of agricultural holdings into which the land was divided; and both expressed the wish that children should only be pro-created by the strongest individuals in the prime of life. Apart



from this, sexual intercourse might be practised, but it should not be allowed to come to the birth of a mature child. And not only Hippocrates, but also the old doctors of Alexandria and of Rome: Pliny, Soranus, Dioscorides and Galen gave numerous prescriptions, by which the natural fecundity of mankind could be restricted. We must not be surprised to learn that these means of prevention and the recipes for provoking abortion led to frivolity and immorality in the boudoirs of Roman patrician ladies, just as they did in the oriental harem.

In contrast to this, Christianity appears pure and sublime. But for the Paulinic, that is dualistic christianity sexual life was too base, too material to be honoured in any way; marriage was only tolerated to avoid something worse. Practically the limitation of families went on as before. In the old Christian countries, just as formerly in heathen Rome, the infants were frequently exposed to the elements, i. e. they were left to Providence. And fecundity was left to Providence too, at least in theory! Also the memory of the old anti-conceptional herbs and poisons was handed down from mouth to mouth, and has been preserved even until the present time; while wars and pestilence very greatly reduced population. The holy church in the Middle Ages had' monopolised the motherly care of everything and everybody; but with the course of time she was no longer equal to the task.

In Italy from the Renaissance period a reliable method of preventing conception was known, which at that time was called in France the Italian method\*, and was probably the same as that which we now term the French method. But it was not until the end of the 18th century that mankind really dared to take up earnestly all social problems, even the most shocking ones and to devote some attention to the population question, stirred to do so by the needs of the times. And various authors had insisted on the connection between the density of the population and the existing means of subsistence, before Malthus had devoted a comprehensive study to it, and thus won the title of "father of Malthusianism", in the same sense as later on, Darwin became the father of Darwinism.

\* See the Life of Cellini, translated by Goethe (1500—1570) Book III, Chap. 7.



51. — Malthus.

Birth-control is a population question. If in this connection we take Malthus\*, as our starting-point, we do not wish thereby to infer that we agree with Malthus in everything. On the contrary. His times are not our times. The evolution of mankind did not stand still for a century. Malthusians have become fewer, but the neo-malthusians who strive for a modified and improved form of malthusianism, constantly more numerous. We have however, a pious historical duty to perform on account of the fact that such endless wrong was done and is still done to this apostle of birth-control. Nothing is cheaper than to blame an old man, especially when he is dead, and so poor old Malthus is still thoroughly scoffed at, after his views have either been falsified, or formulated in a one-sided manner. So we will now endeavor to restore this pioneer to his just and honorable place in history, and at the same time to come to a proper judgment of the question before us.

Malthus was the forerunner of Darwin, and the merit accorded to Darwin for having opened the eyes of mankind to the struggle for existence in which we had always been taking part without knowing it, had been earned long before by Malthus. Darwin admits this in the beginning of his "Origin of Species", where immediately after the introduction treating of race improvement by selection in mankind, he says that his "Struggle for Existence" is only Malthus' doctrine applied to plants and animals. Darwin says: "A struggle for existence invariably follows from the high rate at which all organic beings tend to increase. Every being which during its natural lifetime produces several eggs or seeds, must suffer destruction during some period of its life and during some season or occasional year, otherwise, on the principle of geometrical increase, its numbers would quickly become so inordinately great that no country could support the product. Hence, as more individuals are produced than can possibly survive, there must in every case be a struggle for existence, either with another individual of the same species, or with the individuals of distinct species, or with the physical conditions of life. It is the doctrine of Malthus, applied with

\* THOMAS ROBERT MALTHUS, "Essay on the principle of population", 1798.



manifold force to the whole animal and vegetable kingdoms; for in this case (amongst plants and animals) there can be no artificial increase of food, and no prudential restraint from marriage." (DARWIN, *Origin of Species*, 1st Ed. 1859, Chap. III, p. 63.)

So far, both leaders stand on the same ground; but Darwin, because he recognizes this struggle in plants and animals as a cruel necessity of Nature, rejoices philosophically that this struggle also has its useful side, while Malthus, when he observes the same struggle specially in man, feels anxiety and sorrow, and seeks a remedy with which reasonable men might succeed in alleviating this misery, or abolishing it altogether. (Is's only a pity, that there are so few reasonable people!). In connection with which we must repeat that both leaders regard this for existence as not always a struggle between individuals, but principally a struggle against the forces of Nature, a fight for the indispensable means of existence, in which solidarity forges the most powerful weapon.

At the time of the French revolution, when his old contemporary and friend, Adam Smith\* founded English national economy, Malthus also regarded the population question from the economic stand-point. Both leaders were thoroughly animated by the new economic ideals, when once the magic word of individual freedom: "self help" had burst the bonds of the Middle Ages. Adam Smith, Malthus and their friends then formed the powerful reform party in England, something like the Socialists do nowadays; but in the opposite direction, inasmuch as Adam Smith and his followers defended individual freedom against the mediaeval guild-system, while in our days the opposite swinging of the pendulum makes itself felt in world history, and sets the solidarity of mankind again in the foreground in opposition to the individualism of the English system of national economy.

Between Malthus and Adam Smith there was only one serious point of difference. Adam Smith in his general definitions always included food-products and industrial-products together, as though they were identical; Malthus like the French physiocrats, did not fall into this error, because the conditions of these two branches of production are so totally

\* Dr. Smith as he was called by Prof. Malthus.



different; as much in reference to the mode of production as in regard to their indispensability to the maintenance of life.

Malthus' monumental work: "An essay on the principle of population" is a *chef d'oeuvre* of investigation in natural science, such as one would scarcely expect from a theologian and jurist. He finds divinity in the laws of Nature, and expressly honors utilitarianism, fifty years before John Stuart Mill. We may even look upon him as a forerunner of the historical materialism of our days, for he does not regard human misery as God's punishment for sin, but sees one of the most powerful causes of human suffering in the material conditions of life.

And what has not been said against him! What has he not been blamed for! Especially pessimism. And it was Malthus and nobody else, who tried to find a remedy, in the hope of removing one of the causes of the evil, or at least to mitigate it if possible. If he did not have the excessive optimism to believe that as soon as the source of trouble was discovered, everyone would hasten to make use of the remedy, this is only a proof of his modesty. Although some of his published opinions may sound a little discouraged — at any rate Malthus cannot be blamed for not sharing the idealistic optimism of the anarchist philosopher Godwin.

Malthus has been reproached with capitalism, but to be just, he should be judged in the setting of his times. Malthus belonged to the champions of English national economy, who welcomed in their time the dawning of a new day for the world. The capitalistic method of production was then the ideal method, and the faults of the system were only to be felt later on. Malthus expected all reforms to proceed from individual initiative, not from state-compulsion or state interference; but one can scarcely blame him for that, because he did not, like Godwin, take every interference of the state to be an evil.

Malthus has been called a *fatalist*, but he proved his disbelief in fate, because he constantly sought to discover the true cause of human misery. The law of Malthus may possibly seem to the ignorant as a dictum of fate, but not to the man who thinks. And it is to the credit of Malthus that he, perhaps more than anyone else, has awakened our moral consciousness in this respect.



Further, Malthus is said to have deprived the *poor* of their last hope and consolation, — marriage and family life; for if the mass of labourers must delay their marriage until they are secure against poverty, the poor would never be able to marry at all. This reproach deserves a thorough refutation. Malthus lived in the delusion of “self-help”: if a man wills it, he can do everything; this belief in contrast to the Middle Ages, in which the will of the individual was paralyzed and suppressed at every step. He who wills it in earnest, may become Lord Mayor of London. So it was not to the poor that Malthus forbade marriage, but to the *idle*, the *indifferent*.

In this sense an idea of healthy reciprocity was at the bottom of the Malthusian remedy: “no marriage till the needful means of existence are forthcoming”. Then thoughtless marriages would be prevented — hence fewer people, less consumption of food; and on the other hand the young people would be encouraged to show increased zeal and energy, so as to marry earlier — that means increased production. This explains why Malthus was so greatly against the neo-malthusian preventives, the “artificial checks”\*. In his opinion the incentive to diligence would thereby disappear.

We must here mention emphatically, that Malthus indeed recommended sexual abstinence *before* marriage, but did not require constant abstinence in married life as soon as a certain number in family been reached; this is an enormity, which has only been proposed in our time. On the contrary, Malthus expressly says that in case a married couple have an abnormally large number of children, this would be a fitting opportunity in which charity would by no means be out of place; for abnormal fecundity is not subject to our will, and cannot be artificially be provoked by charity\*\*.

On the other hand the imaginary honor is not due to Malthus as if he had given the solution of the social question\*\*\*.

\* Malthus' Essay, 6th Ed, London. 1826, Vol II, appendix of 1817, page 479; “their tendency to remove a necessary stimulus to industry.”

\*\* Malthus, Essay Ed IV, 1807, Book IV, page 410.

\*\*\* Malthus says emphatically at the commencement of his Essay that it is not possible to any man to enumerate all the factors that may lead to reform, and in his Essay treats of only “one important reason”. He says: “to enumerate all the causes that have hitherto influenced human



His theory did not render any attempt at social reform superfluous. On the contrary, all real improvements support each other, complete each other, and are mutually indispensable. Every reform is a "*conditio sine qua non*" for all others.

Such statements as the following then sound most comical: "I believe in birth-control, and therefore am not a social democrat", or vica versa "I am a social democrat, so I am not for birth-control". Whoever speaks thus, does not understand either socialism or birth-control. For he who has sympathy for the one must necessarily have a certain amount of understanding for the other. He who turns his attention to a better mode of production must also be interested in a better distribution of the necessities of life; and where this distribution is concerned, we cannot remain indifferent to the number of mouths to be fed.

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Although Godwin, the political opponent of Malthus, held him up to public scorn, it was not the real Malthus, but a caricature of him that Godwin ridiculed. Godwin did this with such humor, that his pseudo-criticism had only too great a success. The monstrous ideas however, which Godwin attributed to Malthus existed only in that critic's imagination, and it is much to be regretted that so many later writers adopted them either directly or indirectly.

## 52. — The Law of Malthus. A tendency to divergence.

The world is not constituted as childish folks fancifully believe. Less than a hundred years ago people took it for granted that everything in Nature was regulated according to simple laws and rules, and that everything in physics and chemistry bore the seal of truth. That is to say, that if a phenomenon could be referred back to a simple proportion, this fact spoke for the correctness of the demonstration, just as a schoolboy is sure that he has done a sum

improvement, would be much beyond the power of an individual. The principal object of the present essay is to examine the effects of one great cause intimately united with the very nature of man. The cause to which I allude is the constant tendency in all animated life to increase beyond the nourishment prepared for it." Essay, Ed VI, 1826, Book I, pp 1 und 2.



right, if he can prove it by division. The great Creator and builder of the universe could be perceived in this sublime simplicity of Nature. Regnault was one of the first to destroy this fanciful idea, this naïve ignorance. From his physical experiments the following was evident: the more deeply and precisely he carried out his investigations, the more surely he found long decimal fractions instead of simple proportions and simple figures. Our observations of Nature teach us that far from being so simple and naïve, its rules and conditions are of a most complicated order. What actually occurs can never be traced to one single cause — or all would be easy to explain. Everything is far more the result of *various* causes, one of which holds the other in equilibrium. The best example of this truth that we can prove mathematically, is the course of the celestial bodies in our planetary system, the harmony of which would soon be disturbed if the path of one were not constantly influenced by the path of another. Therefore all will go well for a certain time — we can confidently say for a long time.

In organized life, with its far greater complexity, the multifarious nature of the modifications and adjustments which Nature applies to her own works is still more vast. Age, sickness and death are often the means by which the disturbed equilibrium will at last be corrected in a most fatal manner. That which is built in the day-time, is often destroyed at night. That is Nature's method.

In the age when all mankind was in its childhood, they saw in Nature a puzzle picture that could be put together, but the grown man recognizes Nature as a tragedy. And when social wrongs come in, the tragic conflict is embittered.

The law of Malthus shows us a striking example of this disproportion in Nature, and we will now enquire a little more closely into it.

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The next opportunity for Malthus' essay was given by the burning question of his day: to what extent the distribution of cheap corn, as was recommended in Paris, and the care of the poor, as regulated by the English Poor Laws were a remedy for pauperism or had made it worse? Godwin represented the Parisian ideals; Malthus relied on "self-help" to bring



salvation\*; in a well ordered state, of course. The results obtained in ancient Rome by the distribution of corn had proved rather unfortunate. Malthus could not see the advantage of giving bread to the one class and making it so dear for the other; he thought it was only a postponement of misery, not an alleviation of it. This view now appears to us crude and theoretical, but it was at that time the fact, that there was not enough of the means of existence for all. Starting from this fact, Malthus inquired how this evil could be remedied at its source. How would it be possible to maintain the equilibrium between the available food-supply and the number of those to be fed undisturbed for any length of time?

Basing his judgment on an economic study of this question throughout the world (see Books I and II of his Essay), he came to the conclusion that this balance between food-supply and demand was everywhere very unsatisfactory. While savage nations suddenly experienced transitions from plenty to starvation, he found amongst the cultured peoples a constant tendency to divergence of these two factors, a certain tendency in men as well as in plants and animals to increase more rapidly than the food supply allowed.

As a national economist he was specially observant of this disproportion, this tendency to divergence between the available food-supply and the number to be fed. And he found its explanation in the physiological fact that mankind, like all living creatures in general, constantly multiply their numbers through the impulse of each individual organism, while even under the best of conditions the product of the soil can only be increased a little each year.

We come now to the thesis with which Malthus endeavored to illustrate his theory, and which gave rise to almost as much misunderstanding as the Heidelberg catechism, which also was only given as an elucidation.

Of course all such formulating gives rise to error. So it is with every definition; however simple a thing may be, every

\* Malthus does not say as Godwin would have us believe, that we should leave the sick, infirm, aged and children to starve. But the arrangement by which the valid should also have the right to demand poor-relief, had gradually become an evil for the people, because it destroyed all feeling of personal responsibility.



definition is defective, and as soon as it is too generalized, no longer fits the case. Only mathematical definitions can be perfectly and absolutely adequate, because the subjects treated of are abstract. In chemical and physical phenomena it is still more difficult, and when treating of cell-life the clumsiness of all formulating must be evident. Therefore I will endeavor, in accordance with Malthus' ideas, to sketch out not one formula, but several different theses, which will illustrate the same proposition from a different view-point and mutually complete one another; something like the way in which in music a melody can develop different variations. I once knew a clergyman who had photos of himself taken in ten or twelve different poses and moods, in order that together they would represent him completely. And so I hope that each of my readers will find in the following, *one* explanation that appeals to him.

I give them in a series of nine theses.

No. 1. — Men like all other living organisms, have the impulse to increase their numbers, according to the principle of cell-division. This, if no obstacle intervenes, gives us, a geometrical progression e. g. 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, 64 etc., or 2, 6, 18, 54, 162, 486 etc.

By means of new inventions and improved cultivation, the produce of a field can indeed be somewhat increased in the course of time, but at best the harvest can only be slightly increased each year. At the most this would give an arithmetical progression, e. g. 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12 etc., or 2, 5, 8, 11, 14, 17 etc.

No matter how great we take the increase to be in an arithmetical progression, a geometrical progression will in the course of time always far exceed it. Consequently there is a constant tendency to divergence between the curves which show the numbers of those to be fed, and the figures of available food respectively.

The foregoing formulas demonstrate what is the situation when the increase can proceed without any impediment. This potential possibility may be concretely shown by the following imaginary example:

No. 2. Imagine a farm which amply supports a man and wife and six children. It is impossible for the fields to be sufficiently manured, drained and continually improved to such an extent that in ninety years time it will be producing sufficient



food to nourish the total number of descendants of this family, if they go on multiplying without any impediment. For in ninety years their number would be the respectable one of 702 persons, if each one of the women between her 18th and 30th year only brought into the world 6 children who live to grow up, i. e. three girls and three boys.

As such abstract demonstrations are always rather difficult to follow for people who are not mathematicians, in the following theses I will only mention what we can really see from this Malthusian divergence:

No. 3. Men *multiply* by reproduction; the harvest which the soil yields each year, can only be *increased*.

The next thesis will explain this more clearly.

No. 4. The more people there are already living in a district, the more easily will their number increase. And inversely, the more intensely the soil in a given district is already cultivated, the harder it becomes to increase the amount of produce.

The same tendency to divergence may also be expressed as follows:

No. 5. The people multiply, and every year a portion of them are carried off by death; still the greater number continue to live and to multiply. Or food supplying vegetables and animals multiply also, but the majority of them are eaten, and only a small portion of the product is spared for propagation next year.

Or more briefly:

No. 6. The term nourishment implies that the nourished individuals will multiply, and that the available nourishment will be consumed.

The same tendency to divergence, otherwise expressed:

No. 7. The surface of the earth is limited, and man occupies much less space than the fields and land which directly or indirectly, are wanted for his nourishment.

In other words:

No. 8. Man occupies but little room, and this living-room can easily be extended; if necessary men can live in several layers, in floors built tower-like, one above the other. But food-products always require great space and much sunshine for months, consequently as time goes on it is ever more difficult to increase the production of food-stuffs at the same rate.



If we take cattle breeding as a source of food, the same difficulty arises, as with agriculture products, for our cattle and domestic animals must live on products of the vegetable kingdom as well.

If we include also fish and game as food, the same remark applies as in No. 4: the more preserves are hunted and fished, the harder it is to obtain greater quantities of fish and game from them afterwards.

No. 9. The reproduction of new individuals is the result of mating; the raising of crops however depends on work. The fact that mating pleases more than work, is of itself a cause of divergence.

Each of these theses offers through its defective mode of expression sufficient material for an evening's discussion; and they are not by any means identical, but still they give an idea of the tendency to divergence which we have mentioned.

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This tendency observed by Malthus manifests itself in various ways, according to the phase of production in which a nation is living. As Marx also says, every system of production has its own law of population. But it can always be traced back to the principle formulated above. The law of Malthus lies in the nature of things; it is a law of Nature. Only in different cases the details may take on different appearances. This tendency to divergence will only cease when we understand the art of producing food-stuffs artificially and in unlimited quantity. But for the time being, there does not seem to be the least probability that man will ever succeed in this.

If there is anyone who still has the slightest doubt that the law of Malthus really signifies a lack in the arrangements of Nature, I would beg him to just imagine with me for a moment, what would happen if fecundity in Nature depended on the exact amount of the food-supply existing at any given time. Then surely everyone would be filled with admiration and would say: "See how wisely that is ordered — it could not be otherwise, for it is quite necessary." And each one would praise the expediency of Nature, that produced no offspring for which the necessities of life were absent.



But now it appears that in reality there is no such arrangement, and that there is only quite a loose connection between these two factors. That a woman can be very prolific even when from one week's end to the other she is almost constantly starving. Even worse! It is a fact that Nature, as if in blind zeal for the continuation of the species, so far oversteps her purpose, that just through this boundless fecundity far more individuals perish than would be the case if there were a certain amount of limitation.

Have we not then every reason to deplore this state of things? Here is evidently an incongruity in the methods of Nature itself\*. How this disproportion is kept within certain bounds, we shall now see.

This excessive fruitfulness of Nature has often been quoted as the most striking example of its expediency. I mean the thing is like this. Amongst the primitive organisms their salvation lay in their countless numbers. In more highly differentiated beings however, better and more economical methods of regulation in respect to the number of their offspring have developed; and finally in man, we have the finest regulation of all, *reason*. But this process of evolution is unfortunately still a matter of the future; the majority of mankind has not yet got so far.

### 53. — How is this Divergence Checked?

What is now the consequence of this disproportion, this tendency to divergence between the curve of nourishment and the population-curve? What will be their course in the future? Will the disproportion continue to increase when the causes remain stationary? Will the curves pursue paths still farther apart?

No, that will not happen, says Malthus. It cannot happen, says he\*\*. Another natural law, just as powerful as the law

\* See my book "*The Sexual Life in its biological significance*" Dresden, R. A. Giesecke, — especially chapter 40.

\*\* There are always opposing forces, "checks" Malthus calls them, such must always exist. "Some check to population must exist" And in his Essay, Sixth edition 1826, Book I, pp 3 and 4, he says: "But as, by that law of our nature which makes food necessary to the life of man, population can never actually increase beyond the lowest nourishment capable of supporting it, a strong check on population from the difficulty of acquiring food, must be constantly in operation."



of increase, renders it impossible. We cannot live without food; he who takes no nourishment dies. And he who receives too little nourishment gradually perishes, and dies before his time. Then everything is in order again, the equilibrium is restored. After the passion for reproduction comes the reverse of the medal; death. An early death after a life full of suffering. The law of reproduction and the law of death maintain the balance.

Statistically everything is then in order, and the restoration of the correct equilibrium may really be the result. If death and reproduction balance each other exactly, the figure of the population will remain constant\*. However in most cases one or the other of the influences will preponderate, and an increase or diminution in the population result. In agreement with the usual probabilities among the phenomena of Nature, the result of this eternal fight between life and death will show great or small variations. Other factors of course come into play, and these also may very well sometimes prove decisive in regard to the number of the population.

But in regard to the welfare of the people also, the law of Malthus will not always be found to agree. Increase in the birth-rate does not necessarily always make conditions worse, although as a rule a birth-rate that increases too rapidly results in the course of time in a fall in the people's welfare, as was the case at the close of the 18th century in France and Ireland, when the most terrible poverty prevailed. And a falling birth-rate such as we have had in most European countries for the last 25 years before the war, is generally accompanied by an improvement in the relative comfort of the masses. But because the number of the population is only one factor and

\* Here a "bon mot" occurs to me which a witty man once made in regard to Malthus, and which runs as follows; "Malthus says that people multiply very fast, and that is indeed true: I have 4 children, 16 grandchildren and possibly in time shall have 64 greatgrandchildren. But I have just as much right to argue *vica versa*: I have 2 parents, 4 grandparents, 16 greatgrandparents, 64 great-great-grandparents, etc. This is just as true, with the difference that the number of my ancestors is certain, but that of my descendants very uncertain." — The solution of the problem is the following: My wife and I have surely not more than 4 parents, 8 grandparents, etc., but we might easily have more descendants than 4 children, 16 grandchildren, etc.



not the only cause which brings about the general comfort, so in certain circumstances it may happen that another factor proves the decisive one.

More clearly than in the noisy bustle of the market of life, we may observe the law of Malthus in the tables of birth and death-rates, and this in an incontestable and convincing manner.

Statistics prove with extraordinary regularity — and this phenomenon strikes everyone who has anything to do with vital statistics, that a high birth-rate always coincides with a high death-rate, especially with a high infant-mortality. As soon as the birth-rate diminishes we see the death-rate drop\*. That is the best proof of Malthus' example.

So now we could with Süssmilch sing a hymn to the infallibility of Nature, which orders all so perfectly, and when the food supply runs short, so cunningly diminishes the numbers to be fed! But Malthus, who lived in years when famine was rife, felt all the cruelty of Nature, the mass of suffering that is contained in those dry death-rate statistics, as the direct or indirect consequence of the disproportion between the food supply and the number to be fed.

There are a thousand other causes of an early death, a million other causes of suffering; this cause is only one, but it is one of the deepest, and one which shows itself in a variety of forms and stands in mutual relation to all others.

As far as the results are concerned it may be almost a matter of indifference what is the particular cause of death in a given case; every death helps to restore the disturbed equilibrium. Every death makes room for one life more. That is the gruesome play of Nature. And that we perceive so little of all the suffering that Malthus announced as a prophet of misery, arises from the fact that the dead tell no tales, and because our social horizon is so narrow.

*Instead of allowing the disturbed equilibrium to be restored in this cruel manner by Nature, it is far better that man's chief concern should be that the equilibrium should not be disturbed.*

There are two ways in which we could accomplish this:

\* We saw the same phenomenon in family statistics in the first part of this book, (p. 23); for the various countries of Europe in the second part (page 87) for Australia in the third part, (pp. 129—134).



1. by increasing the production of food-stuffs. Malthus and Adam Smith, by their system of free trade and of individual initiative did more than anyone else to help this; 2. by moderation in the production of children, for instance by contracting no inconsidered marriages.

That is the moral of his teaching. He expresses it in his own way when he says: the population has a tendency to increase at a greater rate than the food supply; and as man cannot live without food, the tide of humanity must always be stemmed, dammed, controlled. By "checks" Malthus means the regulating influences which act as brakes on a too rapid increase in the population; he calls all the causes of early deaths "repressive checks", and all those of diminished conception "preventive checks".

Here we would like to enquire a little more closely into these Malthusian checks, and especially to show the different forms in which they occur. But before we go into the question of how they affect mankind, let us glance for a moment at the elm tree that stands before our window. Here we see Nature's repressive checks more distinctly than on paper. Every spring, each tiny branch develops two rows of leaf-buds, an equal number on either side. From each bud in the early part of the summer there sprouts a new twig with new buds. All these twigs and new shoots would strangle each other in the course of the next years, and a mass of knotted dead-wood would be the result, if they had not nearly all dropped off earlier. Many years later we find on the main trunk, which once was merely a twig, only a few branches, and on these branches but very few twigs remain. But wherever the tree is cut into or wounded later on, there spring out under favorable conditions, atypic buds from the deeper layers of the wood, (in contrast to the axillary buds), originating from the remains of all these twigs that have been buried and grown over, which may be noticed right through the wood as little "eyes" or knots. Nature lops off the branches if man neglects to do so. So universal are "checks".

Another example, taken from the realm of the bacteria: "Under the best possible conditions of temperature and nutriment, the hay-bacillus doubles in half an hour, the vibrio of cholera in 20 minutes, from which the actual number of des-



cendants of one single cell in 24 hours would reach the colossal total of 1600 trillions. The dry substance of such a mass of bacteria would weigh about 100 tons. But in fact it is never so terrible in Nature, for owing to various causes the cell division never proceeds in such regular geometrical progression. Firstly because the necessary mass of nourishment is never available, even in the body of a sick person; secondly because many of the individual bacteria die off, owing to the restraining effect of competing microbes; and finally because, especially in cultures of bacteria, their own excretions, such as the formation of acids, restrain their growth." (Dr. Alfred Fischer, "Vorlesungen über Bakterien", Jena, Gustav Fischer, p. 17.) Thus the checks work amongst the microbes.

As to the checks with ourselves. In order to examine the different varieties, we will first refer to the accidental causes which lie outside of our free will and which we only mention for the sake of covering every cause. They are manifold and some of them most powerful, such as earthquakes and glacial epochs. These may indeed have such a tremendous effect, that for the next few years or even centuries there occurs a deficit in cell-life. And if the vegetable and animal worlds recover more rapidly than the species "homo sapiens", a relative shortage of men may exist for a long time, as Kropotkin observes. The disproportion is then over compensated.

But in most cases the disproportion will be insufficiently corrected, and there results an endless chain of privations and permanent sufferings, to which we finally succumb. Although death from starvation in our circles is rare, chronic hunger is just as common\*. But the latter is difficult to

\* Professor Huizinga says in his well known work regarding nourishment that "Millions of people die because they have either no regular midday meal or an insufficient one. Yet they don't die immediately. It is only in Persia that people die from starvation nowadays; in the European culture-states folks die from chronic insufficiency. The organism of man is tough and may resist for years under insufficient nourishment before it results in death. The usual form of this European starvation is not a total lack of food, but defective and one-sided nourishment. The cheap carbo-hydrates are generally represented in fair sufficiency, but the dearer fats and albuminoids are not. And then in order to overcome the feeling of weakness and loss of energy, people fly to nerve-stimulants, especially the cheapest: alcohol. The ordinary hunger-diet of Europe is potatoes and spirits." (Groningen, Noordhoff & Smit, p. 10).



diagnose. Through longstanding privation the power of resistance is finally exhausted. Bacteriology also teaches us that hunger and cold (which physiologically are indeed indetical ideas) destroy immunity and render one receptive of infection. So people die young through lack of all necessities, and especially of sufficient nourishment. In many such cases it is practically impossible for the physician to determine whether hunger was the primary and the disease the secondary cause of death, or if the disease was the primary and exhaustion the secondary cause. Both causes generally act reciprocally. A gradual death always takes the form of some disease or other. The power of resistance has long been broken down, and it depends purely on the circumstances, which of the causes of death shall be the final one. Life is, for many people, an experiment for finding the minimum limit of maintenance.

But it is not only the poor who feel the disadvantages of the disproportion we have mentioned, not only the "starving" who perish early as a consequence of it. The rich man also experiences through it an all too severe competition, a discouraging feeling of being crowded out by others. He is constantly faced by higher requirements, examinations are made more difficult, more protection is always needed. Through all this the rich man lives in a state of nervous tension which may undermine his strength at an early age.

And who is there who is more completely ruined and even murdered by too numerous births than the *mother*, who often brings children into the world without having had a sufficient rest-period between? The early decease of the mother is the most effective "check", but also the most tragic.

And then it is quite easy to realise, that all privations, all social disproportions attack the child first of all, because it has the least power of resistance. It is easy enough to procreate a child, but it is difficult to bring one up! A high infantile mortality is the best sliding scale for a too high birth-rate. And all other social evils, all sins, all the misery of the world are aggravated, when this factor, a too great crowding of mankind, occurs. Why cannot pauperism be uprooted? Because there are so many paupers, and the more we help them, the more their numbers will be increased. Why are all



reforms of so little use? Because the secondary production of children persists longer than the primary advantage. All abuses (drink and prostitution included) act reciprocally, and promote each other mutually, and one of the most important factors is the disproportion between the food-supply and the number to be fed. Of course it is an evil that corrects itself, that balances itself — but it will remain an endless source of suffering as long as men procreate thoughtlessly.

After the cruel checks of Nature, let us consider the reasonable checks of self-controlling people. Self-control in the sexual province, no hasty marriages, moderation in the procreation of children, prevention of the disproportions mentioned — “preventive checks”, that is the best solution of the question; a solution which may indeed bring some suffering, but infinitely less than all those above mentioned. So for instance complete abstinence from sexual intercourse, no matter how much sickness and sin it may cause or how unbearable it may be, is not such a terrible thing as poverty and hunger. For from the moment we are born, self-preservation is the first law of Nature, preservation of the species, the second. Abstinence, not from the satisfaction of sexual instinct, but only abstinence from procreation through “artificial checks”, through the employment of neomalthusian preventives — that is no harm, and morally speaking is in many cases far higher than absolute abstinence. It is a form of altruism which causes no suffering.

Consequently, no matter in what way it is applied, the use of “preventive checks”, the avoidance of too many births, is the solution of a great social problem. It is as imperative a duty towards the child, who does not ask to be brought into the world, as it is towards society, which is thereby spared a terrible dilemma. For no matter how we look at the question, we have only the choice between preventive or repressive checks; there is no other way out.

#### 54. — Land-reclamation and Colonisation.

Some people tell us there is still a third possible way out. We must continually find new land for cultivation, so as to raise the production of food in proportion to the increase in population.



This can be accomplished in two ways: 1. through gradual reclaiming and cultivating of land on the borders or in the vicinity of already cultivated plots: 2. through settlements at great distances, where the density of the population is still slight, and where the opportunity occurs to settle without too much resistance or danger (colonisation).

Land reclamation is still only possible to a proportionately limited degree; for wherever human beings are dwelling, the smallest parcel of land apt for cultivation has already been utilised; one sees oneself obliged to have recourse to such which constantly cost more capital and are less worth while than formerly. One must be able to dispose of large sums to be spent in advance and then permanently for manures, or for the building of dykes or irrigation works\*, and this risk and the whole undertaking would only be worth while if the weather is favorable and when the market-price is advantageous.

Everyone who is well informed of the conditions, knows that there is still much land to be brought under cultivation, and that much land will continually be cultivated; but not to such an extent that the population can be allowed to increase by unhindered reproduction. This remedy will not prevent the gruesome "checks" of Nature. The simplest calculation suffices to show us that it will always be harder in the long run to cultivate more land, because we must constantly take in hand land which is harder to break up. How many districts there are already, in which the tiniest corner is already built over and no ground is available for reclamation at all. And how can the problem be solved in the big cities?

\* Nor is the state of things materially altered in those cases in which the state undertakes the execution of the work, so as to lease the land out in small lots — as President Roosevelt ordered in the U. S. A. by the Reclamation Act in 1902 — for the tenant must always pay back the outlay, in this case within 10 years. So in principle it is practically the same thing whether the farmer is under a heavy obligation to repay a private contractor the expenses in 20 years, or if he has to pay the costs to the state in the form of rent for 10 years, — reclamation remains financially, always a heavy undertaking.

In Friesland (Holland) here and there land that has already been surrounded by dykes has been abandoned because the yearly produce was not enough to pay for the pumping expenses. And in Surinam there may be seen a considerable number of plantations now abandoned, which in their time had been drained at a great expense.



Land reclamation is a fine thing for farming, but cannot be considered as a solution of the population question.

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So this means that we must look farther afield, and turn our attention to warmer countries, where the most fruitful alluvial soil lies in boundless extent bathed in a sea of sunshine, and only awaits the hand of man to yield a harvest a thousand fold. "Aux grands maux les grands remèdes" — yes, indeed, but we can also say: "aux grands remèdes les grands maux!"

Colonisation is far more costly than reclamation, and there is also greater risk: for the enormous expense of transportation and the lack of the means of subsistence until the first harvest is garnered into the newly built barns has to be reckoned with. Colonisation is easy to propose, but very few people are capable of forming a good idea of the cost. In the "Bondsblad", the organ of the Dutch East Indies League, 11th June 1904 we read:

"I will here quote a few figures to illustrate the idea of moderating the disquieting total of the population of Java and Madura by the emigration of the Javanese to the other islands of the archipelago. According to the census figures, the native population in Java and Madura on the last day of December 1895 was 25,370,000, and last day of December 1900, 28,385,000, being an annual gain of 2,27%. That would give for 1902 29,689,000 and in 31 years would double the population. Attention was first drawn to emigration in 1902 by the Director of Justice, Mr. Cohen Stuart. Let us imagine the case that it was sought to keep down the population to the figure of 31st December 1902, it would then be necessary, every year, from 1903 on, for 674,240 persons, or rather let us say;  $674,240 \div 5 = 134,848$  Javanese families to emigrate. Do you understand me?" I hurriedly assented, upon which my friend went on: "Let us suppose again — which however is not at all sure —, that every year this number of families should be willing to leave the islands, and that in their new colony they should find sufficient land to live on, in short that everything goes off well, as it can only go on paper; then however we must enquire what would be required to provide each family of five persons for the first year with tools, housing and the



preparation of their land with their maintenance. Let us suppose: (Money in Dutch Gulden)

Clothing, pocket money etc. . . . .	Gulden 35.—
Journey to port of embarkment, keep during the journey, etc. . . . .	25.—
Sea Voyage . . . . .	35.—
Journey overland to destination, keep, etc. . .	25.—
Dwelling house . . . . .	40.—
Tools . . . . .	20.—
Food during the first year . . . . .	120.—
	<hr/>
	Total Gulden 300.—
	(About £ 30, English money)

"So that was for how many families did we say?"

"134,848!" I answered.

"Then that would cost over 4 millions sterling every year (40000000 Gulden). But it costs more. Supposing that the shipping of these people could go on regularly and uninterruptedly daily throughout the year, then 1847 people on the average must be transported every day. For this purpose we must use 4 island steamers; 1460 journeys must be made annually, and if we take an average of 8 days for the return voyage and if every steamer could perform 40 trips per year, then a fleet of 36 steamers would be required for this service alone."

"I don't think anyone could dispute this calculation in any way", said I. "No, because it is correct. But you can plainly see from this that it is not possible to maintain a sufficiency of emigration. And to conduct the emigration in any other manner, is to my mind a waste of money, for it can lead to no good result."

If it is looked into more closely, we cannot expect any result from emigration in smaller numbers, than that above mentioned. I have prepared a few figures in this respect, which will also enlighten you. We have already shown that under present conditions the population would be doubled in 31 years. How could we begin to postpone this doubling? Even if we persuade 10,000 families per annum to emigrate, the doubling would only be put off for 1.7 years, if 20,000 families, then 3.7 years later, 40,000 families 8.5 years later, and so on.



So that really means that in order to postpone the doubling of the population 20 months, we should have to devote 3 million Gulden every year for 32 years to emigration."

Now let us enquire what individuals are apt for colonization. Are they our town-dwellers huddled all up together, who have no idea of farming and cannot stand wind and weather or any change of climate? Or our country folks, who are acquainted with *our* farming, but who are more awkward than the townsfolk? To be a good colonist, the efficiency of the pioneer, and an enormous amount of energy, knowledge and smartness are required, which is very seldom found in a population. And experience also teaches us that it is only rarely that a plan of colonization really holds out prospects of success, whether the organization is despotic, philanthropic, cooperative or individualistic.

Besides which — "*terra inoccupata*", no man's land, is no longer to be found on our globe. However thinly the population may be scattered here and there, and however primitive the tilling of the soil may be, colonisation results sooner or later in a struggle for life or death with the original inhabitants. History has never had to record such cruelty as in this struggle for existence, which is one of the most dreadful of checks. The struggle usually only ends with the conquest of one of the two opponents. There is no escape possible. The course of events is generally that first of all the entire colony is exterminated either once or several times; then building on the preparatory work of these pioneers, bigger expeditions are fitted out with superior methods of destruction, and that the natives who, being the original inhabitants have the only perfect right to remain where they are, are exterminated, — or what is almost worse — are driven into the interior. These are the saddest chapters of the history of civilization. How did the Europeans first get a hold in America, the Dutch in the East Indies, and the English in India? It is always the same tragedy. The fortress can only be stormed and plundered when the moat is filled with corpses over which the conquerors can march!

Begun in this manner, colonization is at any rate one kind of solution of the population question. Would it not however



be better, to be more moderate in the procreation of children instead of feeling obliged to destroy the lives of men in this fashion? Without this, in the course of time through the gradual spread of civilization, the same lands would have been won for the plough, and would be a blessing for all instead of a curse to millions.

When mankind has been raised to a higher level of morality, it will be shocked at such barbarity. Whose fault is it? Not that of the colonists; for once led to emigrate, they see no other way for their own preservation than that of opposing force to force; but that of these friendly philanthropists who recommend colonization without knowing what they are doing; who only want colonization in order to prevent the "frightful evil" (frightful only for themselves) of preventive intercourse. And all the crooks and blackguards who form the chorus to their song!

The advantages of colonization are purchased too dearly. What however are these advantages? Economically considered, the colonies may yield big profits for a time, but would not solve the population question; for it is just in a new colony, when every thing "goes well" — that the population increases much more rapidly than in the motherland. Such as in Java, for instance\*:

And in the homeland? As soon as through colonization many people are drawn away from a thickly populated district, there is once more plenty of room and business, even if not very important. This is then taken by storm from every side, and henceforth the increase of the population continues more rapidly than ever before.

This is just as evident a phenomenon as the incredibly rapid restoration of population after a catastrophe. People usually seem tremendously astonished at this recreative power of Nature, which in a certain sense may be compared to the healing of a wound. After bleeding, the blood is made up twice as quickly as usual; after a wound or a fracture the

\* The population of Java and Madura together was approximately:  
in 1816 = 4,613,000    in 1880 = 19,794,559    in 1900 = 28,746,638  
„ 1830 = 6,830,000    „ 1885 = 21,467,445    „ 1905 = 30,098,008  
„ 1849 = 9,384,000    „ 1890 = 23,914,564    „ 1917 = 34,157,383  
„ 1869 = 15,573,000    „ 1895 = 25,679,701    „ 1920 = 35,017,204



newformation is much more active than the original growth of the tissue, that is to say, so long as one is in the growing period\*. Thus a numerous emigration reacts in the motherland as a stimulus.

Perhaps in theory the entire surface of the earth, the whole of the 509,950,714 square kilometres of land and sea on which the sun shines in turn, might be brought under cultivation, and turned into a great fruitful field. From the cliff-side a great "étagère" could perhaps be made for vineyards, which unfortunately might be swept away by a single rain-storm. And as for the surface of the water: in China there are flower-boats and in Holland floating homes (house-boats) under which the fish live as usual . . . So the question is not, what is possible, — for everything is possible, — but is it worth while? And the outlook is not bright.

We are filled with sorrow when we see the barley growing so scantily in the highlands, like the hairs on the head of a man of seventy; and that is the harvest of the whole year's growth.

When we see here and there in Sweden or Norway the hay-crops, — a mere handful of grass hung on sticks to dry — we are forced to think: what a lot of trouble for such a poor result! Should we work still harder, on still worse soil?

To be practically realisable, such an undertaking must be worth while, no matter under what system of production it is worked. And if you do not want to reckon the trouble given on a money basis, because money is only the usual measure for work, then you can reckon it by the time occupied. The working day is now quite long enough; in the country for instance farm people often work in the summer time from before sunrise until dark. Shall people then work longer hours and tire themselves more completely? Shall they run still greater risks in navigation and fishery, even in the roughest weather?

People are already working too hard and too long hours. The modern system of production has pushed to extremes the seeking after new ways and means, the exploitation of new sources of industry. Do not let us wish for anything

\* In the vegetable world we find the same phenomenon, as soon as one has cut down the top of a shrub, it sends out far bigger shoots.



worse. Rather a little moderation in the number of children, and a betterment of the existence of the people who are already on the earth. The connection is unmistakable: in China with its proverbial high birth-rate the people work under the most terrible conditions; in Australia, where the birth-rate fell faster than anywhere else, they have long enjoyed a working day shortened by law. (See page 135.)

**55. — Has the doctrine of Malthus been corroborated by experience?**

More than a hundred years have passed since Malthus first made his theory public. What has become of his prophecies since that time. Have his claims been fulfilled?

If things looked so bad in Malthus' time, through the over-population, what is the state of things now, when meanwhile the population has more than doubled? The streets must be blocked by the corpses of those who have died from starvation.

What however do we see instead? More comfort in the country, and rapid growth of the towns. There is even over-production, crises arise due to over-production, and not over-production of men but of goods, while there are not people enough to buy all that is manufactured!

It seems like finding fault with prevailing conditions when we must talk of "crises". Such a crisis through over-production of any particular article does not mean that there are not enough *men*, but not enough *buyers*, that is to say, not enough prosperity and purchasing power. The more the proletariat increases and the more "shameful poor" there are, the fewer good articles can be sold, and the greater will be the demand for cheap and clumsy wares, through which finally the producer finds himself with a stock on his hands of articles which are tempting but which folks cannot afford. There would be less talk of crises if comfort were more general and the proletariat not so numerous.

All these facts might be otherwise expressed if we regarded men as producers instead of consumers. Commercially, we may say: constantly just as in every other article crises occur from time to time, which threaten to become chronic, until the trust regulates the production reasonably, so we observe



also a tendency to crises in the production of hand-labour, and this condition also shows a continual tendency to grow worse, until such time as reasonable birth-control takes the place of thoughtless reproduction of mankind.

Malthus seems to have been a false prophet, for two reasons especially: firstly because he had a wrong idea of the increase in population, and secondly because he had not the least idea of our increased production of food-stuffs. And for several other reasons besides.

1. *The increase in population.*

One of Nature's fixed rules, a sort of natural law which was formulated by Spencer, is the following: the lower a plant or animal stands in the scale of evolution, the greater is its fecundity. Man stands at the top of the series in this respect; the number of his offspring is small.

One can notice the same difference in comparing ignorant people with those who are highly educated and cultured. The educated wife has far fewer pregnancies than the woman of the proletariat. That is only what we might expect. The more differentiated individuals and species are, the more conditions must be complied with, before the creation of a new individual can occur, and so much the more also will the energy of the parents be distributed over the various vital functions, instead of being limited to the reproduction of the human race. The higher orders of animals use their more complicated organs of sense and defence with more energy than those of the lower orders. What is now in general the greatest difference between man and animals, between intelligent men and savages? Simply this, that a relatively greater part of their energy is employed for the brain. So here we have the connection between limited fecundity and higher differentiation more distinctly shown than elsewhere. The brain thinks, and the man who thinks breeds no children which he does not wish for; he avoids then either sexual intercourse, or at least a part of it, conception.

Spencer's law, properly understood, is indeed the strongest argument in favor of birth-control. A reasonable man acts with prudence. And also he who is not reasonable, but only rich, will not breed many children if he does not feel inclined



to have them. In this case the husband will easily be led to seek pleasure in paid love and prostitution; the wife to habitual abortion. Both cost much money, more than poor people could pay if they wanted these things. Is it then to be wondered at, that the rich display less fecundity than the poor?

There is absolutely no ground for thinking that the lesser fecundity in men of a high intellectual standard is owing to their having become through their greater mental development less *capable* than before of producing children, or barren and impotent — excepting in the rare cases where the sterility is a pathological consequence of prostitution or abortion\*. The intellectuals themselves would not admit that they are impotent or sterile; and there is no reason for supposing that they are.

Reason, prudence and fecundity do not preclude each other. The higher brain-centres only work intermittently, and the sexual organs also only at certain times; so they do not mutually interfere with each other. But the heart works day and night so as to give impulse to first one organ and then the other. In healthy, intellectual people the sexual instinct may be less passionate, especially in advanced years, (wisdom comes with age); but that does not affect the procreative power nor the probability of conception. A few sexual connections in the course of the year is quite sufficient for a normal couple to produce a child every year.

Even if we could admit that fecundity would be diminished by mental overwork or through obesity as a result of over-indulgence etc, we cannot however imagine that fecundity, except in pathological cases should become so reduced, that a married couple could not produce from 6 to 12 children in the course of their married life; unless man, by his prudence managed to control this function as well as others.

\* Man occupies the highest place in creation, not only through his greater power of thinking, but also — and this is not of less importance in selection — because of his greater copulative capacity, which is more permanent and less periodic than in animals, at least than in the mammals. This is evident in man's habits, in the erect posture which has become the usual one, while in the lower animals it is only exceptional, as in copulation. We see also that man also enjoys constantly a superior mental capacity, which amongst the animals is only found at the sexual period.



And experience teaches us that he does this. The man of intelligence listens to the voice of reason, listens also to the voice of Malthus; for Malthus was a reasonable man.

The diminution of fecundity among reasonable people, the fall of the birth-rate in almost the whole of Europe which followed the preaching of the doctrine of Malthus, does not bear witness *against* Malthus, but *for* him. The prophet was listened to, public opinion was stirred; of course not because Malthus spoke thus, but because of the need of the times. And Malthus had recognized the necessity before most of his contemporaries. His prophecies were therefore correct, and not falsehoods\*.

## 2. *The increase of food production.*

Industrial production has shown a boundless increase since Malthus' time, traffic also. But the production of food has not kept pace with these, it has not become a great industry. At best we can only say so of one or two branches of agriculture, but growth still requires much room and time; and mass production of food-stuffs like chemicals or machines does not exist. The annual produce of an acre of cultivated soil has increased greatly compared with former times, but that is not the question. Malthus only declares that *in the long run* the increased production of the soil cannot keep pace with the population, if it multiplies *without hindrance*.

The reader can reckon for himself according to the instance mentioned on page 174—175 how rapidly the number of inhabitants of an estate increases if allowed to multiply unhindered. From the third and fourth generation it is shown to be absolutely impossible to feed so many people from the same piece of land on which the ancestors could live so comfortably. It is out of all proportion, even if a few strips of newly reclaimed moorland is added.

Only the man who has never tried to reckon things out, can talk so foolishly of improved farming, which might approach

\* It is very remarkable that in every province in which Godwin tried to controvert Malthus, not only with jokes, but with figures, the subsequent statistics turned out very destructive for Godwin. The census figures really show a steady increase; there is no glut in foodstuffs; there is usually a distinct proportion between birth-rate and death-rate; the stock of salmon has actually diminished through fishery.



anywhere near such increase of numbers. In the fifth generation the proportion would be already absurd. In all circumstances the increase in population *must* be continually kept within certain limits, either by Nature or by our own reason. When a few generations of insects or of mice multiply with exceptional rapidity and numbers one after the other, we speak of a plague of mice or of insects.

But that the earth can provide food enough for mankind if procreation is restricted, we willingly admit. Of course. That only depends on how effective the "checks" are.

In admitting an annual increase in farm-produce, Malthus, also shows himself to be far too modest, but he expressly adds it himself. It is the utmost concession in his discussion, as if he would say: "even if we presume, that this might be possible." Personally, he was convinced that judging by the position of agriculture in his day, the land must show symptoms of exhaustion in the long run. Through this allowance, however, which was excessive from his point of view, Malthus' argument still holds good. If he had said: "the population is increasing, but land produce diminishes", that could no longer be maintained.

Meanwhile — the land actually loses in productive power through plant-growth and harvest, it shows symptoms of exhaustion. Only through rotation of crops, mixing of different kinds of soil, natural or chemical manuring, etc., can we succeed in compensating this deficit, and sometimes in surpassing it, with an increase of the production. But we must not lose sight of the fact that an amount of money and labor is required, that must be carried from the credit to the debit side. Besides which there is always an insurmountable hindrance to the increase of the yearly harvest: every plant, every ear of corn on the farm needs a sea of sunlight all the summer. For this capital that only exists in limited quantity, there is no satisfactory substitute. And if the plants grow too thickly together, there is no good harvest at all.

Sometimes of course, it may happen that the produce of a piece of land increases enormously through an improvement or new discovery, e. g. of recent times through chemical manures, but such epoch-making discoveries must ever remain the exception, and it would then be difficult to increase the



harvest the following year in similar proportion. The more the land has already been improved, the more difficult it becomes to go on improving it each year. Furthermore it is well known that in farming, good and bad years generally succeed each other.

We have just dealt with land-reclamation and colonization. We ought not however to quit the subject of the increased product of cultivation, without expressing our thanks to all those who have contributed to an increase in the product of the soil, whether by the sweat of their brow, or in the silence of their study. And although the workman had a great deal to suffer under the regime of capitalistic production — the system of free trade, of personal initiative and of individual freedom sees its reward in the increased production. It was Adam Smith and Malthus and the other pioneers of the national economy of their times, who accomplished this victory. Malthus and his partisans did more than arrest the increase in the population, they stimulated the production of foodstuffs just as energetically.

And yet the increased food production has been brought against Malthus as proof of his having been a false prophet!

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3. The whole Malthusian system has shown itself erroneous, because he regarded the increase of food production and the increase in population as two problems independent of each other. Which really is just the great difference between men and animals. Animals *seek* the existing nourishment; so the more animals there are, the smaller will be the portion for each one. Man however *provides* his nourishment; so the more men there are, the greater the supply of food that will be delivered, and continually more cheaply delivered through mass-production and division of labor. Every workman produces more than he needs for himself, thus the only fault is that this surplus so often goes into the pockets of the manufacturer and the shareholders instead of into the stomachs of the workman and his family.

But the production of food-stuffs is precisely the factor which man can only control to a limited degree. We cannot produce foodstuffs in any quantities we wish, like industrial



articles; vegetables and corn must grow slowly, well rooted in the soil, and bathed in sunlight. And this soil is *limited*, just as limited for men as the hazel bush is for squirrels.

The land does not increase. Cell division is limitless, and from the fertilized egg-cell full grown men result, when sufficient nourishment is provided. But the division of meadows does not help much; for the little fields do not grow to be big ones.

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4. Some folks say: the very opposite to the prophecies of Malthus has come true. Malthus represented hunger and want as the rock against which humanity was dashed to pieces. And what do we see? That it is just comfort and intelligence which limit the increase in population. Practically this objection is not very important. The increase of the population is limited by widely different means, as much through the preventive appliances of the rich as through the infantile mortality of the poor. Malthus himself spoke of *various checks*. If only the rich set a good example and did not selfishly keep the knowledge of the means to themselves, the others would soon follow it.

Yet it seems as though Malthus' theory is vitally attacked by this objection. For starvation was the cardinal point of his argument.

Our needs make themselves felt in various ways, and for the rich as well as for the poor there is the necessity of birth-control if he desires to provide his children with the needful education. Even he who is rich enough to gratify all his desires will limit his offspring, so as to ensure the permanent well-being of his descendants\* and so that they in their turn may be able to provide for the needs with which they have grown up.

In other words, and to return to our proposition: man not only seeks to avoid the minimum limit, but to attain the physiological optimum; these are the positive and negative sides of the same desideratum. The same advice that Malthus gave when he warned the poor to avoid the minimum limit, will also prove the salvation of the rich in their striving towards the physiological optimum. The principle is one and the same.

\* Besides which the consideration may arise that he will not wilfully expose his wife to the dangers of unlimited child-birth, and if he wishes it, *she* will be careful enough to avoid the danger.



### 56. — The Malthusian Remedy.

Malthus requires parallel with an increase in the production of food-stuffs a diminution of the birth-rate, i. e. adaption of the birth-rate to the production. His remedy was: not to marry until one could earn the means of supporting a family. This advice is indeed splendid and very laudable; but is it really a remedy for the evil he so accurately diagnosed?

According to Hippocrates, we should always enquire before prescribing a remedy, whether it is not *harmful*. Now it is obvious — and Malthus recognized this plainly himself —, that tardy marriage has a dangerous side, and a very dangerous one indeed. So as to avoid this remark, he always pointed out that every one should live in chastity before marriage; but the laying down of this requirement does not in any way remove the danger. As an excuse we have already seen above, that Malthus in his illusion of “self-help” did not believe that energetic young people would be led to marry late in this way. Still less did he expect that his remedy would mean life-long celibacy for the majority of working men, a “*decretum horribile*” which would be utterly unlikely to protect morals from depravity.

The remedy proposed by Malthus in his time is thus in many cases worse than the disease, for by its application marriage would only become a new privilege of the rich. Besides, this remedy is such a torture, that on that account alone its general adoption is a chimera. But after all it can never lead to a solution of the population question, for even if this remedy were tried, it would prove ineffective. In most cases it is the husband who brings home the cost of living, and always the wife who brings the children into the world.

When Malthus advises people not to marry before they can provide for a family, he hopes — without reason — that as a consequence the woman will not marry either before she is 28 to 30 years old\*. But even in the case where the woman also takes Malthus' advice and does not marry till she reaches that age, because she has had to save up for years first, she may, if she exercises no care in her sexual intercourse, quite easily bring ten children into the world, even supposing she

\* MALTHUS, Essay, 4th Edition 1807, p. 251.



only has one every two years. Where is then the solution of the population question?

Can it cause any surprise that people have gone beyond Malthus to seek for better remedies?

Since Malthus, our opinions in regard to these matters have varied greatly, and proposals have constantly diverged more from each other. Some of us have even surpassed Malthus in idealism, exhorting people to practice life-long abstinence even in married life, as soon as the wished-for number of children has been reached. Indeed there are moralists who say: even when you are married, all through life you ought only to have sexual intercourse when you hope to procreate a child thereby. Besides the impulse to render each other happy, the married couple must always have this accessory purpose in view.

Most people however, do not hold this view, but thankfully accept those scientific improvements through which we have succeeded in the most varied ways in controlling fecundity, so that it is now in our power to choose at our own pleasure either the Malthusian remedy, the idealistic one, or the mechanical and chemical means of birth-control with which I presume everyone is acquainted.

Consequently it has become possible nowadays for each individual to adapt himself better than formerly to the most varied circumstances; and therefore we have made great strides towards the solution of the problem that Malthus had outlined, but to which he had found no key.

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However we may turn the question over and over, and no matter how greatly circumstances may change, parents and the rulers of states must always take to heart Malthus' doctrine that it is easier to increase the population, than it is to increase the supply of foodstuffs from year to year in the same degree. Care must be taken in both directions, not only to prevent a too great increase in numbers, but at the same time to urge a raising of the food production, instead of the production and use of superfluous articles of luxury.



57. — The Present View of the Population Question.

Birth and death, the need of food, and as result: competition, govern all animated life, and not only the social life of mankind. So the great problem of the population question must now finally be studied as a biological problem.

We do not find always and everywhere in the great world of living nature such a constant tendency to overpopulation, as Malthus observed all around him in the necessitous times in which he lived. So KROPOTKIN was quite right when he urged that, for instance, during a glacial epoch the danger of the race dying out is much greater than that of overpopulation. Therefore we ought to congratulate ourselves that we are living in one of the interglacial periods, which inclines much more to over-population; a circumstance which of course must be reckoned with.

Animals can at least migrate and so seek other food; but what wholesale destruction of germinating life also occurs in the animal world through insufficiency of nourishment! In lakes, rivers and seas there are always swarming countless life-germs that can never come to full development, for the waters do not hold nourishment enough for all. If it sometimes happens that two or three successive swarms of grasshoppers, mice or ants follow closely on each other, then we have a plague of grasshoppers, mice or ants, until finally the food for such hordes fails. Meanwhile their enemies who live by preying upon them, would have vastly increased from the plentiful food they represented, and the next year the balance would be restored.

So we can see that there exists in Nature a swinging to and fro, a striving after an average equilibrium, in which the food-demand and food-supply balance; the disproportions in which always equalize each other automatically.

Mankind indeed has learnt to produce food artificially, and yet it is only much later, through private property-owning, better organization and still more recently through production on a large scale and world-commerce, that we have arrived at a stage in which it is rare to see acute starvation. In the ranks of the proletariat however, there reigns like an endemic disease, a chronic state of want, shortage, if not of food actually, at least of the right kind of foods and of care, in



consequence of which their vital energies and especially their powers of resistance have strikingly diminished.

And now, what is the attitude we reasonable men take towards these oscillations, which are so evident in nature, but which in human society are so much obscured?

The immense fecundity in the animal and vegetable worlds awakens our astonishment, we are delighted by it, we take advantage of it, and scarcely notice that one of its consequences is, that in the winter time millions of insects and many thousands of birds perish pitifully through hunger and poverty; we are rejoiced when in the spring every living thing multiplies again just as vastly as before. And even we ourselves feel then an overwhelming impulse to procreate; and remorse comes to us, when often it is too late. For at first we only feel the sensual pleasure, and the cares come later on. So we also are caught in the net, and we also are striving eagerly to upset the equilibrium, the sliding balance between food-supply and food-demand.

From the earliest times man has always been placed before the dilemma of either sacrificing a great deal of his sexual life\* or risking an impoverishment of his numerous progeny. To furnish a solution of this fatal dilemma, is the pride of the birth-control movement. An untold amount of misery and despair can thereby be prevented.

Every man with a certain amount of education desires to be initiated in these secrets; he would be ashamed not to know all about it; we agree with this ideal for our own familial life. But as soon as the subject is approached and this gospel, this solution of the above dilemma is to be preached and broadcasted among the needy families who want it most, cries go up from all sides against such improper and reprehensible subjects being spoken of. Just as mankind draws a profit out of the great fecundity of plants and animals, without observing what dark shadows this fecundity draws after it for the individuals concerned, we also like in our social relations to draw a profit from the fecundity of the masses; sweetening it at the most, with perhaps a little bit of philanthropy. Militarism demands the largest contingent possible,

\* In regard to the great biological significance of the sexual life see my book already mentioned on page 177.



many large employers attach more importance to cheap labor than to a higher standard of production, and even many a respectable wife is quite pleased, if she has a large number of offers at once from cheap and willing servant-girls. Whilst most people feel themselves involuntarily led to brand the preaching of marital forethought as wicked and impolitic, we the advocates of birth control feel on the contrary, that to withhold this knowledge from the masses is the highest degree of immorality.

Well, because the different opinions on the subject are so diametrically opposed to each other, we must allow experience of actual facts to decide. First and foremost the facts as we ourselves observe them at every step in our own families. But because individual observation can only be very limited and is most frequently one-sided, we shall do better, just as we have always done in this book, to consult the vital statistics. The great strides that have been made in statistics of recent years allow us to observe now much better than in former days.

The mere fact of a diminution in the birth-rate is nowadays a spectre for many a journalist. People used to say: what will become of us if the increase of the population goes on always like this? Now they say: what will become of us if the decrease continues! We however recognise in both cases the above mentioned oscillations.

Let us take for instance those two countries of Europe which are now so frequently mentioned in regard to their diminishing birth-rates: France and Ireland. These happen to be precisely the two countries which Malthus mentioned over a hundred years ago, as giving rise to so much anxiety on account of their overwhelming increase in population.

Especially since the decimating war, we now hear on all sides the public outcry: how can we succeed in repairing as soon as possible this great loss of life? But the parents who really love their children, anxiously ask: what will now become of them, will the Moloch of war cruelly devour them also?

Many of these people stare blindly at the birth-rate figures and imagine that these present a correct criterion by which they may judge the sexual and other efficiencies of a nation, through which its further existence and progress may best be



guaranteed. This may have been the case in primitive times amongst savage races, just as it is among the lower animals; yet since those days man has disturbed this connection between sexual recklessness and general efficiency in two directions: on the one hand by alcoholic orgies of sexuality and Bacchanalian feasts, on the other by the institution of marriage and by the preaching of sexual abstinence as an ideal.

Other authors glorify a high birth-rate as the highest ideal, because in it they see the expression of an increase in the population. But this is not correct either. Of course for a normal increase in the population a normal number of births is a *sine quâ non*; it is however useless, as soon as a high death-rate and especially a high infantile death-rate makes the apparent increase illusory. Real statisticians never look upon the birth-rate by and for itself alone, but always in connection with the rate of mortality. The figure of the births only shows the gross profits of a nation; but only the surplus of births i. e. the number of births after deduction of the deaths, shows the net profit.

We might imagine as a matter of course that this surplus of births must be proportional to the number of births; but unfortunately the contrary is often the case. As we have already mentioned, statistical experience teaches us that a high birth-rate generally goes hand in hand with a high death-rate, and especially with an appreciably higher infantile mortality; while with equal regularity a diminution of the birth-rate is compensated in the most remarkable manner, and often is over-compensated through a diminution in the death-rate, especially of the infantile mortality (see page 89). So we can recognize even in the statistical tables the tendency towards a restoration of the natural equilibrium. This really means a fundamental law of population.

The fact that this works out to a law should not surprise us, for just as in all fields of animated nature, so also in mankind, the whole question of the population depends on the presence or absence of sufficient means of existence. I take France as an example. What is the reason for the small increase of its population during the last century, when it was once so great? Why this swinging back of the pendulum?



Why is France all at once so backward in the increase of its numbers in comparison with its neighbours?

Since the use of steam machinery has become so general, France has felt the absence of those great native supplies of iron and coal, to which England, Belgium and Germany owe the immense increase in their own populations. World-industry and world-traffic which formerly had been directed towards France an account of her artistic eminence, now turned in other directions. From the advent of the steam-era the great streams of traffic ran towards England and Germany, but no longer through France. So France was left on one side, though in an earlier period she was on account of her perfected culture of the soil and her fine handiwork, most productive; until the bloody crisis of the French revolution suddenly set a limit to her prolificacy. From that time onwards the increase went on in a much lesser degree.

Holland (i. e. the Netherlands) also has very little iron or coal in its subsoil; but here however, industrialising of the country and scientific manuring of the soil, because so much of the land had remained uncultivated, have worked wonders, and permitted of a surplus of births, which belongs to the highest in the world.

In most of other European countries also it is just on account of renewed productiveness in the industries, that the population has been enabled to increase in so striking a manner. But this should not lead us to profligacy. For the same industry thoroughly understands the art of replacing the highly paid manual labor by machinery, either steam or electric, which can both be so much more cheaply fed with coals, petroleum or water-power! The automatic refinements of modern industry are indeed limitless, and who knows what may be attained in the future, when the differences in tension of the atmospheric electricity will be utilised! Still more will few workers then be asked for, not for heavy or monotonous labor, for that will all be executed by machinery; but only to watch and control this highly perfected mechanical installation.

So then we see that either a more rapid or more gradual increase in the population does not depend on our will, but is the result of the whole economical situation. Now we can also understand why all attempts of governments and law-



makers to goad the population on to increase their numbers, have never been able to provoke a real increase, and they will never be able to do so.

Through this no new means of existence is produced! And even if it were possible to raise the number of births artificially or by forcible measures, the surplus of births over deaths would not be improved.

Still another factor must be statistically compared with the surplus of births over deaths or vica versa, which is the principal factor in the population question; that is the surplus of emigration over immigration, or vica versa. Although this factor is as a rule not of decisive importance, it should not be disregarded. For the majority of emigrants have, unlike the newly born inhabitants, their childish ailments and childhood's days behind them, they bring perhaps a little of their savings with them, and contribute at least fresh blood and new energy to the community. For they are almost always the most efficient families which decide to move into a strange country, and who have saved up enough to be able to do so, even if their travelling costumes may appear somewhat comical. Especially in the ethical sense, such a mingling of the peoples brings new values in character and aptitude, by which the national life will be all the more richly colored; whilst otherwise folks would possibly stupefied by continual sameness. How greatly for instance science and art, industry and crafts have advanced in Holland by the infiltration of so many refugees: Israelites, Mennonites, Huguenots and Moravian brethren! If many of them were poor when they came, they at any rate had the advantage of not being spoilt by luxury.

Yet we must always take into consideration never to mention statistically only either immigration or emigration. Only the surplus of one over the other are of any statistical value concerning the increase of the population. Which of the two preponderates, this the economic circumstances will finally decide. The more favorably a country is situated, from the economic point of view, the less are its inhabitants likely to quit it, and the more will people from neighboring countries flock in.

The fluctuations of these two factors, the natural and artificial increase (or decrease) mutually complete each other, they compensate each other, and the result is a constant oscillating



towards a state of equilibrium; which might be represented by curves, but never as a straight line. Nothing is therefore more ridiculous than the fact that, as soon as a lowering of the birth surplus, or even a decrease in the population has been stated, the entire daily press sends up one despairing cry of blue murder, as if depopulation threatened!

One might now ask: but how can we ascertain what is really the state of correct equilibrium, in order that we may bring our actions and our judgment into harmony with it? The answer is for practical life simple enough. The parents themselves can judge better than anyone else, whether they feel well and strong enough for the battle of life, what is their economic situation, and what may be the prospects of any children they may have in the immediate future. They can best decide for themselves whether they should wish for more children or not.

But scientifically and objectively we should like to have a criterion from which we could recognize the correct state of equilibrium; as in 1910 at the third international Neomalthusian Congress held at the Hague, Prof. Wichsell, from Sweden brought the question in the order of the day, „what in a given case should indeed be considered as the optimum of density of population?”

Theoretically this cannot be deduced from the various economic conditions such as: a rise in the prices of land, the rate of wages, the extent of unemployment, etc.; our social relations are much too complicated for this, and to ascertain statistically the actual relation between the existing food supply and the number of people to be fed, as the various European governments tried to do during the late war with the object of rationing, is certainly a very laudable endeavour, but so many sources of error are attached to it, that we are quite unable for the time being, to draw any exact conclusions from it.

Every other exact method of investigation is therefore very valuable, even when the result is only visible after the statistical documents bearing on it are published. Dr. C. V. DRYSDALE draws our attention to such an acid-test. He says: the more a reduced birth-rate is accompanied by a proportionately restricted death-rate, so much the more does it appear as an



approach to the physiological equilibrium. And vica versa. In this manner census figures can give us an objective reference.

We have still another method of arriving at the state of affairs; if we do not use the population figures as such, but if we calculate the average duration of life from the figures in the tables of deaths and survivals, which is a common method of reckoning probabilities. We ask ourselves: how long will a person have at his birth or at any chosen point in his life still to live, according to an average possibility? (Technically termed "*l'esperance de vie*" or "living chance".)

That is perhaps the most delicate test we possess of finding out how far a nation is still from the physiological optimum, or in case we are comparing several nations: which one has reached the nearest to the physiological equilibrium. It is also possible to know at once by this method whether a certain nation is in this respect on the right road or not.

This method is so extremely correct because almost all good influences, whether of the hygienic, ethical or economic order, even if hidden from public observation, they are still find their expression in the longevity of the people, whilst all manner of evil can only lead to a shortening of the span of life\*. How many otherwise endless disputes can be avoided by this method!

It is very satisfactory to the inhabitants of little Holland, in which country birth-control propaganda has probably been less repressed or hindered by the law and the police than in any other country in Europe, and it brings the surest evidence that this diffusion of knowledge has not in any way proved prejudicial to the people's welfare, to find it officially certified that the average duration of the Dutch people's life stands in the highest rank of nations.

According to the latest records before the war (1900—1909), the average living chance in Holland at birth was 51 years for males and 53.4 for females. The only records of pre-war times we possess of later date than the above, are those of England and Wales, (those for 1912), and these are still higher than the Dutch figures, viz: 51.50 and 55.35 years respectively.

\* Many exceptions are only apparent or temporary exceptions; for instance, all economical, political and colonial exploitation will surely take its revenge sooner or later.



It is also a historical fact that birth-control propaganda first reached Holland from England. These figures are only exceeded in Scandinavia (see Table V), where birth-control was in practice long before it was in England and Holland. With the exception of these countries, all the others in Europe are a long way behind (see Table V).

And if we turn to countries where the standard of culture is still of a lower order, where all efforts tend as in primitive times to a maximum birth-rate, we find the average living-chance much less favorable. In British India in 1901 the birth-rate per 1000 inhabitants was 39.14, while the death-rate was 36.14\*, the average living chance at birth was then only 23.63 years in British India!

In the last few decades, that is to say since 1876, a remarkable falling of the birth-rate has been evident in almost all the countries of Europe, as we explained in Chapter 33, and at the same time just as remarkable a diminution of the death-rate, especially in the infantile mortality. Only France shows since 1806 a steady and constant lowering of the birth-rate, which in contrast with the excessive increase in population towards the end of the 18th century, only signifies the quiet and regular adjustment to the state of equilibrium; for also the death rate and specially the infantile mortality became meanwhile continually more favorable, and these are, compared with the other countries, very low (see Tables II and III).

Given, however, this constant restriction of the birth-rate, while yet the rate of mortality cannot be reduced to infinity, still the time may come in which the total number of the inhabitants in these countries becomes so far lowered, that finally a shortness of man-power would be felt. What will happen then? Would that not indeed be then the beginning of a decline of these culture-nations? Or would not this perhaps, just like the glacial-epochs through which mankind has already passed, threaten a decline of the whole human race?

I think this would only be possible if militarism, this climax in modern industry of the means of destruction, continues as now with its association of venereal disease, tuberculosis and demoralisation. But how stupid mankind is; — it is to be

\* These figures should be compared with those of European countries in Table II.



hoped that we shall be wiser one day! If governments, diplomats and official congresses do not suffice to bring about better international relations, then the populace itself, especially the labour party will hold this scourge of mankind in check, just as it has already checked the evil influence of alcoholism.

I will not further allude here to the scourge of militarism, only to the new possibility, not of over-population but of under-population. How may we the most effectively counteract an all too excessive swinging back of the pendulum of evolution?

In the natural history of mankind we have seen that the fluctuations of population regulate themselves automatically. So it will also be in this case. As soon as children are becoming rare, the community will at last begin to give them the full amount of care and attention they want. In France public opinion began some time ago to carry out this scheme. Everywhere in the new era institutions for the greater care of pregnant women, for rational infant-feeding and for the hygienic rearing of young children arise with the greatest success.

The more the birth-rate falls the sooner will dawn a new era for mother and child. Fecundity will once again be held in the greatest veneration by mankind and taken as the type of the highest culture; it will once more be a pleasure to be able to confer life on a number of children. All children will then have a happy youth, no longer constantly compelled to sit still and cramped in the years of their puberty, as a senseless memory of the convent schools of the Middle Ages. Above all, people will take the question of eugenics so energetically in hand, that giving birth to a child will no longer be a maddening torture, but simply the physiological complement of the joy of procreation. Even in wedlock the individuality of the mother will no longer be curtailed.

Then will the parents, who now feel themselves led to wish for fewer children, be induced with the same mathematical, or rather physiological certainty as long as they are young and healthy, to willingly produce more children.

For ages past thoughtless breeding has been an endless source of suffering and despair; certainly a factor of evolution, but only in the sense of a struggle for life or death. In the new era birth-control is beginning to mark a higher stage in evolution, in the sense of mutual help.













TABLE I

MARRIAGES		DIVORCES	
Annual Average		Annual Average	
per 10,000 marriageable persons <sup>1)</sup>	per 100,000 married couples	per 10,000 marriageable persons <sup>1)</sup>	per 100,000 married couples
Sweden . . .	1876-1885 417 1886-1895 390 1896-1905 377 1906-1915 367	Sweden . . .	1876-1885 28 1886-1895 34 1896-1905 47 1906-1915 68
Norway . . .	1881-1885 428 1886-1895 445 1896-1905 437 1907-1914 418	Norway . . .	1887-1894 20 1895-1905 41 1906-1915 61
Finland . . .	1876-1885 536 1886-1895 497 1896-1905 479 1906-1915 398	Finland . . .	1876-1885 13 1886-1895 19 1896-1905 27 1906-1915 44
Denmark . . . without Iceland . . .	1875-1884 549 1885-1894 501 1895-1905 508 1906-1914 513	Denmark . . . without Iceland . . .	1896-1905 96 1906-1915 153
Iceland . . .	1876-1885 330 1886-1895 369 1896-1905 366 1906-1915 335		
England . . . and Wales . . .	1876-1885 568 1886-1895 529 1896-1905 531 1907-1914 507	England . . . and Wales . . .	1876-1885 7 1886-1895 7 1896-1905 9 1907-1914 10

<sup>1)</sup> I.e.: single men of 18 years of age and upwards, and single women from 15 years of age. N.B. "single" includes widows, widowers and the divorced.

per 10,000 marriageable persons <sup>1)</sup>	per 100,000 married couples	per 10,000 marriageable persons <sup>1)</sup>	per 100,000 married couples
Scotland . . .	1876-1885 445 1886-1895 421 1896-1905 432 1907-1914 411	Scotland . . .	1876-1885 13 1886-1895 7 1896-1905 25 1906-1915 31
Ireland . . .	1876-1885 260 1886-1895 241 1896-1905 253 1909-1912 254	Ireland . . .	1876-1885 0.01 1886-1895 0.1 1896-1905 0.17
Holland . . .	1875-1884 536 1885-1894 490 1895-1904 512 1905-1914 572	Holland . . .	1875-1884 25 1885-1894 49 1895-1904 63 1905-1914 91
Luxemburg . . .	1891-1895 415 1896-1905 456 1909-1912 474	Luxemburg . . .	1896-1905 21 1909-1912 41
Belgium . . .	1876-1885 437 1890 455 1900 553 1910 533	Belgium . . .	1876-1885 21 1886-1895 41 1896-1905 63 1909-1912 80
France . . .	1877-1886 496 1886-1895 477 1896-1905 513 1910-1911 539	France . . .	1886-1895 96 1896-1905 102 1908-1913 115
Switzerland . . .	1876-1885 432 1880-1891 426 1896-1905 455 1906-1915 429	Switzerland . . .	1876-1885 208 1886-1891 188 1896-1905 203 1906-1915 242

<sup>1)</sup> I.e.: single men of 18 years of age and upwards, and single women from 15 years of age. N.B. "single" includes widows, widowers and the divorced.

per 10,000 marriageable persons <sup>1)</sup>	per 100,000 married couples	per 10,000 marriageable persons <sup>1)</sup>	per 100,000 married couples
German Empire . . .	1901 603 1907-1914 569	German Empire . . .	1896-1895 80 1896-1905 95 1907-1914 133
Prussia . . .	1876-1885 578 1886-1895 595 1896-1905 616 1907-1914 585	Prussia . . .	1896-1905 96 1907-1914 135
Bavaria . . .	1876-1885 476 1886-1895 471 1896-1905 517 1907-1914 495	Bavaria . . .	1896-1905 54 1906-1915 80
Saxony . . .	1876-1885 691 1886-1896 701 1896-1905 700 1907-1914 645	Saxony . . .	1907-1914 181
Wurtemberg . . .	1876-1885 484 1886-1895 486 1896-1905 525 1907-1914 510	Wurtemberg . . .	1904-1914 79
Austria . . .	1876-1885 551 1886-1895 530 1896-1905 560 1906-1913 536	Austria . . .	1886-1895 3 1896-1905 4 1909-1912 8
Hungary . . .	1876-1885 1038 1886-1895 999 1896-1905 813 1906-1915 778	Hungary . . .	1876-1885 32 1886-1895 33 1896-1905 57 1906-1915 152

<sup>1)</sup> I.e.: single men of 18 years of age and upwards, and single women from 15 years of age. N.B. "single" includes widows, widowers and the divorced.

per 10,000 marriageable persons <sup>1)</sup>	per 100,000 married couples	per 10,000 marriageable persons <sup>1)</sup>	per 100,000 married couples
Russia <sup>2)</sup> . . .	1896-1897 921	Romania . . .	1896-1903 100
Romania . . .	1896-1903 873	Romania . . .	1896-1903 100
Bulgaria . . .	1896-1905 1111 1910-1911 1223	Servia . . .	1896-1905 1386 1897-1894 65 1896-1905 65
Servia . . .	1896-1905 1386	Servia . . .	1897-1894 65 1896-1905 65
Italy . . .	1877-1886 545 1886-1895 547 1896-1905 541 1907-1914 574	Spain . . .	1900-1901 652 1907-1914 522
Spain . . .	1900-1901 652 1907-1914 522	Portugal . . .	1886-1895 435 1896-1905 443

<sup>1)</sup> I.e.: single men of 18 years of age and upwards, and single women from 15 years of age. N.B. "single" includes widows, widowers and the divorced.

<sup>2)</sup> Outing the 50 governments in Europe without Finland and Poland.







TABLE II

BIRTHS & DEATHS  
Per 1000 Inhabitants

	Annual average	Born alive	Deaths stillborn children excepted	Excess of Births over Deaths
Sweden . . . .	1876-1885 29.8 1886-1895 28.1 1896-1905 26.4 1906-1913 24.4	17.8 16.5 15.8 14.0	12.0 11.6 10.6 10.4	
Norway . . . .	1881-1885 31.3 1886-1895 30.4 1896-1905 29.2 1906-1913 26.0	17.3 17.0 15.0 13.6	14.0 13.4 14.2 12.4	
Finland . . . .	1876-1885 36.2 1886-1895 33.0 1896-1905 32.0 1906-1913 29.5	22.4 20.2 18.8 16.4	13.8 12.8 13.2 13.1	
Denmark . . . . without Iceland	1875-1884 32.1 1885-1894 31.0 1895-1905 29.4 1906-1913 27.1	19.2 18.7 15.5 13.2	12.9 12.3 13.9 13.9	
Iceland . . . .	1876-1885 31.4 1886-1895 31.0 1896-1905 28.9 1906-1913 26.2	24.5 19.5 17.2 14.8	6.9 11.5 11.7 11.4	
England and Wales . . . .	1876-1885 34.2 1886-1895 30.9 1896-1905 28.6 1906-1913 24.9	20.0 18.8 16.8 14.1	14.2 12.1 11.8 10.8	
Scotland . . . .	1876-1885 33.8 1886-1895 31.0 1896-1905 29.4 1906-1913 26.2	20.0 19.0 17.4 15.5	13.8 12.0 12.0 10.7	

BIRTHS & DEATHS  
Per 1000 Inhabitants

	Annual average	Born alive	Deaths stillborn children excepted	Excess of Births over Deaths
Ireland . . . .	1876-1885 24.7 1886-1895 22.9 1896-1905 23.3 1906-1913 23.1	18.3 18.2 17.9 16.9	6.4 4.7 5.4 6.2	
Holland . . . .	1875-1884 35.9 1885-1894 33.6 1895-1904 31.2 1905-1913 29.1	22.7 20.4 17.1 13.9	13.2 13.2 15.1 15.2	
Luxemburg . .	1891-1895 28.8 1896-1905 29.9 1906-1912 27.4	20.4 19.7 17.8	8.4 10.2 9.6	
Belgium . . . .	1876-1885 31.7 1886-1895 29.5 1896-1905 28.8 1906-1912 23.4	21.4 20.4 17.8 15.7	10.3 9.1 11.0 7.7	
France . . . .	1877-1886 24.9 1886-1895 22.8 1896-1905 21.8 1906-1913 19.5	22.5 22.3 20.4 18.6	2.4 0.5 1.4 0.9	
Switzerland . .	1876-1885 30.0 1886-1891 27.8 1896-1905 28.2 1906-1913 24.7	22.1 20.5 17.8 15.2	7.9 7.3 10.4 9.5	
German Empire	1876-1885 38.0 1886-1895 36.5 1896-1905 35.2 1906-1913 29.5	25.8 23.9 20.6 16.5	12.2 12.6 14.6 13.0	

BIRTHS & DEATHS  
Per 1000 Inhabitants

	Annual average	Born alive	Deaths stillborn children excepted	Excess of Births over Deaths
Prussia . . . .	1876-1885 38.1 1886-1895 37.2 1896-1905 35.7 1906-1913 30.2	25.3 23.4 20.3 16.4	12.8 13.8 15.4 13.8	
Bavaria . . . .	1876-1885 38.9 1886-1895 36.2 1896-1905 36.4 1906-1913 31.0	29.1 27.1 23.5 19.1	9.8 9.1 12.9 11.9	
Saxony . . . .	1876-1885 42.6 1886-1895 40.7 1896-1905 36.5 1906-1913 27.1	28.8 26.1 21.2 15.5	13.8 14.6 15.3 11.6	
Württemberg .	1876-1885 39.6 1886-1895 34.2 1896-1905 34.4 1906-1913 29.6	28.1 24.7 21.5 17.2	11.5 9.5 12.9 12.4	
Austria . . . .	1876-1885 38.4 1886-1895 37.6 1896-1905 36.4 1906-1913 31.9	30.3 28.4 24.9 21.5	8.1 9.2 11.5 10.4	
Hungary . . . .	1876-1885 44.4 1886-1895 42.5 1896-1905 38.3 1906-1913 36.0	35.1 31.8 27.0 24.6	9.3 10.7 11.3 11.4	
Russia <sup>1</sup> . . . .	1891-1895 49.0 1896-1907 45.4 1908-1909 45.6	36.2 29.4 28.9	12.8 16.0 16.7	

<sup>1</sup> Only the 50 governments in Europe without Poland and Poland.BIRTHS & DEATHS  
Per 1000 Inhabitants

	Annual average	Born alive	Deaths stillborn children excepted	Excess of Births over Deaths
Rumania . . . .	1883-1885 44.4 1885-1894 45.7 1895-1904 40.5 1912-1913 43.1	26.7 33.0 26.9 24.7	17.7 12.7 13.6 18.4	
Bulgaria . . . .	1888-1892 36.7 1896-1905 40.9 1910-1911 40.0	23.3 23.2 22.4	13.4 17.7 18.6	
Servia . . . .	1875-1884 42.7 1886-1895 43.4 1896-1905 39.7 1909-1912 38.2	29.8 27.4 23.8 23.7	12.9 16.0 15.9 14.5	
Bosnia and Herzegovina . .	1886-1895 39.2 1900-1905 38.6 1906-1913 41.4	28.0 28.4 26.7	11.2 10.2 14.7	
Italy . . . .	1877-1886 37.3 1886-1895 36.6 1896-1905 33.2 1906-1913 32.4	28.4 26.2 22.4 20.4	8.9 10.4 10.8 12.0	
Spain . . . .	1878-1887 36.2 1888-1897 35.7 1898-1903 34.7 1908-1913 32.1	31.6 30.4 27.4 22.8	4.6 5.3 7.3 9.3	
Portugal . . . .	1886-1895 32.0 1896-1905 31.2 1910-1913 34.6	21.7 20.7 20.5	10.3 10.5 14.1	







TABLE III.

DEATHS (without still-born)			
	Annual average	Per 10,000 inhabitants	Per 10,000 children under 1 year
Sweden . . . . .	1876—1885 1886—1895 1896—1905 1908—1913	178 165 158 140	1363 1147 1021 793
Norway . . . . .	1881—1885 1886—1895 1896—1905 1906—1915	173 170 150 137	1060 1014 923 723
Finland . . . . .	1876—1885 1886—1895 1896—1905 1906—1915	224 202 188 167	1846 1633 1525 1215
Denmark . . . . . without Iceland	1875—1884 1885—1894 1896—1905 1906—1915	191 187 155 132	1664 1612 1364 1075
Iceland . . . . .	1876—1885 1886—1895 1897—1906 1906—1915	245 195 172 152	2329 1530 1335 1045
England and Wales .	1876—1885 1886—1895 1896—1905 1906—1915	200 188 168 143	1672 1756 1716 1296
Scotland . . . . .	1876—1885 1886—1895 1896—1905 1906—1915	200 190 174 157	1358 1432 1427 1297

	Annual average	Per 10,000 inhabitants	Per 10,000 children under 1 year
Ireland . . . . .	1876—1885 1886—1895 1896—1905 1909—1912	183 182 179 168	1179 1167 1229 1110
Holland . . . . .	1875—1884 1885—1894 1895—1904 1905—1914	227 204 171 139	2160 1942 1655 1190
Luxemburg . . . . .	1901 1909—1912	182 178	1744 1766
Belgium . . . . .	1876—1885 1886—1895 1896—1905 1909—1912	214 204 178 157	1838 1881 1730 1520
France . . . . .	1877—1886 1886—1895 1896—1905 1908—1913	225 223 204 186	2262 2177 1678 1275
Switzerland . . . . .	1876—1885 1886—1891 1896—1905 1906—1915	221 205 178 151	2329 1964 1691 1237
German Empire . . .	1901 1907—1914	208 170	2575 1930
Prussia . . . . .	1876—1885 1886—1895 1896—1905 1907—1914	253 234 203 169	2753 2580 2352 1887

	Annual average	Per 10,000 inhabitants	Per 10,000 children under 1 year
Bavaria . . . . .	1876—1885 1886—1895 1896—1905 1907—1914	291 271 235 195	4250 3683 3207 2409
Saxony . . . . .	1886—1895 1896—1905 1907—1914	261 212 160	3978 3187 2154
Wurtemberg . . . . .	1876—1885 1886—1895 1896—1905 1908—1913	281 247 215 178	4204 3355 2849 1906
Austria . . . . .	1876—1885 1886—1895 1896—1905 1908—1913	303 284 249 215	3140 3150 2672 2264
Hungary . . . . .	1866—1905 1906—1915	270 246	2599 2387
Rumania . . . . .	1885—1894 1899—1900	330 260	2120 1882
Bulgaria . . . . .	1888—1892 1896—1905	233 232	1593 1171
Servia . . . . .	1888—1893 1896—1905	276 238	1506 1319
Italy . . . . .	1877—1886 1886—1895 1896—1905 1907—1914	284 262 224 201	2705 2441 1919 1678
Spain . . . . .	1878—1887 1887—1888	316 314	2575 2635







TABLE IV.

## BIRTHS

	Annual average during the periods	Total births per 1000 women <sup>1</sup>	Legitimate births per 1000 married women <sup>1</sup>	Illegitimate births per 1000 unmarried women <sup>1</sup>
Sweden . . . .	1876-1885 1886-1895 1896-1905 1906-1915	119 117 110 101	240 231 219 196	22 22 23 26
Norway . . . .	1881-1885 1886-1895 1896-1905 1907-1914	127 125 119 106	264 259 247 224	19 17 16 13
Finland . . . .	1876-1885 1886-1895 1896-1905 1906-1915	142 135 130 118	259 246 245 230	21 18 17 17
Denmark without Iceland	1875-1884 1885-1894 1896-1905 1906-1915	131 128 118 108	241 234 217 191	26 24 23 24
Iceland . . . .	1876-1885 1886-1895 1896-1905 1906-1915	113 118 117 108	272 270 248 235	34 35 28 23
England and Wales . . . .	1876-1885 1886-1895 1896-1905 1906-1915	135 118 104 89	250 228 203 171	13 10 8 7

<sup>1</sup> This means women between 15 and 50 years of age. "Unmarried" includes the widowed and divorced.

	Annual average during the periods	Total births per 1000 women <sup>1</sup>	Legitimate births per 1000 married women <sup>1</sup>	Illegitimate births per 1000 unmarried women <sup>1</sup>
Scotland . . . .	1876-1885 1886-1895 1896-1905 1906-1915	133 121 110 98	271 255 232 202	20 17 13 13
Ireland . . . .	1876-1885 1886-1895 1896-1905 1906-1915	101 92 90 94	250 245 267 250	4 4 4 4
Holland . . . .	1875-1884 1885-1894 1895-1904 1905-1914	149 141 132 118	291 284 270 233	9 9 6 5
Luxemburg . .	1891 1896-1905 1906-1912	126 126 118	259 254 210	8 9 14
Belgium . . . .	1876-1885 1886-1895 1896-1905 1906-1915	132 120 114 91	264 238 213 161	19 17 17 12
France . . . .	1877-1886 1886-1895 1896-1905 1906-1915	98 89 85 75	166 149 134 114	16 17 18 16
Switzerland . .	1876-1885 1886-1895 1896-1905 1906-1915	117 108 109 93	229 226 227 184	10 9 9 8

<sup>1</sup> This means women between 15 and 50 years of age. "Unmarried" includes the widowed and divorced.

	Annual average during the periods	Total births per 1000 women <sup>1</sup>	Legitimate births per 1000 married women <sup>1</sup>	Illegitimate births per 1000 unmarried women <sup>1</sup>
German Empire	1876-1885 1886-1895 1896-1905 1907-1914	153 146 141 117	269 258 243 196	28 28 26 23
Prussia . . . .	1876-1885 1886-1895 1896-1905 1907-1914	154 149 143 120	273 165 249 204	25 24 22 21
Bavaria . . . .	1876-1885 1886-1895 1896-1905 1907-1914	159 146 145 124	276 263 259 214	42 39 37 31
Saxony . . . .	1876-1885 1886-1895 1896-1905 1907-1914	167 157 140 101	267 250 216 153	47 43 41 36
Württemberg . .	1876-1885 1886-1895 1896-1905 1907-1914	162 139 139 119	288 239 262 211	29 27 25 21
Austria . . . .	1876-1885 1886-1895 1896-1905 1906-1915	149 149 145 125	246 250 242 219	44 44 41 30
Hungary . . . .	1876-1885 1886-1895 1896-1905 1906-1915	172 173 156 142	234 225 216 198	41 49 41 38

<sup>1</sup> This means women between 15 and 50 years of age. "Unmarried" includes the widowed and divorced.

	Annual average during the periods	Total births per 1000 women <sup>1</sup>	Legitimate births per 1000 married women <sup>1</sup>	Illegitimate births per 1000 unmarried women <sup>1</sup>
Russia <sup>2</sup> . . . .	1896-1897	203	299	17
Bulgaria . . . .	1896-1905 1910-1911	187 199	266 280	2 4
Romania . . . .	1885-1894 1896-1903	184 169	— 223	— 48
Servia . . . .	1896-1905	173	236	7
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1907-1914	176	247	5
Greece . . . .	1876-1881	108	177	3
Italy . . . . .	1877-1886 1886-1895 1896-1905 1907-1914	148 149 139 131	248 249 232 226	24 24 19 14
Spain . . . . .	1887-1888 1901 1906-1915	140 135 130	230 252 218	17 14 14
Portugal . . . .	1886-1895 1896-1905	125 122	235 228	29 28

<sup>1</sup> This means women between 15 and 50 years of age. "Unmarried" includes the widowed and divorced.  
<sup>2</sup> Only the 50 governments of Europe without Poland and Poland.







TABLE V.

AVERAGE LENGTH OF LIFE to be expected at birth of			
	Period	a boy	a girl
Sweden . . . . .	1816—1830	39.50	43.56
	1841—1845	41.94	46.60
	1846—1850	41.38	45.59
	1851—1855	40.51	44.64
	1856—1860	40.48	44.15
	1861—1870	42.80	46.40
	1871—1880	45.30	48.60
	1881—1890	48.55	51.47
	1891—1900	50.94	53.63
	1901—1910	54.53	56.98
Norway . . . . .	1856—1865	47.40	49.95
	1871—72 to		
	1880—1881	48.33	51.30
	1881—82 to		
	1890—1891	48.73	51.21
	1891—92 to		
	1900—1901	50.41	54.14
Finland . . . . .	1901—1910	54.82	57.70
	1881—1890	41.40	44.20
	1891—1900	42.90	45.60
	1901—1910	45.00	47.60
Denmark . . . . . without Iceland	1835—1844	42.69	44.70
	1860—1869	43.60	45.50
	1880—1889	46.80	48.90
	1885—1894	46.90	49.20
	1895—1900	50.20	53.20
	1906—1910	54.90	57.90
Iceland . . . . .	1850—1860	31.90	37.91
	1890—1901	44.43	51.36
	1901—1910	48.3	53.1

to be expected at birth of

	Period	a boy	a girl
England and Wales . . . . .	1838—1854	39.91	41.85
	1871—1880	41.35	44.62
	1881—1890	43.66	47.18
	1891—1900	44.13	47.77
	1901—1910	48.53	52.38
	1912	51.50	55.35
Scotland . . . . .	1861—1870	40.33	43.85
	1871—1880	40.95	43.80
	1881—1890	43.92	46.33
	1891—1900	44.68	47.44
	1911	50.10	
Holland . . . . .	1850—1859	36.44	38.21
	1870—1879	38.40	40.70
	1880—1889	42.50	45.00
	1890—1899	46.20	49.00
	1900—1909	51.00	53.40
Belgium . . . . .	1881—1890	43.59	46.63
	1891—1900	45.35	48.85
France . . . . .	1817—1831	38.30	40.80
	1840—1859	39.30	41.00
	1861—1865	39.10	40.55
	1877—1881	40.83	43.42
	1898—1903	45.74	49.13
Switzerland . . . . .	1876—1881	40.60	43.20
	1881—1888	43.29	45.70
	1889—1900	45.70	48.40
	1901—1910	49.25	52.15

to be expected at birth of

	Period	a boy	a girl
German Empire . . . . .	1871—72 to		
	1880—81	35.58	38.45
	1881—1890	37.17	40.25
	1891—1900	40.56	43.97
	1901—1910	44.82	48.33
	1910—1911	47.41	50.68
Prussia . . . . .	1867—68—72—		
	75—76—77	35.38	37.99
	1890—1891	39.03	42.18
	1891—1900	41.07	44.59
	1900—1901	42.07	45.84
	1906—1910	46.42	50.03
Bavaria . . . . .	1891—1900	37.91	41.06
	1901—1910	42.18	45.38
Saxony . . . . .	1891—1900	37.55	42.06
	1900—01 to		
	1910—1911	44.77	—
Wurtemberg . . . . .	1901—1910	45.15	48.08
Austria . . . . .	1870—1880	30.98	33.77
	1895—1900	36.78	38.97
	1901—1905	39.14	41.05
	1906—1910	40.69	42.88
Italy . . . . .	1876—1887	35.10	35.40
	1899—1902	42.88	43.21
	1901—1910	44.24	44.83
	1910—1912	46.97	47.79







TABLE VI.

Excess of Immigrants ox of Emigrants per 10-year period (in thousands) <sup>1</sup>	Sweden	Norway	Finland	Denmark	Engl. and Wales	Scotland	Ireland	Holland	Belgium	France	Switzerland	German Empire	Austria	Hungary	Servia	Italy	Spain	Portugal
1841—1850	— 4	— 12	+ 6	+ 1	+ 44	—	—	— 7	—51	+105	—	— 593	— 73	—	—	—	—	—
1851—1860	— 27	— 28	—12	+ 6	—311	—	—	—18	—69	+ 28	—21	— 911	+ 8	—	—	—	—	—
1861—1870	—150	— 86	—17	— 5	—232	—117	—837	—68	—54	+ 89	—25	— 972	—123	— 60	—	— 228	—334	—
1871—1880	—139	— 74	+ 9	—42	—208	— 93	—695	—17	—14	+107	—22	— 694	— 51	—236	—	— 266	—225	—
1881—1890	—347	—189	—19	—77	—617	—218	—764	—69	—12	+161	—99	—1319	—190	—184	+36	— 850	— 162	—130
1891—1900	—180	— 57	—42	—29	— 54	— 52	—487	—75	— 9	+379	+69	— 364	—396	—164	—13	—1434	— 70	—139
1901—1910	—192	—167	+20	—65	—507	—256	—332	—76	+33	+213	+79	— 5	—684	—646	— 3	—1550	—785	—116
That is for 10,000 inhabitants <sup>2</sup>																		
1841—1850	— 13	— 98	+ 44	+ 7	+ 28	—	—	— 26	+126	+31	—	—186	— 42	—	—	—	—	—
1851—1860	— 77	—202	— 75	+ 41	—174	—	—	— 58	—158	+ 8	—102	—257	+ 4	—	—	—	—	—
1861—1870	—388	—533	— 99	— 31	—116	—382	—1443	—206	—116	+25	— 98	—258	— 64	— 42	—	— 91	—213	—
1871—1880	—333	—424	+ 53	—231	— 92	—276	—1280	— 47	— 20	+29	— 86	—170	— 25	—151	—	—100	—137	—
1881—1890	—760	—985	— 92	—388	—238	—584	—1477	—170	— 22	+43	—347	—291	— 56	—117	+208	—300	— 94	—277
1891—1900	—377	—283	—180	—134	— 19	—120	—1035	—164	— 14	+99	+234	— 74	—166	— 94	— 61	—490	— 39	—274
1901—1910	—374	—752	+ 74	—265	—156	—572	— 745	—337	+ 49	+55	+238	— 1	—262	—336	— 12	—477	—422	—214

<sup>1</sup> That is to say that from 1841—1850 in England there were roughly 44 thousand more immigrants than emigrants; while in the next decade there were 311 thousand more emigrants than immigrants.

<sup>2</sup> The second table is reckoned in hundreds; and the population reckoned from the latest census figures at the commencement of each ten-year period.

N. B. The above figures are not *per annum* as in the other tables, but for the whole ten-year period (not divided by ten).







