

## **Neo-Malthusianism and eugenics / by C.V. Drysdale.**

### **Contributors**

Drysdale, C. V. 1874-1961.  
Royal College of Surgeons of England

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# NEO-MALTHUSIANISM

AND

## EUGENICS

BY

C. V. DRYSDALE, D.Sc.



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# THE MALTHUSIAN LEAGUE.

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## HON. SECRETARIES :

DR. C. V. DRYSDALE; MRS. B. DRYSDALE,  
49, Rotherwick Road, Hampstead Garden Suburb, N.W.  
(To whom all correspondence and subscriptions should be sent.)

## AUDITOR :

MRS. E. AYRES PURDIE, A.L.A.A.,  
Hampden House, Kingsway, W.C.

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MR. GEORGE STANDRING, 7-9 Finsbury Street, London, E.C.  
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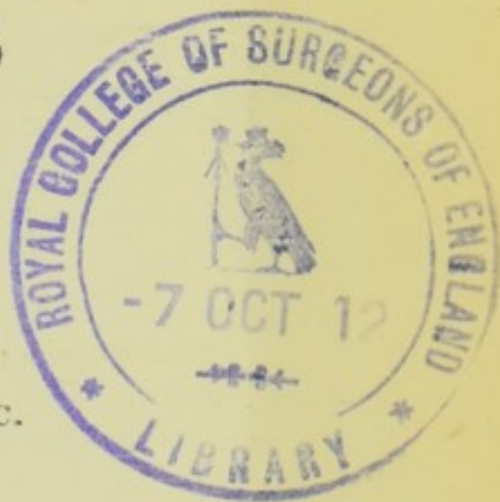
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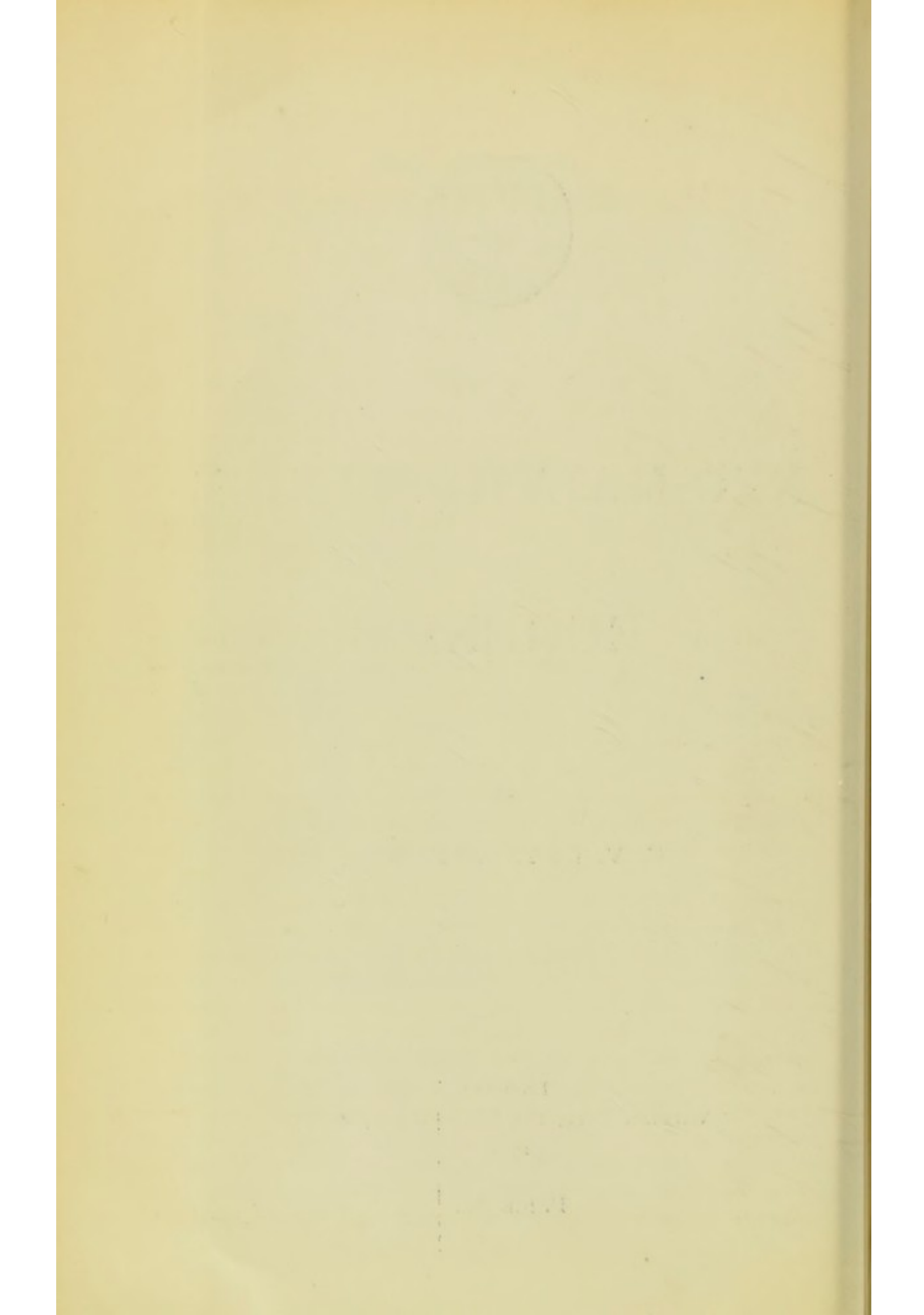


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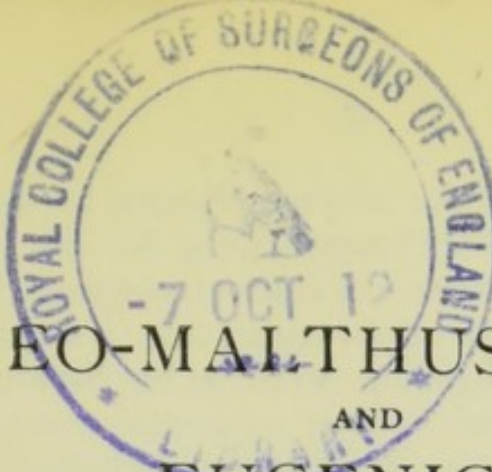
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# NEO-MALTHUSIANISM AND EUGENICS.

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It appears to be a rooted belief of those who have only an outside knowledge of the neo-Malthusian movement for family restriction, that it has concerned itself entirely with the quantity and not with the quality of the human race, and, secondly, that it has acted, and must act, anti-selectively, *i.e.*, for race degeneration, owing to the adoption of family limitation by the more intelligent classes, while the reckless and improvident multiply unchecked.

Now, what are the facts? It is perfectly true that the economic, or rather, biological, doctrine of population of Malthus and Mill dealt primarily with quantity, in asserting that unrestricted human fertility causes a greater production of life to take place than it is possible to obtain food for; and neo-Malthusians hold this doctrine equally strongly at the present time, on the grounds both of biology, economics, and experience, as shown by a comparative study of vital statistics. It has been elsewhere shown that this continued production of life in excess of the advance in food production must lead to a very close dependence of the death-rate upon the birth-rate, which I have expressed as "the law of correspondence between birth and death rates," and this law is amply confirmed both by a study of graphical diagrams of international vital statistics and by the table of correlation coefficients which I have calculated, and which forms an appendix to this paper. Neo-Malthusians, therefore, hold that the question of quantity has been hitherto of the most serious importance, and that it still is so in practically every country in the world except New Zealand and Australia, where human fertility now appears to be sufficiently restricted, and food appears to



be sufficiently plentiful for the death-rate to be no higher than 10 per 1000, which appears to be not very much above a natural minimum. In these countries the question of quality is now of first importance, but in many countries in Europe—notably, Russia, with a birth-rate of nearly 50 and death-rate of about 33—the over-population indicated by the high death-rate indicates that the quantity question is by far the more serious, and we regard any attempt at inculcating eugenic or selective principles in Russia, India, or China, as impracticable as the cultivation of roses in a garden choked by weeds. Not until the death-rate of a country has dropped well below 20 per 1000 can the struggle for existence due to over-population be reduced sufficiently to give an opportunity of applying rational eugenic principles on any important scale, and this means a preliminary reduction of human fertility to about half its natural value. It will be seen in a moment that at the very outset of the neo-Malthusian propaganda it was predicted that a movement in favour of rational selection would arise as soon as the birth-rate was sufficiently reduced, and the Eugenics movement has justified this prophecy.

But have neo-Malthusians themselves been unmindful of the quality question? As many are aware, the neo-Malthusian movement as an organised movement commenced in 1877, immediately after the Knowlton trial of 1876, which has had such a profound influence upon the whole civilised world. The first number of *The Malthusian*, the organ of the Malthusian League, appeared in February, 1879, and in that very number Mrs. Annie Besant commenced an article on the "Social Effects of Neo-Malthusianism," in which she calls attention to the possibilities of improving the physique of the race through early marriage and the elimination of prostitution and venereal disease. But in the third number (April, 1879) there is an editorial review of a book on heredity written by Dr. C. R. Drysdale, President of the League, and the following is an extract from that review :—

"Most writers on social science enforce Malthusian doctrines; but their force lies in this, they forget that attention to the *quality* of the children that are brought



into the world is more important than the limitation of quantity. We might suggest to Dr. Lucas, who is evidently the author himself, that the self-same calculation as to the *size* of a family, which is recommended by Mr. J. S. Mill, whose name he cites, would at once enable even delicate persons to marry; since they might then take the sound advice of Professor Mantegazza—‘Love but do not produce offspring’!\* *Rational selection of the species becomes possible only when the views of neo-Malthusians are applied; and doubtless the culture of the human animal will be one of the tenets of future moralists.*”† . . . “And, in conclusion, we would just note that one of the commonest causes of scrofula and consumption is poverty. The privations, cold, hunger, and poor dwellings of the lowest classes in old countries like this, are all constant factors of pulmonary consumption, rickets and scrofula. By limiting families, therefore, we get rid of a vast amount of these preventible diseases.”

Here we have, therefore, not only a recognition of the importance of quality, but of the fact that both heredity and environment play an important part in it, and that neo-Malthusianism can be employed for race improvement in three ways—the abstention from parenthood (not necessarily from marriage) on the part of the unfit, the elimination of the poverty and overcrowding which foster the race-deteriorating diseases, and the encouragement of early marriage, with the consequent elimination of venereal poisons. From this attitude neo-Malthusians have never swerved. In the issue of July of the same year the Editor replied to the attack which is now so constantly made. Reviewing a book by Mr. Hugh de Aula on “A New Theory of Poverty,” he said :—

“The author for a moment assumes the [Malthusian] theory of poverty to be correct, but says the practical rule deduced from this would, if carried into action, be productive of the greatest evil, for it would not at all

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\* “Amate ma non generate” *Igiene d’amore.*

† Italics mine.—C. V. D.



reduce the population, and would deteriorate the mental and physical stamina of the race. The intelligent and moral, he alleges, would conform to the rule, but the stupid would go on breeding as fast as ever, so that the race would be sure to degenerate. The reply to this remark has often been given. It is this: As soon as the wise and prudent do resolve to act on the theory, they will necessarily see the importance of enforcing the rule on stupid and illiterate recalcitrants; and in the future the rational selection of parents, as well as the rational limitation of numbers in a State are inevitable, if the freedom of the Press but continues to exist."

Only a month later a great discussion on "Evolution and Small Families" was initiated at the London Dialectical Society by Dr. Aveling, in which the whole of the Darwinian theory of heredity and variation was discussed in relation to neo-Malthusianism. He contended that the natural selection of Darwin was not of service to humanity, and that "Success would rather be found to attend the production of a limited number of offspring of good quality, well fed and in good circumstances, than in a multitude of ill-chosen and starved animals." In summing up, he contended that "Evolutionists and New Malthusians need no longer consider each other as in any way antagonistic, but as the truest allies." In the discussion Dr. C. R. Drysdale claimed that "Morality and civilisation were in constant conflict with the inhumanity of nature, and *rational* selection was clearly an infinitely better agent for obtaining an improved stock than the over-production of half-starved multitudes. What farmer who understood his business would put two hundred sheep into a pasture only capable of feeding one hundred, and let *natural selection* feed the fittest sheep?" And Mrs. Annie Besant pointed out that "At present Society does not allow of *natural* selection taking place. Hence we must carry out *rational* selection to its logical outcome. It was said that if the New Malthusian doctrine prevailed, thoughtful people would have so few children that they would not be fairly represented in the next generation, which would be given up to the thoughtless multitudes who propagated fast. But she did not see in nature that



the rapidly breeding lower animals had any chance of putting the higher and other races out of the world. And, in Society, thoughtful persons would, by having fewer children, secure the government of Society, and thus civilisation would proceed downwards from them. . . . It was said that she had spread New Malthusianism among the poor. This was true. The poor required to know about this faith more than the rich, who often acted upon their knowledge. Evolution in the future would be far more conducive to happiness than in the past. Rational selection would make the progress of the race far more rapid." A pamphlet on "Darwinism and Small Families" was published not long after by Dr. Aveling, and advertised in *The Malthusian*.

One other thing should be mentioned in this connection, and that is the fact that in order to prevent the disregard of parental prudence by the reckless and improvident, some of the early neo-Malthusians, following a suggestion of John Stuart Mill, consistently preached the doctrine of State discouragement of large families, by the infliction of a small fine, just sufficient to mark the censure of the community on those who disregarded the interests of Society in this matter. This would, of course, have been a strong compensating influence to the tendency to greater voluntary restriction on the part of the more intelligent and prudent.

Many more quotations might be given, but the above are quite sufficient to show that so far from it being true that neo-Malthusians have concerned themselves with quantity, rather than with quality, they were keenly discussing the question of race improvement in the first year of their movement, long before any other Eugenic movement was even thought of.\* The neo-Malthusians were in fact, in modern language, true negative

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\* It may be objected that the Darwinians of that time did so in their criticism of the neo-Malthusians. But the Darwinians only objected to the removal of the struggle for existence which had already been in operation, and the only practical suggestions for further race improvement by rational selection came from the neo-Malthusians.



and preventive Eugenists from the outset, and from that time until the present there has been no need whatever to modify the two fundamental propositions of neo-Malthusianism.

1. No parents should have more children than they can adequately feed, clothe, and educate.
2. No one having definite hereditary defect should have children, but if they are sufficiently responsible they may marry so long as they do not reproduce.

It will be seen that these two simple principles are perfectly eugenic in character, as they simply bring rational into line with natural selection. According to the latter, the "fittest" are those who are best suited to the environment, and, therefore, succeed best in it, and by asking parents to restrict their families to the number which they are likely to be able to rear properly, as gauged by the economic success or health they have attained, we are securing, as closely as it can be done by human intelligence, that rational selection shall be in harmony with natural selection, while eliminating the misery and brutality of the latter by substituting prevention for extinction. Although more than thirty years have rolled by since the enunciation of these principles, we cannot see the slightest reason for any alteration whatever to-day, and the only points of detail upon which we have gained any knowledge since they were laid down is the more precise definition of the "race poisons." Insanity, narcotism, venereal disease, and tuberculosis were always recognised as coming under the category of hereditary defect; but we have to thank the modern race-hygienists for more precise information on these points, as well as the inclusion of lead poisoning. We have also to acknowledge the very valuable investigations upon easy methods of sterilisation, which we appreciate not only for their actual utility, but for the clear recognition which they imply of the fundamental neo-Malthusian principle, that sex-union and procreation are not to be regarded as morally inseparable. As regards the application of these methods, however, neo-Malthusians as a whole prefer that abstention from



parenthood should, as far as possible, be carried out by the conscious responsibility of the individuals concerned, and that sterilisation should only be resorted to in the small minority of cases, where a person has insufficient intelligence or self-control to abstain from parenthood voluntarily, and yet enough to be permitted to be safely at large. In so far, however, as modern Eugenists have brought about a clear admission, (even officially in parts of the United States), of the necessity for allowing sex-union while denying the right to parenthood, neo-Malthusians owe them the most grateful thanks for justifying what has been the most onerous part of their propaganda.

It will, therefore, be seen that neo-Malthusianism and negative-Eugenics are one and the same thing, and I fancy it would be difficult to find any important point of difference between them. But where the great majority of neo-Malthusians and some Eugenists, notably the German Race-Hygienists, come into absolute antagonism is in the matter of the so-called "positive Eugenics." In so far as this implies rational education for parenthood, and the removal of the burden of the support of the "unfit" by the "fit," which is such a characteristic tendency of modern civilisation, neo-Malthusians have, of course, always worked in this direction; and the books which have been written for the practical guidance of mothers have been until recently, almost without exception, from neo-Malthusian authors. What, however, we unreservedly stigmatise as brutal, unscientific, and immoral is the incitation of the "fit" to reproduce as much as possible in order to eliminate the "unfit" by the struggle for existence. It is brutal and immoral, because of the suffering it involves to women and children and to the whole community; and it is absolutely unscientific, as no modern civilisation is conceivable which will permit of a useful elimination. While we have laws protecting the weak against the strong, while we have poor-laws and hospitals which enable the unfit to be maintained at the minimum of vitality and yet to reproduce, while bad economic conditions lead to chronic alcoholism, to delayed marriage and prostitution, and the spread of venereal poisons, the struggle for existence



must work wholly for evil and not for good; and no advocate of Darwinian selection even shows an intelligent understanding of his own principles, unless he advocates at the same time the removal of every humanitarian law or institution which promotes the survival of the weaker or less intelligent at the expense of the "fit." This does not seem to be recognised to any extent by our English Eugenists, but that it has been partially so, at any rate, by the German Race-Hygienists is shown by their continued inveighings against civilisation, the progress of which, however, they are powerless to prevent. It is also shown in a particularly objectionable form by the position they assign to women, who are to be merely the passive instruments of unlimited maternity, without any right to higher education or participation in public affairs. We have had an echo of this recently in the contribution of Dr. R. Murray Leslie on "Woman's Progress in Relation to Eugenics" to the *Eugenics Education Society*.<sup>\*</sup> To this attitude, and especially of that towards women, we neo-Malthusians offer the most implacable hostility, and, for myself, I do not even pay the smallest tribute of respect to those who assert that the interests of the individual (especially of women) must be antagonistic to that of the race, and that the former must be sacrificed to the latter. The race is made up of individuals, and if it were true that the advance of the former was only to be attained by struggle and misery of the latter, and by consigning women to the torture of unlimited motherhood, we ought unhesitatingly to decide in favour of real—not pretended—"race suicide." *But it is not true.* As Huxley has so well said, the struggle of mankind has been *against* the struggle for existence, and, although it has often carried it too far in certain directions, and paid the penalty for it, the supremacy of the civilised over the uncivilised races is sufficient to show that the modification of the struggle for existence, if wisely directed, is far superior to the primitive Darwinian form, so long as it is not carried so far as to produce reversed or dysgenic selection, as might take place by Socialistic legislation.

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<sup>\*</sup> *Eugenics Review*, Vol II., No. 4, January, 1911.



At any rate, even if we were to admit that the interests of the individual and the race were mutually antagonistic it would at once be the duty of scientific men to attempt to find a means of reconciling them, and the neo-Malthusians claim to have solved the two fundamental difficulties of humanity in one process. The first dilemma was that put forward by Malthus himself—the antagonism between food and love. It was this that the neo-Malthusians set themselves to overcome, and they overcame it by the simple process of divorcing sex-union from inevitable parenthood. But the moment that this was done, it became obvious that it could be applied selectively, and that if this selection were made to conform as nearly as possible to natural selection it would put an end to the Darwinian dilemma of the necessity of the sacrifice of individual happiness to race improvement. In absolute contradiction to the positive Eugenists, therefore, and in recognition of the uselessness of natural selection in combination with humanitarian institutions, neo-Malthusians have aimed at eliminating the struggle for existence entirely, and at obtaining race improvement by inculcating the great importance of parenthood and the means of controlling it, to all adult persons; and at the same time freeing and educating women as much as possible, in order that they should be able to exercise the fullest sexual selection, and to refuse motherhood whenever they felt impelled in the interests of their children or themselves to do so. Again we take our stand upon this position, and I have found nothing in the writings of the Race-Hygienists which would induce me to alter it one iota. I absolutely reject positive Eugenics, in the sense of encouragement to reproduction, *in toto*, believing that it is the birthright of every child to have been longed for by its mother beforehand; and, however much some may deplore the devotion of apparently healthy but childless Society women to dogs or trifles, I am sure that if we could penetrate the mystery of such cases we should either find that there was very good reason for the limitation or abstention, or that the maternal feeling was so far wanting that it would have been a wrong to any child to have come into the world. Even positive Eugenists will admit that the race is better not recruited from such a class of people,



and it simply means that neo-Malthusian practice must soon result in the elimination of all those who are insufficiently endowed with the bump of philoprogenitiveness, leaving the recruiting of the race only to the lovers of children. Until it can be shown that the natural love of children by free women undeterred by economic misery is insufficient to prevent the race from dying out, I contend that there is no place whatever for positive Eugenics; and I venture to assert, after a very close study of the vital statistics of various countries, that there is not a country in the world which shows any sign whatever of justifying such an idea. In France, where the birth-rate is the lowest in Europe (but where women are not enfranchised), the record of the birth and death rates shows most distinctly that it cannot support more than a very slow increase of population, and that it would be desirable to diminish the birth-rate among the poor and reckless, rather than to in any way encourage the reproduction of the prudent. New Zealand and Australia, in which women are the freest in the world, and in which the diffusion of neo-Malthusian practice is the most widespread, have seen the most rapid fall in the birth-rate, but their general and infantile mortality is the lowest in the world, their rate of increase of population is the highest, and it has recently accelerated.

What some positive Eugenists appear to forget (although it is inherently contained in their own principle of natural selection) is that over and above the comparative unfitness of one individual or class as compared with another, there is, and must be for centuries to come, the inherent unfitness of the race as a whole, *i.e.*, the impossibility of increasing the food supply as rapidly as the natural unchecked fertility of the race would require. The excess of births over deaths in such a case is at least 4 per cent. per year (birth-rate 50, death-rate 10), which means a fifty-fold increase in a single century, and there can be no hope even with the most remarkable scientific achievements of attaining that rate of increase of food. At present the rate of increase of food production is probably considerably less than 1 per cent. per year, and this means that starvation and disease can only be prevented by keeping the birth-rate of the older countries



at little over 20 per 1000. Any excess above this merely means misery and physical deterioration without any gain as regards numbers or strength. On this account neo-Malthusians have always maintained the necessity for restriction all round in long settled countries such as our own, and many of us have claimed that four children to a family should be regarded as a maximum, with a further restriction to three, two, one, or none, depending upon the degree of economic or other unfitness of the parents.

It is not necessary to go here into the vexed question of the relative importance of heredity and environment as regards race improvement. The whole Eugenic movement to-day recognises the importance of good environment, both as regards the mother and the child, and we now no longer hear the egregious fallacies that war and disease are useful factors for race improvement, which were so common a few years ago, and which neo-Malthusians absolutely rejected. Now that the inviolable germ plasm theory is exploded, and the presence of definite and serious race poisons admitted, it must be recognised that environment has a most important influence upon heredity, and if neo-Malthusian practice leads to the elimination of prostitution and venereal disease, to the reduction of economic pressure with its consequent overcrowding, alcoholism, tuberculosis, and unwholesome employment of women, it will have done a very great deal towards securing an enormously improved heredity, to say nothing of the automatic selective action just referred to. Good heredity and good environment, or Eugenics and Eutrophics\* are equally important for the advancement of the human race.

But now we come to the serious objection made by most of the Race-Hygienists. Whatever the neo-Malthusian ideal may be, they say, there is no gainsaying the fact that during the thirty-five years of the propaganda, family restriction has been more and more practised by the more prudent classes, while the poor and unfit propagate rapidly, and must inevitably cause a degeneration of the race by the multiplication of the inferior stocks.

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\* From *eu* good, and *τρέφω*, I rear.



This, they hold, confirms the prophecy of the early Darwinian objectors, that the poor and reckless would be too irresponsible to adopt family limitation, and on this ground Professor Schallmeyer and other eminent Race-Hygienists have laid down the dictum: "Neo-Malthusianism must always work anti-selectively."

Now, even supposing these contentions to be true, what conclusion can be come to? In the first place, the majority of Race-Hygienists have made the mistake which nearly every one makes in dealing with this question, but which is doubly inexcusable in a selectionist, that of confounding *birth-rates* with *survival-rates*. It is the rarest thing to find any one who realises that the rate of natural increase of any country or class is got by subtracting the death-rate from the birth-rate, and if this were more general we should not hear such a number of ridiculous fallacies concerning the declining birth-rate.\* Now, if we apply this test to various parts of our large towns, we find that although there is frequently a greater excess of births over deaths in the poorer districts it is by no means as great as the differences in the birth-rates would lead one to suppose, owing to the much higher death-rate. As regards London, in 1905-09 the London County Council showed at the Japan-British Exhibition of 1910 a diagram giving the birth and death rates of the richer and poorer districts. The average birth-rate in the richest districts was 21.4 and in the poorest 33.2, a difference of 11.8. But the death-rate in the former was only 12.4, as against 17.4 in the latter, so that the rate of natural increase in the poorest districts was 15.8 per 1000, which is certainly greater than the 9.4 per 1000 for the richest, but by no means so much so as the difference in the birth-rate would indicate. In Paris, in 1906, the birth-rate in the poorest *arrondissements* varied

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\* Ex-President Roosevelt, for instance, has recently told us that the rate of increase of New Zealand is less than that of Great Britain, and that the Australian population would not double once in a century. As a matter of fact, the rate of increase in New Zealand is 50 per cent. higher than in Great Britain, and the Australian population would increase 4.8-fold in a century. Several prominent English writers have also frequently made similar errors.



from 22 to 24 per 1000, and the death-rate in these quarters was so high that the average rate of increase in them was no higher than in the Elysée quarter with a birth-rate of only 11 per 1000.\* So far as Paris is concerned, there seems to be no evidence whatever that the race is being recruited more rapidly from the poorer stocks, and I believe that other Continental towns frequently show much the same thing. A lower birth-rate frequently means a greater survival value, and Mr. Havelock Ellis, in his "Problems of Race Regeneration," repudiates the idea that the British race has degenerated as a result of the falling birth-rate.†

But now we come to a point at which a little plain and perhaps unpleasant speaking is necessary. What right have the Race-Hygienists or the upper classes to criticise the neo-Malthusians, when it is they who have systematically taken care that neo-Malthusianism should work as anti-selectively as possible? The commencement of the organised neo-Malthusian movement dates from 1876 when the Knowlton trial took place. What happened immediately after? The wealthy and educated classes, who ought to have understood something about selection, made haste to adopt family restriction for themselves, but took the greatest care to avoid confessing it or communicating their knowledge to the poor. At the very outset the aim of the Malthusian League was to help the poor as much as possible, and the importance of bringing the doctrines home to the most reckless and improvident was realised to such an extent that, as has been said above, the proposition originally suggested by John Stuart Mill was put forward, of a mild law against large families, which should especially be framed so as to educate and deter the reckless. But what has happened? Every possible obstacle to the dissemination of any useful information among the poor has been interposed by the

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\* *Annuaire Statistique*, 1909, p. 429.

† It may be thought that this is inconsistent with what was said above concerning the anti-selective action of civilised institutions. But what it really shows is that the anti-selective action of such institutions has not been *increased* by family restriction among the educated classes owing to the greater survival value they have thus acquired.



ruling classes who desire "cheap labour"; and the clergy, as well as the medical profession, have fulminated against it. The last few years has been a period of continual persecution of the neo-Malthusians whenever they try to instruct the poorer classes, and more stringent laws are being framed against them in many countries.\* It is nothing but sheer ignorance or hypocrisy on the part of the Race-Hygienists to condemn neo-Malthusianism as anti-selective, and to inform us that the poorer classes will never exercise prudence in procreation, when they know, or ought to know, that the poor are either hopelessly ignorant of the methods, or have been terrorised against using them. It would make a long history in itself to recount the struggles of the neo-Malthusian pioneers to instruct the poor in the teeth of legal and clerical opposition, and we have our own opinion of those who inform us of the importance of the greater reproduction of the fit in order to keep down the reckless and improvident proletariat who will never exercise forethought for themselves. These persons have generally limited their own families to two or three at the outside despite their superior fitness, and we deny their right to make a sweeping condemnation of the recklessness of the poorer classes until they have joined in an attempt to convey the knowledge they have used to them. Whatever they may say to the contrary, the women of the poorest classes are generally profoundly grateful for the opportunity of escape from ceaseless child-bearing and rearing, and they will be more so as they are emancipated from a masculine and clerical domination, and encouraged to assert their own individuality.

To the answer that this is mere assertion, I have only to reply by giving two facts. In two of the country districts in the South of England lately my wife and I have found that family limitation is now being eagerly and successfully adopted by some of the poorest agricultural labourers, through the instrumentality of one or two

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\* I am glad to say that a recent attempt on the part of the dominant agrarian party in Hungary in this direction has been foiled by a judgment of the Hungarian Medical Senate, which has strongly reported against any attempt to check the practice of family limitation, in the interests of the quality of the race.



devoted workers. In one of these districts, however, the lives of these people are rendered unbearable by the accusations of immorality on the part of the clergyman and the doctor's wife. Whenever lectures are given to poor women by a woman, the most pathetic eagerness to receive practical information is found.

But we have, fortunately, evidence of an even more definite kind. There is one country which, to its honour, has not carried on the hypocritical practice of other countries in which the ruling classes prohibit the very practices they adopt themselves. This is Holland, in which an energetic neo-Malthusian propaganda was started in 1885 under the auspices of one of its Ministers, Heer Dr. van Houten, a distinguished magistrate of Amsterdam, and several medical men, joined afterwards by the first Dutch lady doctor, Dr. Alletta Jacobs, of Amsterdam. Under their auspices, and in a country of remarkable freedom and tolerance, the neo-Malthusian League rapidly grew, and in 1895 it was recognised by Royal decree as a society of public utility. It was able to carry on a practical propaganda among the poor without hindrance, and has a staff of trained midwives who instruct the poor women in the best means of family restriction. And what has been the result? Not only has the birth-rate fallen in all classes of society, but the death-rate and infantile mortality has fallen more rapidly than in any other country, as seen in the diagram on page 24, so that it is now one of the healthiest and most rapidly increasing countries in Europe. In my three visits to Holland I have never seen any sign of the horrible physical deterioration observable in the large towns of most other countries; and Dr. Rutgers, the untiring Secretary of the League, himself the author of an important work on "Race Improvement," is satisfied that the poorest women are only too glad to exercise prudence in procreation when the help is given them. With this definite confirmation of the neo-Malthusian doctrines in the only case in which they have had a fair trial, we contend that our case is proved, and we put the whole blame of any anti-selective action which family restriction may have had in other countries on the



shoulders of those who have hindered its proper application. When we add that the agony of desire of poor married mothers to escape continued child-bearing in this country is so great that they have frequently taken lead plaster in order to produce abortion, in spite of its horrible effects;\* and that lead is one of the recognised "racial poisons," the Race-Hygienists ought to appreciate to the full, the wicked fallacy that the poor will not trouble to restrict their families, and that neo-Malthusianism must always work anti-selectively. We unhesitatingly assert, on the contrary, as Mrs. Besant did more than thirty years ago, that neo-Malthusianism is the only possible way in which race improvement can be carried on in civilised society. We assert further, as was stated at the outset, that it is as absurd to attempt to carry on rational selection in a grossly over-populated community such as exists in every nation in Europe to-day, as it would be to attempt the breeding of a good flock of sheep in a field capable of supporting only a portion of the number, or to cultivate fine varieties of roses in a garden choked with weeds. The present attitude of the Malthusian League on the whole subject is formulated in the principles printed at the back of this pamphlet.

While it is perfectly true that restriction of quantity without regard to quality cannot produce race improvement, it will be seen that this has never been a mistake of the neo-Malthusians. On the other hand, it is none the less true that no improvement of quality is possible in a civilised community without considerable limitation of quantity, and on this account neo-Malthusians have felt obliged to concentrate attention very considerably upon the quantity question, more particularly as it has always been so difficult to get it understood. The greatest authorities on social questions seem to lose the whole of their intelligence when dealing with the population doctrine, and it is indeed necessary that some body of people should maintain this most important of all social principles.

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\* *British Medical Journal*, March 18, 1904, and Feb. 24, 1906.  
*Eugenics Review*, Vol. III., No. 2, July, 1911.



One other objection to family limitation has, however, appeared lately which must not be passed over, *i.e.*, the doctrine of the inferiority of the first-born. According to this doctrine, the first and probably the second child born of every family is liable to be inferior to the subsequent members; and, of course, we are brought again to the inevitable contention in favour of large families. Again I have to register a most emphatic protest against the methods of Race-Hygienists, and especially of the biometricians, for the extremely unscientific manner in which most of their investigations have been carried out; and I entirely agree with the strictures of Dr. Archdall Reid upon the methods of eugenic research.\* One of the first duties of any one who undertakes research work, especially in connection with any physiological or social problem, is to remember that there are usually a large number of variables, and biometricians especially should bear in mind the maxim of logic: "Universal sequence does not prove causation." However close the correlation between two phenomena may be, we must not assume either to be the cause of the other until we are sure which is cause or which effect; and, above all, that they are not both effects of some other cause. Day and night follow one another universally, the correlation between the number of days and nights is unity, yet neither is the cause of the other, and the true cause is the wholly independent phenomenon of the rotation of the earth.

Now, what are the phenomena which may influence the quality of the offspring from a given pair? Here are a few of them:—

1. The order of birth (under consideration).
2. The age of the father and mother at birth as affecting—
  - (a) the germ plasm;
  - (b) the efficiency of the maternal reproductive organs;
  - (c) the bodily framework of the mother.
3. The knowledge of the mother and her conduct during gestation, at parturition, and in the care of her infant.

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\* *Eugenics Review*, Vol. III., No. 3, October, 1911.



It would be easy to write a treatise on this subject, but what should be obvious to the meanest capacity is that there are several factors here of the greatest importance, which are usually associated with the order of birth, but which need not be so. As to the germ-plasm question, it is evident that the doctrine of the inferiority of the first-born is a severe blow to the inviolable germ-plasm theory, and we may leave Eugenists of different schools to fight the matter out, merely pointing out that both sides cannot be right, and that this is another evidence of the justification for suspicion of researches in this connection. But as regards the other factors, neo-Malthusians have very carefully studied them for many years past, and it is obvious that the absolute ignorance in which our girls have been brought up in regard to all matters of sex and motherhood, combined with the immature age at which their first child is frequently born, is quite sufficient to account for its inferiority, to say nothing of the spoiling and bad education which the first-born frequently receives. The President of the Malthusian League, Dr. Alice Drysdale-Vickery, has for many years made a study of this subject, and in her declaration concerning "A Woman's Malthusian League" written in 1900, she has indicated the age of 25 at which a woman should first become a mother, being the age at which her own bodily development is complete, and before her framework becomes too rigid, and this age is confirmed by the statistics of mortality in childbirth as the safest for the mother, and presumably the best for the offspring. The neo-Malthusians advocate early marriage (at about 20-22 years of age), combined with the postponement of parenthood to the age of 25, enabling the young couple to make some preparation for the responsibility of parenthood, for which neo-Malthusian precautions make an excellent introduction. They have also advocated an interval of from  $2\frac{1}{2}$  to 3 years between successive births to allow of proper lactation and recuperation, and it is amusing to observe how the Race-Hygienists have latterly been adopting one by one the very principles laid down by the neo-Malthusians many years ago. Although a first parturition will always have some greater element of risk, neo-Malthusians have the best of reasons for believing that all children, first-born or



otherwise, will be satisfactory, if the parents are healthy, of the right age, and in a position to regulate the number of their children to their desires and resources. If neo-Malthusianism did nothing more than to dispel the mystery concerning the reproductive process which has been so sedulously fostered by orthodox moralists, and which has been shown in the most incredible superstitions associated with childbirth, even by the most experienced mothers, it ought to do much for race improvement. It will be observed that if a woman has her first child at the age of 25, and three others at intervals of  $2\frac{1}{2}$  years, she is then nearly 33 years of age, and with seven years added for the infancy of the last child; this gives practically fifteen years devoted to the bearing and rearing of children, leaving her at the age of 40 with enough youth and vitality remaining to develop her own individuality and charm. If the Eugenists and Race-Hygienists cannot see their way to maintain and improve the race on the lines indicated, so much the worse for them. Neo-Malthusianism, or Race Control as General Begbie has so well named it, is concerned both with the quantity and quality of the race, and with the welfare both of the individual man, woman, and child, and of posterity; and it absolutely refuses to accept the proposition that the improvement of the race demands the sacrifice of women to passive and unlimited maternity. On the contrary, just as John Stuart Mill held that the emancipation of women would lead to the solution of economic difficulties through the reduction of overpopulation, so do I hold absolutely that free and educated women, with their stake in maternity, will be the safest guardians of race improvement, and to any objection from any authority whatever, I simply reply, *finem respice*.

The neo-Malthusian formula for race improvement simply means the continued elimination of unfitness, by the restriction of the poor, weak, and diseased; and if women are able to avoid the misery of bearing children under wretched conditions and of seeing them pine or perish from hunger and disease, without denying their husbands the union they crave, or being forced into prostitution, the process of elimination would



go on at a remarkably rapid rate, and the general level of the race will rapidly improve. I cannot do better than to reproduce at the end of this pamphlet the words of Colonel R. G. Ingersoll, written many years ago, and which have been continually circulated by the Malthusian League from that time to the present. It is not expressed in scientific terminology or in correlation coefficients, and it sounds somewhat Utopian, but it contains a truth which no scientific work has disproved.

In conclusion, I trust it will be seen that neo-Malthusianism and Eugenics are one and the same thing, so far as negative, educative, and preventive measures are concerned, and it is only with the so-called positive Eugenics that there is any real issue. It may be asked whether it would not be better to make experiments in the direction of breeding higher types of human beings, but personally I am opposed to this idea. Neo-Malthusians have always recognised that love is the biological indication of fitness for mating, and the freer sexual selection permitted by better economic conditions should produce a much better and more uniform race than can be obtained by breeding with a set purpose. We do not want an aristocracy of fitness any more than any other aristocracy to dominate us, and a general high level of happiness and vitality can better be produced by the agricultural method of weeding out the unfit and mixing the remainder, than by the horticultural method of breeding from selected stocks.

Such is the relation of neo-Malthusianism to race improvement, and it is hoped that Eugenists and others will realise its importance and combine to help it in its work. Bearing in mind, as every rational person who looks the facts in the face must do, that the more educated and prudent classes will not increase their rate of reproduction even if it were desirable, we are compelled to recognise that the only practical way now open to us for attaining race improvement is to extend the practice of family limitation to the poor as rapidly as possible, for their own welfare and that of the whole community.



# PARENTAL PRUDENCE

THE ONLY ROAD TO SOCIAL REFORM.

*By Col. R. G. Ingersoll.*

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"There is but one hope. Ignorance, poverty, and vice must stop populating the world. This cannot be done by moral suasion. This cannot be done by talk or example. This cannot be done by religion or by law, by priest or by hangman. This cannot be done by force, physical or moral.

"To accomplish this there is but one way. Science must make woman the owner, the mistress of herself. Science, the only possible saviour of mankind, must put it in the power of woman to decide for herself whether she will or will not become a mother.

"This is the solution of the whole question. This frees woman. The babes that are then born will be welcome; they will be clasped with glad hands to happy breasts; they will fill homes with light and joy.

"Men and women who believe that slaves are purer, truer than the free, who believe that fear is a safer guide than knowledge, that only those are really good who obey the commands of others, and that ignorance is the soil in which the perfect, perfumed flower of virtue grows, will with protesting hands hide their shocked faces.

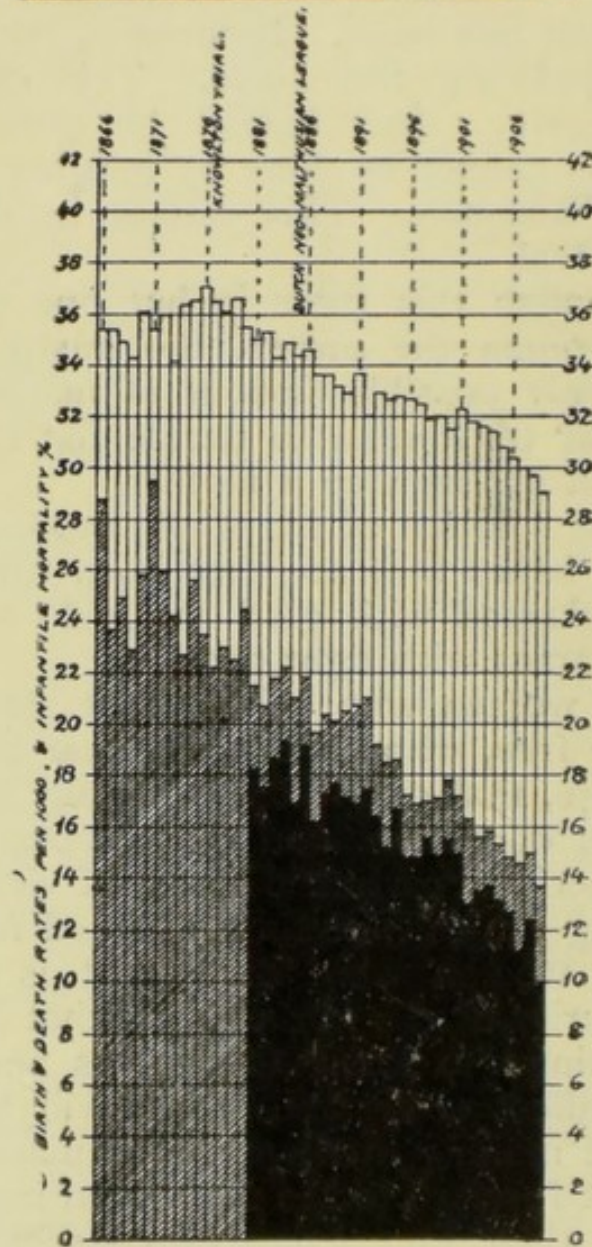
"Men and women who think light is the enemy of virtue, that purity dwells in darkness, that it is dangerous for human beings to know themselves and the facts in Nature that affect their well-being, will be horrified at the thought of making intelligence the master of passion.

"But I look forward to the time when men and women, by reason of their knowledge of consequences, of the morality born of intelligence, will refuse to perpetuate disease and pain, will refuse to fill the world with failures.

"When that time comes the prison wall will fall, the dungeons will be flooded with light, and the shadow of the scaffold will cease to curse the earth. Poverty and crime will be childless. The withered hands of want will not be stretched for alms. They will be dust. The whole world will be intelligent, virtuous and free."



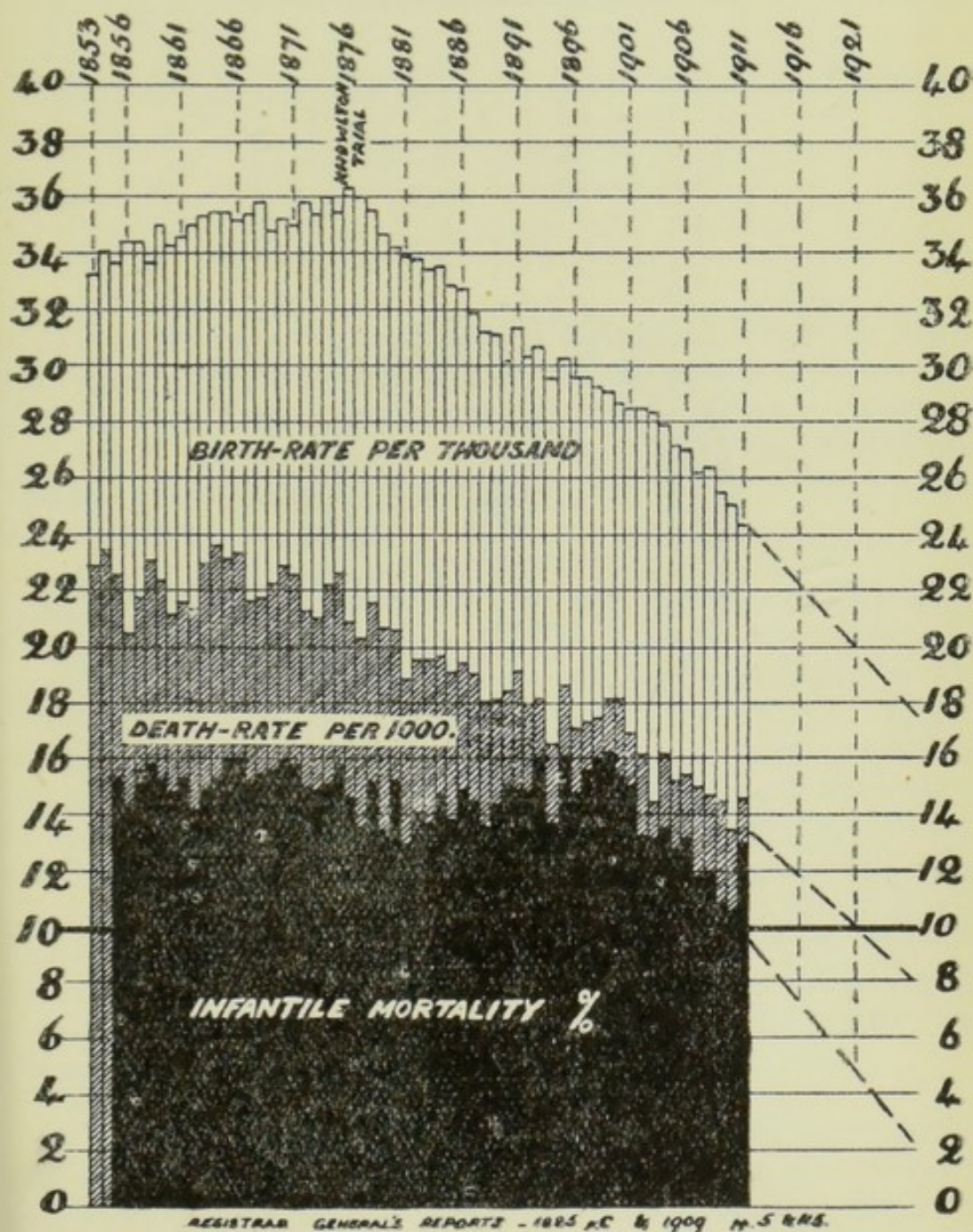
## THE NETHERLANDS.



The only country where an active neo-Malthusian propaganda has taken place (since 1885) by a Society which has been recognized as a Society of public utility, and which has given instruction in family limitation on the large scale to the poor through the agency of doctors and midwives. The death-rate and infantile mortality have fallen more rapidly and uniformly than in any other country, and there seems little signs of race degeneration or of labour unrest.



## **VARIATIONS IN BIRTH-RATE &c., IN ENGLAND & WALES.**



A typical example of a country where family limitation has been adopted mainly by the educated classes at first. The death-rate has declined, but not quite so fast as the birth-rate, and the infantile mortality has only fallen since 1900 when family restriction began to penetrate to the poorer classes.







# A TABLE OF CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS,

CONNECTING THE BIRTH-RATE WITH THE DEATH-RATE,  
INFANTILE MORTALITY, ETC.

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The accompanying table has been calculated to show the degree of correspondence which exists between the birth-rate and the death-rate, etc., in various countries and towns, and between the variations of the birth-rate, death-rate, and infantile mortality from year to year in the same country or town.

A coefficient of correlation, or correlation coefficient, is a number which is supposed to indicate the degree of interdependence between two sets of quantities, or the extent to which one depends upon the other. If this coefficient is unity, it implies that one of these quantities depends rigidly upon the other, while if it is zero, there is no connection between them, and the higher the correlation coefficient, the closer is the connection between them. The coefficients here given have been calculated by the Bravais-Galton-Pearson formula, employed by Prof. Karl Pearson and others in investigations into the theory of heredity, and they eliminate all possibility of any personal bias appearing in the result.

It will be seen from the table that the connection between the birth-rate and the death-rate or the infantile mortality is very high, or in other words, that in the great majority of cases, high or low birth-rates are accompanied by an almost exactly correspondingly high or low death-rate or infantile mortality. According to the theory of population, this should be the case, as a high birth-rate involves greater pressure on the food supply, and thereby causes



a larger amount of death through want and disease. The high values of the correlation coefficients thus obtained, therefore, afford a strong confirmation of the population doctrine.

As large families also imply poverty and overcrowding, this tends to an increase of tuberculosis, and we therefore find a somewhat high correlation between the birth-rate and tuberculosis mortality.

Again, as the artificial limitation of families has been claimed by many to predispose to cancer, the correlation has been calculated between the fertility of married women and the cancer mortality in various countries, the result being to show that there is very little connection between them, but that, on the whole, a low birth-rate implies a lower rather than a higher cancer mortality.



# CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS.

| CORRELATION BETWEEN                            | COEFFICIENT. |
|--|--------------|
| BIRTH AND DEATH RATES in                       |              |
| 15 European Countries 1871-75 ... ..           | .79 ± .06    |
| 21       "               "       1901-5 ... .. | .81 ± .04    |
| 28 Countries of World 1901-5 ... ..            | .80 ± .05    |
| 34 Towns of Various Countries 1901-5           | .30 ± .10    |
| 55 Counties of England and Wales 1909          | .56 ± .06    |
| Paris Arrondissements 1906 ... ..              | .95 ± .02    |
| Europe 1841-03 ... ..                          | .51 ± .14    |
| Western Europe 1841-1905 ... ..                | .82 ± .06    |
| France 1781-1905 (10 year intervals) ...       | .902 ± .036  |
| "   1881-1909 ( 1   "       "   ) ...          | .678 ± .055  |
| London 1860-1909 ... ..                        | .91 ± .017   |
| Paris   1750-1906 ... ..                       | .91 ± .024   |
| Berlin   1841-1909 ... ..                      | .92 ± .03    |
| Toronto 1880-1909 ... ..                       | .96 ± .02    |
| FALL OR RISE OF BIRTH-RATE in                  |              |
| 21 European Countries 1871-5 to 1901-5         | .76 ± .06    |
| 28 Countries of World   "   "   "              | .68 ± .07    |
| BIRTH-RATE AND CORRECTED DEATH-RATE in         |              |
| 25 Countries 1900 ... ..                       | .70 ± .07    |
| FERTILITY-RATE AND CANCER in                   |              |
| 11 Countries 1901-5 ... ..                     | .15 ± .20    |
| BIRTH-RATE AND TUBERCULOSIS in                 |              |
| 11 Countries 1901-5 ... ..                     | .54 ± .12    |
| BIRTH-RATE AND ILLEGITIMACY in                 |              |
| 16 Countries 1900-2 ... ..                     | .488 ± .128  |
| BIRTH-RATE AND INFANT MORTALITY in             |              |
| 20 European Countries 1901-5 ... ..            | .60 ± .08    |
| 32 Countries of World 1901-5 ... ..            | .75 ± .04    |
| 29 Cities of Various Countries 1901-5          | .50 ± .10    |
| 55 Counties of England and Wales 1909          | .84 ± .027   |
| Berlin 1841-1909 ... ..                        | .88 ± .04    |



# OBJECTS AND PRINCIPLES OF THE MALTHUSIAN LEAGUE.

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## I.—NAME.

That this Society be called "THE MALTHUSIAN LEAGUE."

## II.—OBJECTS.

That the object of this Society be to spread among the people—by all practical means—a knowledge of the law of population, of its consequences, and of its bearings upon human conduct and morals

## III.—PRINCIPLES.

1. That population (unless consciously and sufficiently controlled) has a constant tendency to increase beyond the means of subsistence.

2. That the checks which counteract this tendency are resolvable into positive, or life destroying, and prudential, or birth restricting.

3. That the positive, or life destroying, checks comprehend the premature death of children and adults by starvation, disease, infanticide, and war.

4. That the prudential, or birth restricting, check consists in the limitation of offspring (1) by abstention from or postponement of marriage or (2) by prudence after marriage.

5. That prolonged postponement of marriage, as advocated by Malthus, is productive of many diseases and of much sexual vice. Early marriage, on the contrary, tends to ensure sexual purity, domestic comfort, social happiness, and individual health; but it is a grave social offence for men and women to bring into the world more children than they can adequately house, feed, clothe, and educate

6. That over population is the most fruitful source of pauperism, ignorance, crime, and disease.

7. That it is of great importance that those afflicted with hereditary disease, or who are otherwise plainly incapable of producing or rearing physically, intellectually and morally satisfactory children, should not become parents.

8. That the full and open discussion of the population question in all its necessary aspects is a matter of vital moment to society.

## SUPPLEMENTARY PRINCIPLES.

*(Not obligatory.)*

9. That the aim of all true social reform is to promote the general health and longevity of the race, and that reason and experience, evidenced by statistics since the year 1876, has clearly shown that this is only compatible with a restricted birth-rate.



10. That therefore the reduction of the birth-rate should be welcomed and encouraged so long as it is found to be accompanied by a material reduction of the death rate.

11. That, while in no way denying the possibility of ultimately supporting a much larger population or of accelerating the present increase of food production, and while welcoming all efforts in this direction, human life ought not to be produced beyond the reasonable expectation of immediate results.

12. That the struggle for existence due to over population is not the best factor for race improvement, or even a useful one, unless humanitarian schemes for the preservation of the less fit are abandoned, and that it should therefore be eliminated as far as possible by all civilised communities.

13. That prudential limitation of families enables early marriage to become general by removing the fear of economic difficulties, and is therefore a most important step towards the elimination of prostitution and venereal disease, and thus for the moral and physical improvement of the race.

14. That, in addition, the universal knowledge of hygienic means of limitation of births, especially by women, will be a great factor for race improvement by rational selection, owing to the natural desire of women to avoid having children who are sickly or unlikely to have a good chance in life.

15. That the improvement of the race as a whole and of the coming generation is only compatible with the harmonious development of parents (women as well as men) in all their faculties, and that this development can only be secured by the freedom of women to have only such children as they desire.

16. That the elimination of unfitness should, as far as possible, be attained, not by restriction of marriage, segregation, or by sterilisation (which should be resorted to only in the case of those obviously incapable of self-control, such as lunatics and criminals), but by the inculcation of the great responsibility of parenthood and of the effects of such hereditary transmission, combined with a general knowledge of the most hygienic means of limiting families.

17. That, from the national or patriotic standpoint, it is not to the present advantage of this country that the government or society should encourage greater reproduction, but that every effort should be made to preserve and increase our national sources of subsistence, and thus to reduce our general and infantile mortality to its natural minimum.

18. That the struggle for existence due to over population has been the chief factor in human as in animal evolution, and therefore has been chiefly instrumental in bringing about existing social systems; and that it is consequently useless to expect any great alteration in the constitution of society, or that any material improvement would result from it, without removing the fundamental difficulty of over population.



THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

PHYSICS DEPARTMENT

REPORT OF THE

COMMISSIONERS OF THE

BOARD OF EDUCATION

FOR THE YEAR 1900

CHICAGO, ILL.

1901

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1901

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

PHYSICS DEPARTMENT

REPORT OF THE



# Federation Universelle de la Régénération Humaine.

(Federation of neo-Malthusian Leagues).

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*First President* : The late Dr. CHARLES R. DRYSDALE.

*President* : Dr. ALICE DRYSDALE VICKERY,  
47, Rotherwick Road, Hampstead Garden Suburb, N.W.

*Vice-President* : M. PAUL ROBIN,  
5, Passage du Surmelin, Paris, XXme.

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## CONSTITUENT BODIES.

ENGLAND (1877).—The Malthusian League. Periodical, *The Malthusian*.

HOLLAND (1885).—De Nieuw-Malthusiaansche Bond. Secretary, Dr. J. Rutgers, 9, Verhulststraat Den Haag. Periodical, *Het Gellukkig Huisgezin*.

GERMANY (1889).—Sozial Harmonische Verein. Secretary, Herr M. Hausmeister, Stuttgart. Periodical, *Die Sozial Harmonie*.

FRANCE (1895).—*Generation Consciente*. E. Humbert, 27, Rue de la Duée, Paris XX.

SPAIN (1904).—Liga Española de Regeneracion humana. Secretary, Senor Luis Bulffi, Calle Provenza, 177, pral. 1a. Barcelona. Periodical, *Salud y Fuerza*.

BELGIUM (1906).—Ligue Néo-Malthusienne. Secretary, Dr. Fernand Mascaux, Echevin, Courcelles. Periodical, *Generation Consciente*, 27, Rue de la Duée, Paris, XX.

SWITZERLAND (1908).—Group Malthusien. Sec., Valentin, Grand-jean 106, Rue des Eaux Vives, Geneva. Periodical, *La Vie Intime*.

BOHEMIA-AUSTRIA (1901).—*Prace*. Secretary, Michel Kaska, 711 Zizhov, Prague.

PORTUGAL. *Paz e Liberdade*, Revista Anti-Militarist e Neo-Malthusiana. E. Silva, junior, Lisbon.

BRAZIL (1905).—Seccion brasilena de propaganda. Secretaries : Manuel Moscota, Rua de' Bento Pires 29, San Pablo ; Antonio Dominguez, Rua Vizcande de Moranguapez 25, Rio de Janeiro.

CUBA (1907).—Seccion de propaganda. Secretary, José Guardiola, Empedrado 14, Havana.

SWEDEN (1911).—Sällskapet for Humanitar Barnalstring. President : Fru Viktorin Tomtebogatan 12, O.G. Stockholm.

FLEMISH BELGIUM (1912).—National Verbond ter Regeling van het Kindertal. President, M. L. van Brussel, Rue de Canal, 70, Louvain.

AFRICA.—Ligue Néo-Malthusienne, Maison du Peuple, 10, Rampe Magenta, Alger.

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AMERICA.—*The American Journal of Eugenics*. Lilian Harman, Los Angeles, California, U.S.A.



