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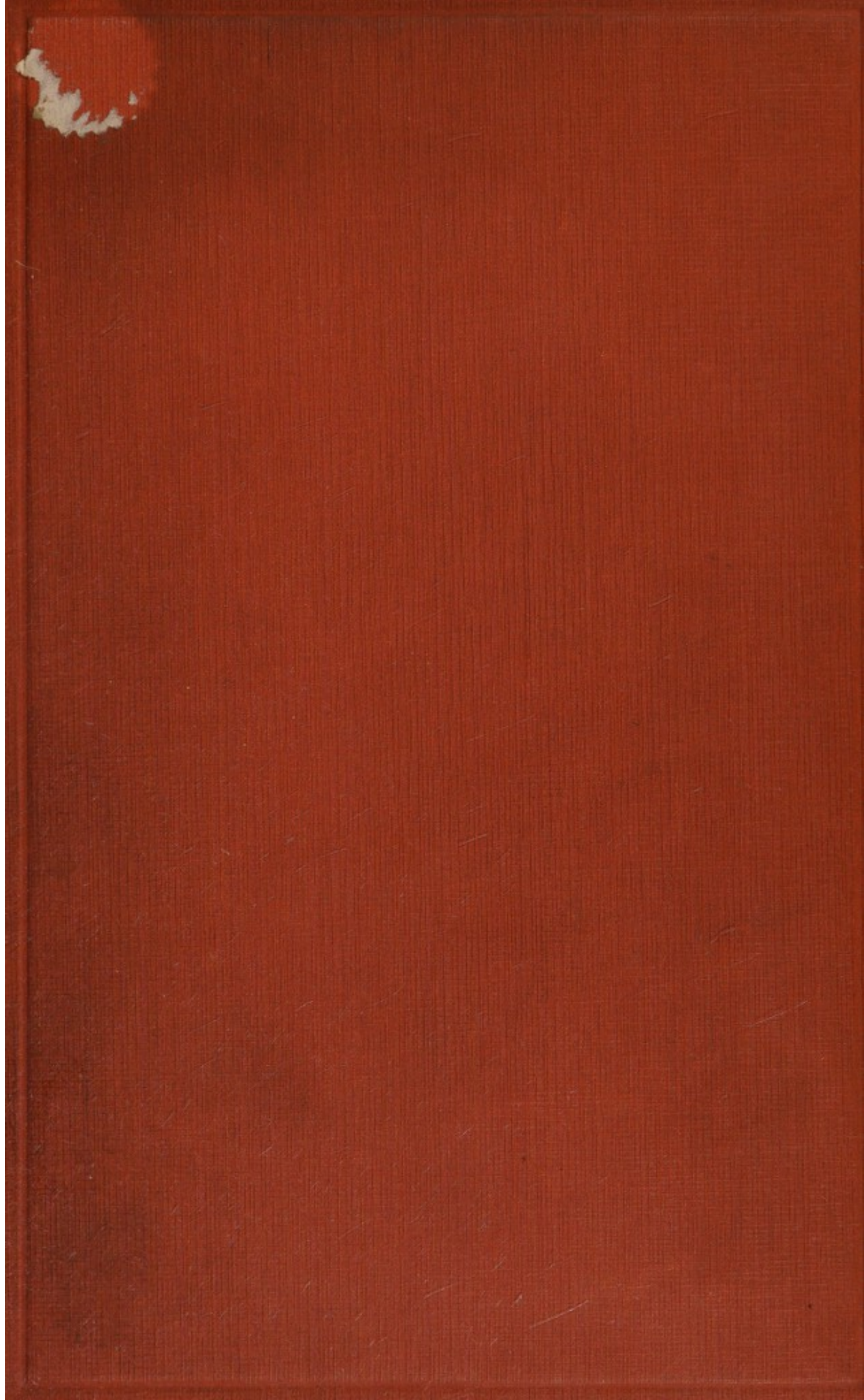
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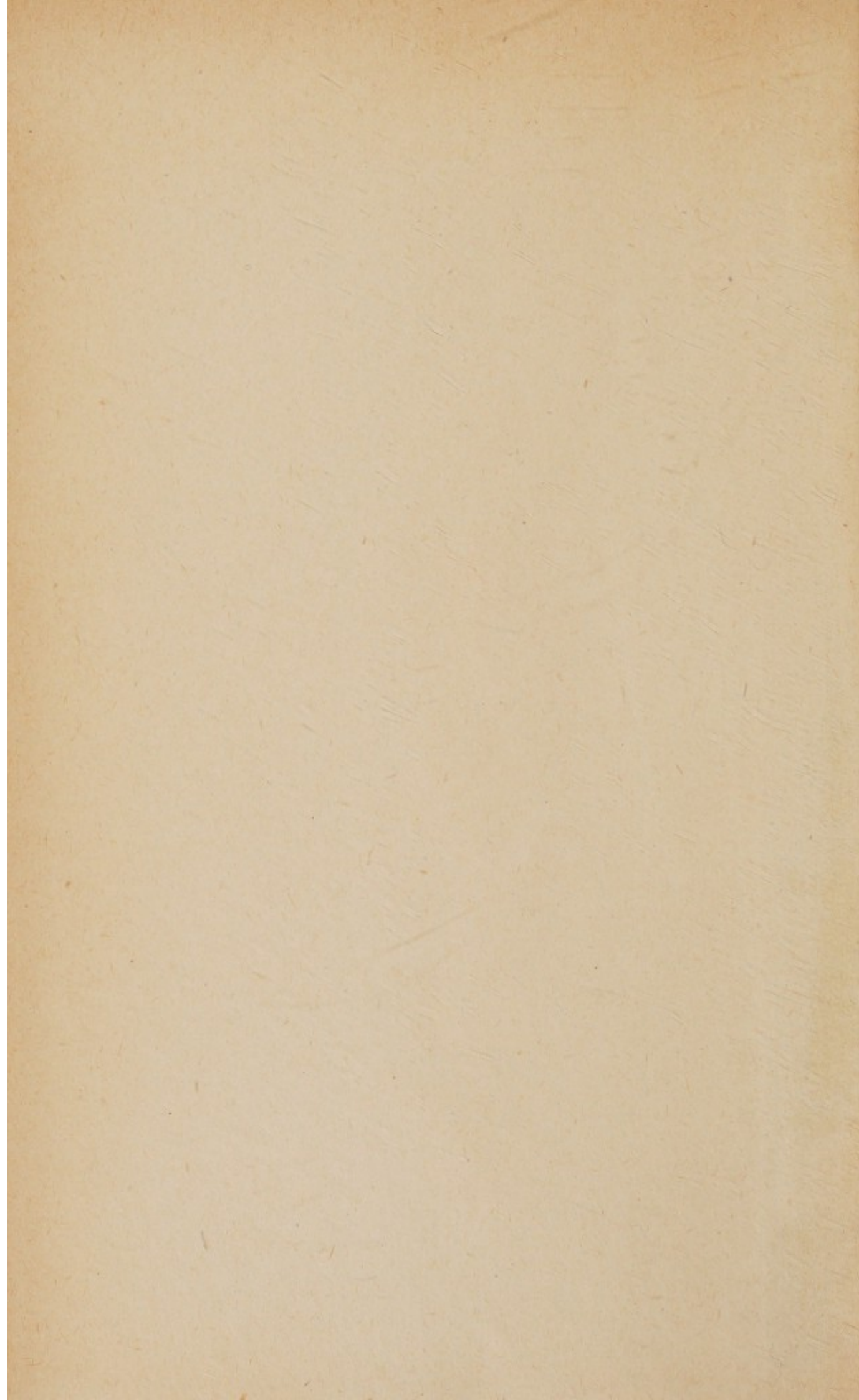
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BIRTH-RATE AND EMPIRE

WORKS BY THE SAME AUTHOR

ALFRED RUSSEL WALLACE. LETTERS AND REMINISCENCES.
Two Vols.

THE MEMOIRS OF DR. BARNARDO.

DR. PATON—EDUCATIONAL AND SOCIAL PIONEER.

THE MASTER PROBLEM.

CRADLES OR COFFINS?

REMINISCENCES OF RAPHAEL MELDOLA (EDITED BY).

ETC.

BIRTH-RATE AND EMPIRE



BY

JAMES MARCHANT

*Secretary of the National Birth-Rate Commission,
and The Cinema Inquiry, Director of the National
Council for the Promotion of Race-Regeneration, etc.*

LONDON

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1917

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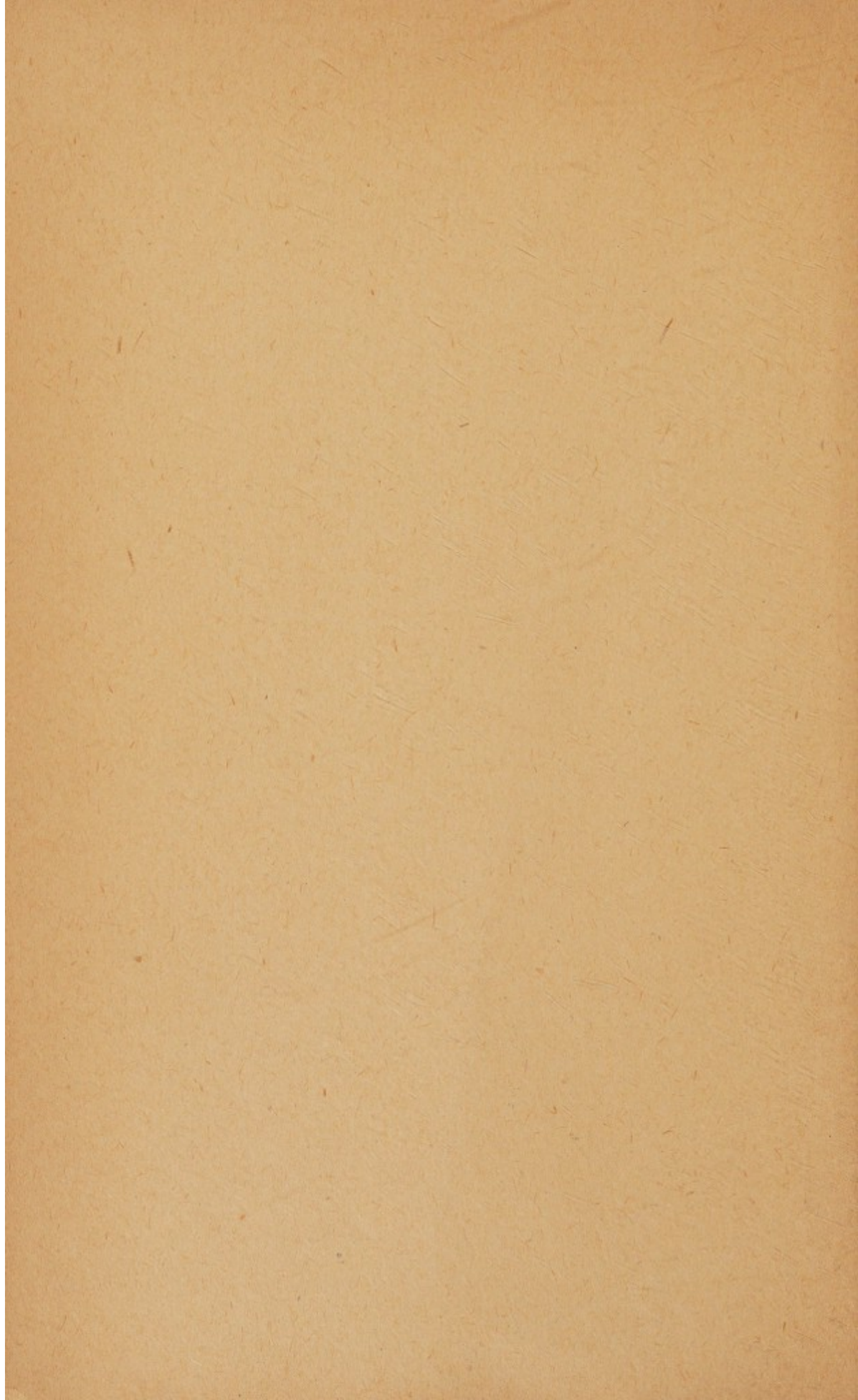
To
H. R. W.
F. B. M.
and
R. F. H.
In Gratitude.





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PREFACE

THIS book attempts to deal with various aspects of the most complex problem of our corporate life. That problem is to find some remedy for the persistently diminishing birth-rate of our growing Empire and the serious decrease of men of ability born to the better-educated classes, a deficiency in quantity and of quality which has been accentuated by the irreparable losses of hundreds of thousands of promising lives in this world-war, and which must impoverish and may imperil the future of the race. The problem is rendered more acute by the increasing practice of deliberate birth restriction amongst the very classes where it ought not to be encouraged, a practice which is now being advocated at street corners as the latest remedy for almost all our ills. It would be foolish to seem to propose a solution of these tremendous questions within the compass of this small book, even were the requisite knowledge available. All we are able to do is to examine some of the causes and effects of the rise and fall of life in various classes, the nature and influence of the environment in which millions of our fellow-citizens live and die, and the shocking but preventable results of our

industrial conditions upon child life. Some consideration is given to the allegation that predominant and immutable race and class distinctions are fixed by heredity, which is now being used to destroy the doctrine of the brotherhood of man. Some practical proposals are made towards relieving parenthood of financial burdens imposed by the State and for dealing with the development of the sex instinct amongst young people. The need for organised pre-natal and post-natal care of maternity by a Ministry of Health is insisted on, especially in view of the permanent demand of women for the immediate realisation of a life as full and free as that enjoyed by men. A section is devoted to the question of the better redistribution of our surplus female population in our Colonies; and in several chapters will be found an examination of the arguments in favour of a low birth-rate and the difficulties of adjusting the size of the family to the means of the parents, the health of the mother, the claims of the moral law, and the growing and imperative demands of our Empire and posterity. The attitude of the Churches towards the use of Malthusian devices for birth-control is also considered at some length. These are the aspects of the problem of race-renewal which are approached in this book, which closes with a few reflections upon the old but always fresh question—What is the purpose of human life?

My cordial thanks are due to Dr. T. H. C. Stevenson, Superintendent of Statistics, and to Sir A. Newsholme, who have read various portions of the proofs, and to whom I have long been indebted for manifold kindnesses; and to Dr. Maxwell Williamson, Medical Officer of Health for Edinburgh, who has kindly checked the statistics for Scotland. Dr. J. W. Ballantyne read the MS., giving special attention to that part dealing with ante-natal questions, in which he is an expert; and my esteemed co-workers, the Rev. F. B. Meyer, D.D., Rabbi Prof. Hermann Gollancz, D.Lit., Dr. C. W. Saleeby, and the Rev. Principal A. E. Garvie, D.D., have placed me under additional obligations for like services always graciously rendered. In recording my unstinted thankfulness to these friends for their assistance I owe it to them to add that I am entirely responsible for this book and for the views herein expressed.

October, 1917.



BIRTH-RATE AND EMPIRE

CHAPTER I

BIRTH-RATE AND EMPIRE

EMPIRE and Birth-rate are terms which connote vast and complex conceptions. When we put them in juxtaposition we think, first of all, of the enormous extent of this growing federation of practically independent and yet, as they now realise, intimately interdependent nations, described in the picturesque phrase of the Psalmist happily adopted by Canada¹ as "our Dominions beyond the Seas." Then, we recall the nature and number of their varied populations hitherto, so far as white people are concerned, almost

¹ Lt.-Col. Rev. William Beattie, D.D., C.M.G., in the course of a recent sermon at St. Columba's, London, on the occasion of the Jubilee of the Dominion of Canada, told the following story:—Leaders of the United Provinces had consulted vainly as to the best title for the new Confederacy when these words flashed on the mind of a Canadian statesman, Sir Leonard Tilley, in reading the 72nd Psalm: "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea and from the river unto the ends of the earth." He had a vision of the far-reaching territory of his country, a land bounded by the Atlantic on the east, and the Pacific on the west, on the south by the great chain of rivers and lakes, and on the north by the ends of the earth. On his suggestion the word "Dominion" was adopted in the Council Chamber.

entirely supplied by the Motherland. Our Empire covers over 13,000,000 square miles, or one-fourth of the land of the world, and our vessels freely traverse the seven seas. But our white population only amounts to sixty millions ; forty-five millions constitute our home population, fifteen millions only remain to distribute over and to govern, develop, and defend our mighty daughter nations of Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, and immense vacant spaces in Africa and other lands. And these fifteen millions have been derived from the British Isles and are mainly replenished and reinforced from the same source of life. India, with her immense multifarious population numbering, in 1911, 161,338,935 males and 153,817,416 females, the births in 1915 (for British India alone) being 4,664,460 boys and 4,357,365 girls, must be left out of account in the present survey, and only those parts of the Empire considered which afford opportunities of prosperity to the white populations which are their mainstay.

The better distribution of our present population, male and female, in the homeland and Colonies is one practical way to meet the situation which the Government must take in hand after the War, especially as regards the sending out, under safe conditions, of certain sections of our female population to the Colonies where homes await them. But with a birth-rate which has

fallen from 35·4 per thousand in 1875 to 20·9 in 1916 (in places like Edinburgh to 17·8, in some districts to 10), which reveals a potential loss of many millions of lives during that period, a loss which is further accentuated by the shocking mortality of infants through neglect, want, and ignorance, how is the enfeebled heart of the Empire to continue to supply more fresh and healthy blood to circulate to its far-flung extremities? In Canada, which had at the last census (1911) a population of 7,206,643, divided into males 3,821,995 and females 3,384,648—an excess of 437,347 males—there are only two persons to the square mile. In Australia, where the birth-rate in 1915 was 27·3 per thousand of the population, there is only one; a population, less than the depleted population of Scotland, is pathetically struggling to hold a continent as a white man's land against the congested millions of coloured peoples just across the sea. Australia has been under the British Crown for over a century, yet in the Northern Division of 500,000 square miles there are still only about 3,300 males and 700 females, of white population. Western Australia, which is sub-tropical, had in 1911, 282,114, and Queensland 605,813. These lands, even when we allow for the desert wastes, have immense tracts which are very fertile, and are becoming more and more habitable by white populations owing to the great advance made

in tropical medicine. As regards New Zealand, it is interesting to note that the estimated population (excluding Maoris) on 31st December, 1915, was 563,963 males and 538,831 females, a total of 1,102,794; and on 31st December, 1916, 550,033 males and 550,125 females, a total of 1,100,158; the births registered in 1915 were 27,850, and in 1916, 28,518, a slight but welcome increase in spite of the war losses.

The most vital problem of the future of our Empire is, How adequately to populate our Colonies with healthy citizens? If we cannot do it, have we a moral right to hold them against the world? We may be able to spare some of our home population, which, by comparison, seems overcrowded, being 618 to the square mile for England and Wales. But in face of the falling birth-rate, the excessive male infant mortality, and the actual loss of a large and daily increasing proportion of our splendid manhood in this world-war, some of our social and economic experts have taken up a position of definite hostility to the emigration of another able-bodied man to our Colonies. Our Colonies, naturally and rightly, ask for our best. Dr. Barnardo's Homes and such-like noble institutions have sent out tens of thousands of physically fit boys and girls to Canada, and some to Australia and New Zealand, and many of them have returned as brave soldiers and sailors of the King to lay down their lives in Flanders or

in the grey waters of the North Sea. Truly, they have not been lost to the Empire. Truly, none will be lost in the future, for our Empire is now united by the blood of her sons and daughters for evermore. Sir Rider Haggard, in his report to the Royal Colonial Institute of his tour round the Empire in order to discover where we may profitably send out men who return from the war, states, amongst other interesting facts, that, for instance, Queensland will offer 1,000,000 acres, New South Wales 1,000 farms to establish the war-emigrants, and New Zealand and Canada will likewise give large preferences to our returned soldiers and sailors.¹ But, it may be asked, Can we spare even the wounded men for our Colonies? It is always true that Empires begin to decay at their core, and unless there is an immediate and continuous revival of family life and parenthood in the British Isles, which are the reservoir of our life, our Colonies, to the great extent to which they now depend upon the Motherland, must vitally suffer and be populated from other countries. They cannot, from their present resources, which, in fact, tend to decrease, permanently and effectively people their vast

¹ Whilst this book is passing through the press the Empire Settlement Committee, appointed April, 1917, has issued its report, to which the reader is referred, in which full details are given of the provisions to be made in our Colonies for ex-service men. Cd. 8672. Price 9d. net.

lands. More and more sons and daughters they must have, and they look to the Motherland to bring many of them forth.

Birth-rate and Empire form the theme of this book. It will not be necessary to occupy any space with references to the history and geographical and material development of the Empire. We must devote the whole of our pages to a close consideration of the racial, moral, industrial and physical causes of the rise and fall of the birth-rate and death-rate at home, which, in the end, may mean life or death to our Colonies. The birth-rate in relation to the needs and future life of the Empire is the point of view maintained throughout. This is our controlling conception whether we are dealing with the disastrous influences of Industrialism upon child life, the sinister arguments of the leading advocates of the small family system which has in practice discouraged worthy parenthood amongst the classes best able to bear the burdens, the attitude of the Churches towards the modern practices of birth-restriction, or with our national awakening to the needs of motherhood and the question of the regulated migration of young women from our congested areas to the ample lands which call for them overseas.

All our investigations have failed to reveal any physiological ground for believing that the forces of reproduction are permanently failing.

The fear that we were physically weaker than our forefathers seems to have no warrant in the opinion of our leading authorities. The splendid physique of our armies has apparently set to rest all misgivings on that score. Yet, as one listened to the evidence of witness after witness before the National Birth-rate Commission—physicians, social reformers, clergy and working men, we discovered that many were not wholly satisfied with the explanations of the declining birth-rate which are now current opinion, although they could discover no others. One thought haunted our own mind which we then refrained from expressing because it seemed to be incapable of definite proof. That thought was that whilst the physical basis of reproduction remained sound, the peoples were seriously acting upon the doubt whether it was, after all, worth bringing forth many children to endure the hazards of life.

There appeared to the writer to be a general feeling of race-weariness. Perhaps it is nearer the probable truth to infer that there is a growing belief that if sexual desires can be met without having children, or if maternal love can be satisfied with one or two, it is best to have as few as possible. The claims of race, or posterity, have had less and less appealing force during the last half-century. The question of having children is now held to be entirely a matter for the individual parents to decide and not the

Church or State. And their experience does not warrant them in smothering their latent conviction that it is doubtful whether it is really "worth while," if life is to continue to be, on the whole, a "long war in the night."

The will to live, which involves the capacity of reproducing life, is the intrinsic distinction between mechanism and man. The human organism has often been likened to a machine, and the illustration is helpful so far as it enables us to visualise functioning, but when it is used to suggest that man is another sort of steam engine, consuming beef and bread and turning them into power, which may be controlled by other men and exchanged for gold, the implication is pushed too far. Life cannot be completely described in terms of physics and chemistry. The vital distinction between an engine and a man is not that the man by the wonderful physiological processes of digestion and assimilation produces a greater amount of energy proportionately and with less waste and loss than the steam engine, which the intelligent employer of labour well knows, but that he is a self-stoking, self-assimilating, self-adapting organism, which in resting acquires more energy and in working is self-regulating. "Life," says Bergson, "is consciousness penetrating and organising matter." It is also essentially creative. But in our industrial system, life has been of less value than a machine, to be

scrapped almost without compunction. Man has been a cog in the wheel, to be replaced the moment it tended to slow down the revolutions. Life indeed has been run at a greater speed, on scantier fuel, and with less allowance for wear, tear, and repair than loom or engine. The fact that it takes a few weeks to make a machine and twenty years to make a man has been wholly neglected in the mad race for wealth. And the consequence has been that the will to propagate has sensibly weakened.

The Co-operative Guild, in reviewing the letters they received from working women, which are referred to in a later chapter, say, "These letters give the skeletons of individual lives, and individual thoughts and feelings ; *but in these facts and thoughts and feelings one can see clearly the general mould of life and the sweep of the current of general opinion which is among the working classes, resulting in the refusal to have children.*" (Italics ours.)

There may not be physical incapacity, but are the springs of fertility drying up in the souls of men and women ? There may not be race-exhaustion, but is faith in the social order and perhaps in life itself shaken at its foundations ? In this war parents have given up with well-nigh divine self-sacrifice their only sons, but deep down in their hearts many of them question, Was it worth while to have them ? Ask them to have more sons and they gravely hesitate. It is

not that this war provides an exceptional reason. Long before it the same hesitancy existed. Mother love was there, physical capacity was not wanting, but—but—. In short, the deeper cause of the falling birth-rate is human experience.

But a mighty change is coming.

Seventeen years ago, as the new century came to birth, we wrote, "The new Spirit of the Age, which appeared in wondrous guise on the horizon at the watch of the centuries, is becoming articulate. It is evident to all who possess the historic vision that we are living in the twilight before the dawn. The rapid, ruthless progress, and verily bewildering discoveries and developments of the latter half of the nineteenth century, the opening up of virgin fields of reform and of untrodden and unsuspected paths of advance, are heralds of the approaching Kingdom of God."¹ But who amongst us then could have foreseen the present world convulsion?

Is it the herald of a new world or the trump of final doom?

For uncountable millenniums the physical world has been slowly prepared for the advent of man; the changes which have taken place in the evolution of living things came about, we believed, mainly by gradual processes of natural selection, by the accumulation of infinitesimal variations, which have given the plant or animal

¹ See the "Master Problem."

a slightly better chance in the race of life. But, we now know, Nature has frequently taken giant strides, there have been sudden outbursts, an unexpected flowering of life and new forms have come into being within a generation. Something like that is surely now taking place in our international life. The world has been going on, spinning down the grooves of change without breakdown or abrupt check, spreading her improvements over centuries, keeping alive the species and letting the individual die after it has served the larger life. But now vaster changes are taking place. Within a century we have made greater advances in science and in the arts of industry than in the preceding thousand years. The changing of the centuries was verily the dividing line between the old world and the new, now in its birth-throes. To-day, we are witnessing the greatest upheaval which has happened in the history of our world.

In the old worlds of Egypt, Greece, Rome, at the time of their decay, there may well have been those who not only marked the signs of degeneracy, but who also prophesied the coming of another age and another civilisation, as we to-day are doing. And there were no doubt those who ridiculed them. But the old world died, and civilisation found a new home in the West. After twenty centuries another catastrophe is upon us. Our civilisation is on trial. What new order will

emerge from this conflict? That it will be a better social order, that the world is to assume a new form and produce a nobler type of humanity to rule the earth, is our steadfast faith.

We have long enough tinkered with the ghastly effects we call poverty, crime, and prostitution, made more revolting by contrast with the lavish luxury on every side. We must arrest our cut-throat competition, the break-up of family life, the deterioration of the moral and physical stamina of the people in sordid surroundings, evils which destroyed the Hellenic race and other ancient civilisations.

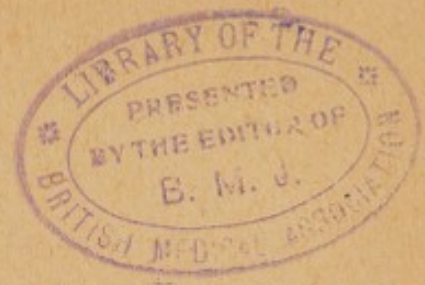
This war is designed, we cannot but believe, to bring all that to an end. It is, perhaps, the last deadly battle with the forces of evil for many centuries. After this we shall commence to reconstruct our own Empire upon the principles of true brotherhood, of the spirit of self-sacrifice, which is being so finely exhibited amongst us and which is so full of promise for the better day coming, when society will more and more check the brutal and sordid forms of the struggle for existence and give a chance to every life born to fulfil its highest purposes, then the will to live will be renewed.

After the war we must put both hands to the greatest task of reconstruction which has ever confronted our or any other country. The material loss is to a considerable extent measurable

and may in time be made good ; it is at any rate not the most serious aspect of the problem of renewal. The supreme task is to reconstruct our ideals, our ways of life, our religious beliefs ; the whole religious, moral, and social fabric has to be placed upon better and stronger foundations. And at the centre of the problem is the question of refilling the vacant cradles at home, of fully caring for the children we have in our homes and schools that they may become healthy parents of a future generation, of adequately peopling our Colonies—in short, of renewing the race. Some of the work of race-renewal we men may be able to handle alone, although the advent of women into practically every part of the nation's operations will impose further limits upon the area of man's exclusive occupations. But in the problem of restoring the birth-rate to a healthier level, involving the establishment of a national system of education worthy of our land, in cleaning out our slums and building homes, in restoring religion to its rightful place in our lives, we shall need the whole-hearted co-operation of women. If we are to handle the birth-rate question with any real hope of solution, men and women must frankly unite in making the colossal effort.

This awful war itself, in which much of our false and wicked civilisation, so called, is being burnt up, looks like a clear proof that we had missed the way of life and had gone far along the road of

dissolution. But the truer view is that we may yet save the Empire and our souls as well. This holocaust of suffering, this letting loose of the powers of hell, may be at the bottom a work of mercy. The blood which is being spilt upon the earth, watered by the tears of millions of women and children, is the seed of a newer and better civilisation for our Empire and the whole earth. The Eastern sky is already aglow with the flushes of the new-born day ; is it the life-blood of the men who have been slain for its redemption that is crimsoning the horizon ?



CHAPTER II

THE RISE AND FALL OF LIFE

THE phenomenon of the rise and fall of the birth-rates and death-rates arrests prolonged and inquiring attention as we read the story of the growth and decline of nations. Dr. Brownlee, statistician to the Medical Research Committee under the Insurance Act, in his evidence before the National Birth-rate Commission, propounded the novel hypothesis that the birth-rate was a periodic phenomenon. He was for some years the medical officer of the Glasgow Fever Hospital and there studied the problem of the periodicity of fever outbreaks, which is now generally admitted. What seems to happen in epidemiology is that there is a period during which energy is being stored up by disease-organisms and this is liberated at certain regulated intervals. Then, until the organisms replenish their energy, there are no further outbursts of the disease. If this analogy is applied to the birth-rate, it follows that during certain times racial energy is stored up and that in energetic periods it is

liberated. This appears to be shown both as regards the production of great men and the production of numbers of the people; and the periods between are times of rest when energy is being regathered for another outburst. Taking the heart as an analogy, there is a heart-beat which dies away, then a period of rest, during which energy is stored up, and with its liberation the next heart-beat occurs. That is to say, if we have rightly understood Dr. Brownlee's surmise, so far as the rise and fall of life are concerned, there has been and is an internal rhythm which has been punctuated at long intervals by external periodicities.

I

Without expressing any definite opinion upon this suggestive and picturesque theory, which may or may not be founded on historical facts, it will be more useful to turn to the concrete figures, and first to the birth-rates of some of the principal countries of the world. Taking the crude figures the highest birth-rate is in Russia with 44·0 per thousand of her population, next Roumania with 43·4, then a big drop occurs until we reach Italy with 32·4, and Austria 31·3. A shorter fall brings us to Australia with 27·3, only a little above Germany's 28·6. New Zealand follows with a further decline to 26·5, Norway 25·4, Belgium 22·9, the United Kingdom 20·9, and

France at the bottom with 19·0. The greatest difference, 25·0, is between Russia and France, which is more than the total birth-rate of the United Kingdom. Almost the exact mean is Austria, with 31·3.

It is one of the stock arguments of Neo-Malthusians that the more backward nations have a considerably higher birth-rate than the more advanced. According to this dangerous scale of distinctions, the order of progress, whatever that may imply, would read : France, United Kingdom, Belgium, Norway, New Zealand, Germany, Australia, Austria, Italy, Roumania, and at the bottom Russia—a result which might have been attained by drawing the names blindfolded from a bag. It is obvious that a comparison between great nations—with their different migrations, mixed types, climatic conditions, ages, and political, social, and religious developments, and ten thousand other vital distinctions—based upon the differences of birth-rates is too fanciful to become a guide to us in keeping our birth-rate low.

These figures are also susceptible of a like treatment which is used to bolster up the theory that only a low birth-rate is consonant with a high degree of intellectual superiority and commercial prosperity. Let us put the death-rates beside the birth-rates of these same countries and in the same descending order of backwardness; and to complete the table add the net rate of

increase in each country, which indeed gives a significant result.

	Birth-rate Death-rate		Net rate of increase.
	per 1,000 of population.		
France ¹	19.0	17.5	1.5
United Kingdom (1916)...	20.9	14.4 ²	6.5
Belgium	22.9	16.4	6.5
Norway	25.4	13.4	12.0
New Zealand	26.5	8.9	17.6
Union of South Africa (1915)	28.4	—	—
Germany	28.6	17.3	11.3
Australia	28.7	11.2	17.5
Austria	31.3	20.5	10.8
Italy	32.4	18.2	14.2
Roumania	43.4	22.9	20.5
Russia	44.0	28.9	15.1

Dean Inge, in a noteworthy article,³ in commenting upon these figures, says: "It will be seen that Australia and New Zealand, with low birth-rates and the lowest death-rates in the world, increase more rapidly than Russia, with an enormous birth-rate and proportionately high death-rate. No one can doubt that our Colonies achieve their increase with far less friction and misery than the prolific but short-lived Slavs. Civilisation in a high form is incompatible with such conditions as these figures disclose in Russia." This refer-

¹ This was the last census year. There was a slight improvement in 1912; the births reached 750,651 and deaths 692,740. But in 1914 they fell to 594,222 births and 647,549 deaths for 77 departments, excluding those wholly or partly in German occupation. (See 77th Annual Report of Registrar-General.)

² Excluding deaths abroad of men at the war.

³ *Edinburgh Review*, January, 1917.

ence to Russia is a striking illustration of the pitfalls awaiting those who have the temerity to make sweeping comparisons between races and nations. There are innumerable signs that we are about to witness a wonderful industrial and cultural development amongst the despised Slavs.

It is certainly and happily true that our Colonies are at the top of the scale with the lowest death-rates, but France had a death-rate in 1914 which exceeded her birth-rate and was consequently at the bottom of the scale in natural increase. "Civilisation in a high form is incompatible with such conditions as these figures disclose in Russia," says the Dean. France is, therefore—. But it is futile to pursue an argument which lands you in conclusions which are as complex and debatable as any contentious problem it is possible to enunciate; and it is going too far to ask us to regard such conclusions almost as principles which should guide our conduct in deciding whether we should have large or small families. The Dean himself later on pointedly remarks (did he see its application to his previous contentions?) that "the German complains that the Poles, whom he considers an inferior race, breed like rabbits, while the gifted exponents of *Kultur* only breed like hares"!

The Dean further presents us with the pistol argument in its most threatening form. "The

choice," he writes, "is between a high birth-rate combined with a high death-rate and a low birth-rate with a low death-rate." That is a sweet morsel for the more robust Neo-Malthusians. But as we shall see, the Dean frankly throws up the case in the end by declaring that for the next fifty years we should go on breeding as we are doing now, perhaps more rapidly, in order to people our Colonies. After that we can put a check upon our fertility. Now we fail to see the inevitableness of this much-lauded correlation between a high birth-rate and a high death-rate. But given our increasingly improved environment, we should surely expect, and, unless there is actually race exhaustion, which no improvement of environment could alter, we should obtain a higher birth-rate and a lower death-rate. And why should not that be a better result than a high birth-rate and a high death-rate or a low birth-rate and a low death-rate? The Dean's alternatives are not exhaustive, and we contend that the third alternative which we have indicated is more to be desired, and, after the present great loss of life in the world, more likely to be the result attained in the future, because, to quote the language of the Dean used in another connection, "the next fifty years will decide for all time whether these magnificent and still empty countries (our Colonies) are to be the home of great nations

speaking our language, carrying our institutions and valuing our traditions."

But Dean Inge seems to suggest a fourth alternative. It is whether we should not aim at establishing a fine equilibrium between life and death; that every receding wave of life should give place to an incoming one, which, however, should only flow a little higher up the beach, so that, on the one hand, the breakwaters which Society has reared against over-population should not be swept away, or, on the other, that the ocean of life should not recede and leave the sands dry and lifeless. No doubt he would hold that there ought to be a slight margin of safety to provide against war or famine or other disaster; some "small populationists" think that a 5 per cent. or at most a 7 per cent. margin would suffice, and then we should be in a position, with our intensive culture, our multiplying means of importation, our healthier conditions of existence and higher wages, to inaugurate a kind of golden age when the lion would lie down with the lamb, and parasites would live on themselves, and labour would cease from quarrelling with capital for evermore.

That is the risky bargain which France intentionally or unintentionally has made between life and death. And with what result? In 1800-1812 France overran Europe; in 1870 she surrendered to the German hosts, and to-day, had it not

been for her alliances and our observing our plighted word to Belgium, this present war would have had most fatal consequences in the destruction of her independent civilisation—an irreparable tragedy for humanity. It is highly probable that had France maintained her birth-rate she would have been equal to meeting Germany without our assistance. If the Neo-Malthusian propaganda succeeded in inducing us to strike a similar equilibrium to compete with France for fewer cradles and more coffins, we should be in great danger ultimately of losing our Colonies. That risk, even were we to plaster across the skies treaties of mutual agreements, written with the mingled blood of the nations, would be too grave for any generation in any country to take. And that apart altogether from the numerous other arguments which go to show that this alleged ideal state of equilibrium might not result in all the holiday blessings portrayed, even if we were ruled by a benevolent despotic socialism and there were no sour grapes in the land.

The bargain, too, leaves out of account a number of serious considerations, such as the results upon motherhood, which we fear may be grave, of the attempt partially to sterilise it, and the regulation of the number of children born to this section of society or that, for it is obvious that it would not do to let democracy finally

oust a self-sterilised aristocracy, or for Roman Catholics, who advocate the largest birth-rate possible, to supplant Protestantism which at present does not trouble its head too much about the ethics or results of restriction. Indeed, when we come to analyse the problem of producing a nicely balanced equilibrium between cradles and coffins, and to follow up some of its refinements and ramifications, it would appear to be a task we are less prepared to tackle than we were to meet the Germans on land. In short, an organised attempt to solve such a vast and complicated problem is impossible under present conditions or under any international or national circumstances likely to arise for another century. And if we tried to do so with the example of France before us, we should be deliberately courting disaster for ourselves and for posterity.

II

It will be useful, before we deal with the latest death-rate returns and our estimate of the probable loss of life largely from preventable causes during the last forty years, to examine the Malthusianism of Mr. Havelock Ellis, who is the foremost champion, not excepting the eminent Dean, of a low birth-rate.

The position of Mr. Havelock Ellis, in face of the falling birth-rate and the appalling loss of life on the battlefields, and our empty Colonies

which the war has further depleted of their manhood, is at times difficult to understand. He starts out with the *a priori* conviction that a low birth-rate is the intention of Providence and the sign manual of highest civilisation; and wherever he finds a high birth-rate he attributes all poverty and almost all ills to it. A low birth-rate seems to be his magic remedy for the salvation of humanity. It is clear from his writings that he believes he has found a theory as sound as the theory of natural selection which fits all the problems of poverty, war, disease, infantile mortality, trade organisations, strikes, the riches of capitalists and the poverty of the poor. Let us, in the first place, look at some of his points of view. He seems to believe that our period of expansion is over and Germany's is still taking place. He seems to ignore, in the volume¹ before us, the subject of peopling our vast Colonies, which will hold many more millions and which we are morally bound to populate or abandon to other nations who want more room for growth. He is the littlest of "little Englanders," and his eyes seem fixed upon the well-being of certain sections of society at home. But our period of commercial and territorial expansion is by no means over; indeed, whilst Mr. Ellis was writing his essays we were adding still further millions of acres to

¹ "Essays in War-Time."

our Dominions. And Dean Inge with characteristic candour has been compelled, as we have said, to admit that for another fifty years we must maintain our birth-rate because he sees that this is an expanding Empire and not a shrinking nation.

Further, Mr. Ellis constantly asserts that "Social progress and a higher civilisation involve a reduced birth-rate" and "the fact that civilisation involves small families is clearly shown by the tendency of the educated and upper social class to have small families," and as "the proletariat class" becomes "as it were aristocratised it also has small families." All of which is his prejudiced *a priori* assumption. What kind of civilisation involves small families? And is civilisation synonymous with what he calls "upper classes"—their habits, fashions, politics, social standards, etc.? Mr. Ellis should know quite well that he is talking class nonsense when he sets the small families of portions of our population at the apex of civilisation and asks democracy generally to become aristocratised by using the cradle for firewood. The reduced birth-rate amongst his "upper classes" was not a sign of their higher civilisation, but, in many cases, amongst other undesirable things, of an enfeebled sense of duty and of their squandering their health and wealth in rounds of nerve-racking and ephemeral pleasures,—at least before the war.

Mr. Ellis is not satisfied with claiming that, *a priori*, a falling birth-rate is the sovereign remedy for our ills, that it is the mark of superior education and of belonging to the upper strata, but he also claims that Nature, sometimes he says that God, is on his side. "Small families and a falling birth-rate are not merely no evil, they are a positive good. They are a gain for humanity. They represent an evolutionary rise in Nature, and a higher stage of civilisation." And again: "Civilisational progress is here in a line with biological progress. The lower organisms spawn their progeny in thousands, the higher mammals produce one or two at a time. The higher the race the fewer the offspring." But why did he not have the courage to complete his argument? With great respect to Mr. Ellis's judgment,—if the appeal to individual cases is allowable,—many amongst us have produced large families who are excellent types of a higher civilisation. And elsewhere he further exalts his momentous discovery, "With whatever hesitation, Nature finally decided, once and for all, that it was better, from every point of view, to produce a few superior beings than a vast number of inferior beings." Now as a matter of fact did she *decide* anything of the kind? It is a statement which requires proof. His immediate reference, however, is to herrings (an illustration which much pleases him, since he repeats it

again and again), of which a single female had 70,000 eggs. But he leaves no doubt that the application is to the proletariat class with large families who are the human counterpart to the herring which "possesses a very small brain and is almost totally unequipped to grapple with the special difficulties of its life." The counterpart to his aristocracy he has not discovered in the sea, but he seems to suggest it may be the elephant—"a single elephant is carried for about two years in his mother's womb, and is carefully guarded by her for many years after birth; he possesses a large brain; his muscular system is as remarkable for its delicacy as for its power and is guided by the most sensitive perceptions. He is fully equipped for all the dangers of his life, . . . and though a single pair of elephants produces so few offspring, yet their high cost is justified." Could we ask for a more complete and telling description of Mr. Ellis's "superior class" which Nature has produced after millions of ages of travail—"large brained," "remarkably delicate muscular system," "most fully equipped," produced at a "high cost"; the only difference being decidedly in favour of the elephant "who is carried for about two years in his mother's womb." There clearly the elephant has the better of these pseudo-aristocrats.

Mr. Ellis draws a vivid picture of some of the worst conditions in Russia, where ignorance,

superstition, insanitation, filth, bad food, impure water abound; where workers sleep on shelves above the machinery, regardless of sex. "Here is the goal of unrestricted reproduction," he exclaims, "the same among men as among herrings. This is the ideal of those persons, whether they know it or not, who in their criminal rashness would dare to arrest that fall in the birth-rate, which is now beginning to spread its beneficent influence in every civilised land." Criminal rashness!

Mr. Ellis therefore proposes to help Nature by deliberate birth control, because she has somehow bungled the human end of her immense travail and allowed so many "inferior" stocks to be brought forth at the same cost of labour and time as the aristocrats. The "blind operations of Nature," the "absence of conscious and deliberate volition," is to be assisted by what he describes as "an Art," and he calls in Shakespeare to bless it:

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

And he still further glorifies his newly discovered "Art." "The deliberate co-operation of Man in the natural task of birth-control represents an identification of the human will with what we may, if we choose, regard as the divinely appointed law of the world." "We can well believe"—he

risers even to loftier heights in his praise of "the Art"—"that the great pioneers who, a century ago, acted in the spirit of this faith may have echoed the thought of Kepler when, on discovering his great planetary law, he exclaimed in rapture: 'O God! I think Thy thoughts after Thee.'"

This is the prelude, good reader, to a discourse upon the use of the unmentionable goods popularised by the late Mr. Charles Bradlaugh and exposed for sale in the windows of those disgusting shops which are scattered in certain quarters of our great city! It has, he further writes, "silenced those who would waste our time with their fears lest it is not right to control conception. We know now on whose side are the laws of God and Nature." And again, "There are still a few persons ignorant enough or foolish enough"—that is how he writes of those who do not agree with him—"to fight against the advance of civilisation in this matter; we can well afford to leave them severely alone, knowing that in a few years all of them will have passed away."

Now all this cock-crowing is not to celebrate self-control, which is the most effective form of control, and which Mr. Ellis knows it has always been the great purpose of religion and morals to cultivate, but it is to advertise the virtues of a "new art," the use of mechanical or chemical appliances by which control from within may go to the dogs, if it will. Mr. Ellis should be aware that it is false to

allege that the goal of "unrestricted reproduction" resulting in the deplorable conditions of the worst Russian quarters is the ideal of those who do not like his new art. We have never advocated throwing the reins on the neck of blind passion. Self-control is daily exercised by millions of decent-minded men and women, and the laws of reproduction are being more and more recognised, and maternal hygiene, the proper intervals between births, tender solicitude for the wife and mother, are part and parcel of family life in a multitude of homes where his indelicate art is not welcome. Birth control is not a discovery of Mr. Ellis and his Malthusian League. What they have, or pretend to have, discovered are some material contraceptive devices which may actually promote uncontrolled passions and which in practice may turn women into mere vessels of convenience. That is, in the last analysis, the sum and substance of their practical contribution to the birth-rate problem.

Mr. Ellis reminds us that lowly forms of life are reproduced in abundance, apparently to his regret. "A single infusoria becomes in a week the ancestor of millions; that is to say, of far more individuals than could proceed under the most favourable conditions from a pair of elephants in five centuries." "Among herrings"—it is, good reader, the same catch—"nearly 70,000 eggs have been found in a

single female." Huxley, he avers, calculated that "the progeny of a single parthenogenetic aphid would in a few months outweigh the whole of China." We could give Mr. Ellis a long list of these picturesque illustrations.¹ Wallace showed that a British weed, *Sisymbrium sophia*, has nearly a million seeds which in three years, if they all matured, would more than cover the dry land of the earth. "A bacillus less than 1/5000th of an inch in length multiplies under normal conditions at a rate that would cause the offspring of a single individual to fill the ocean to the depth of a mile in five days." Dr. R. C. Macfie says the cholera bacillus can duplicate every twenty minutes and might in one day become 5,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 with the weight, according to the calculations of Cohn, of about 7,366 tons. In a few days, at this rate, there would be a mass of bacteria as big as the moon, huge enough to fill the whole ocean. And Darwin calculated that the elephant, this slowest breeder among mammals, is supposed to rear one young one in every ten years, but, as it lives to more than a hundred, Darwin says that "in 750 years each pair would, if all their offspring lived and bred, be the ancestor of nineteen millions." A cod has two million eggs, and if these "all developed into cods there

¹ See "Darwinism and Human Life," by Prof. J. Arthur Thomson, LL.D. (Melrose, London.)

would soon be no more fishing," an illustration which Mr. Ellis might vary with his herring. An oyster may have sixty million eggs, and the average American yield is 16,000,000. If all the progeny of one oyster survived and multiplied, its great-great-grandchildren would number sixty-six with thirty-three noughts after it, and the heap of shells would be eight times the size of the world.

We could fill pages with similar arithmetical illustrations of the possible prodigality of life, but we should exhaust the printer's founts of "ifs." But we fail to see their use to Mr. Ellis in advocating the employment of mechanical means. In many cases man has by domestication and cultivation interfered with Nature to his own advantage, and he has paid for it, but he has likewise sometimes made things worse.¹ But the practice of deliberate birth control amongst these lower forms of life by man does not encourage us to trust him with experimenting upon human beings, more especially when he goes to the herring and the elephant for his illustrations. The plain fact is that there is no reliable analogy between these other forms of life and man. According to the ordinary biological standards of comparison we may say that the herring is inferior to an elephant; but it is certainly superior for breakfast.

¹ See "The Study of Animal Life," 1917 Ed., by Prof. J. Arthur Thomson, pp. 16 & 27.

The oyster is not so companionable as the dog, but the pearl merchant would be disposed to dispute its inferiority. When, however, you reach man the whole argument demands many and great qualifications. Are there such vital and inherent differences as these words "inferior" and "superior" imply in the mouths of these advocates of contraceptives? The poor babe born of the anxious overworked mother in slumdom is not inferior as the herring is to the elephant. That babe and mother, given the proper environment which they have a right to expect from this Christian nation, would be as superior as most of us. The evidence given before the Committee on Physical Deterioration showed that "in no single case has it ever been asserted that babies ill-nourished or unhealthy at the time of birth are more frequent among the poor than among the rich. The poorest and most ill-nourished women bring forth as hale and strong-looking babies as those in the very best conditions. In fact, it almost appears as though the unborn child fights strenuously for its own health at the expense of the mother and arrives in the world with a full chance of living a normal physical existence." And this testimony has been frequently supported by doctors practising in our great industrial centres as well as in the slums. It is not that the children are conceived in iniquity but they are damaged from the beginning by

criminal neglect. Sir George Newman says that "it would be difficult to over-estimate the volume of National inefficiency, of unfitness and suffering, of unnecessary expenditure, and of industrial unrest and unemployability to which this country consents because of its relative failure to rear and to educate a healthy, virile and well equipped race of children." Two years ago he startled the country by stating that on a moderate estimate there were a million children of school age but not in school who were so physically diseased or defective as to be unable to derive reasonable benefit from the education which the State provides. And in his latest report he repeats that the figures are an "underestimate of the existing condition of things to-day."¹

There is, it need hardly be said, a sane and broad-minded eugenics of which Dr. Saleeby is one of the most brilliant advocates, but it is not the eugenics of Mr. Havelock Ellis and the Malthusian League.

III

We can now look at the birth-rate returns and our estimate of the amount of life which has been lost during the past forty years.

The death-rate² returns will be considerably

¹ Annual Report for 1916 of the Chief Medical Officer of the Board of Education. Cd. 8746.

² Dr. Brownlee called my attention to the interesting phenomenon that we die in a geometrical progression. The death-rate

influenced by the war, but they are not yet available. One result has, however, appeared. The men who have gone to the Army were selected lives, and the death-rate amongst those left has, says the Registrar-General, "necessarily been higher than would have been recorded for the total male population of those ages." There is, therefore, some deterioration in the quality of the population; and there will be a serious deficiency of both quantity and quality when the balance-sheet of this ghastly war is struck.¹ The death-rate returns for 1915 show that there have been 553,476 civilian deaths, which corresponds to a rate of 15·7 per 1,000 of the estimated civil population. When standardised to correct for the deviation of the sex and age distribution of the civil population from that of the standard population of 1901 this rate is reduced to 14·6. The lowest standardised death-rate of the nineteenth century was 16·4 in 1894; for 1861–70 it was 21·3, and 1891–95, 18·5, and from that time the fall has been continuous. The male death-rate regularly exceeds that of females, and since 1860 this excess has greatly increased. Up to 1860 or so the

in England for males shows 18 per 1,000 at the age of 55; 36 at 65; 72 at 75; 144 at 85, and 280 at 95, doubling every ten years.

¹ But the latest returns happily show that our losses in this war are, so far, less than those of any other important country; and that in 1916, the excess of births over deaths registered in England and Wales was 277,303. The war deaths among our troops abroad is less than that figure. Of course they may not be the same for 1917.

excess of male over female deaths was only about 9 per cent., but for the last fifteen years it has averaged about 20 per cent. In 1915, on account of the deterioration in quality of a section of the male population, the excess has risen to 25 per cent. Again, between 1841-1845 and 1911-15 the standardised mortality of females has fallen by 36.9 per cent., while the fall in that of males has been only 29.6 per cent.

The ratios of male per cent. of female mortality at the various age-periods during the years 1911-1914 and 1915 are as follows :—

	All Ages (standard- ised).	0-	5-	10-	15-	20-	25-	35-	45-	55-	65-	75-	85
1911-14	122	120	102	95	109	119	121	125	130	132	125	117	111
1915	125	122	101	100	129	182	152	134	126	126	126	114	108

At all ages affected by military service, particularly from 20 to 35, they are abnormal. The deaths concerned, it may be repeated, are those of civilians only, and "the abnormal male mortality at military age is therefore quite independent of casualties." This is shown again when the total figures are taken.¹

IV

As we are considering the rise and fall of life, it is appropriate here to bring some of the figures given in this and other chapters together, so

¹ See table, page 38.

that the eye and the mind may take in the grand totals at a glance.

First, as regards the loss of life as revealed in the falling birth-rate. Dr. Amand Routh, consulting obstetric physician to Charing Cross Hospital, sends me the following particulars :—

“ It is estimated, and the estimate has been adopted by Dr. Newsholme, the Medical Officer to the Local Government Board, that in the forty weeks of antenatal life 150 infants die out of every 1,000. This foetal death-rate includes an estimated death-rate per 1,000 births of 30 still-births, and 120 deaths in the earlier months of pregnancy, and represented a loss of 138,249 lives last year (1914) in England and Wales.

“ During the first year after birth, the loss of infant lives among the survivors of the initial antenatal loss is about 100 to every 1,000 births. This double loss means that 250 infants out of every 1,000 births, or one-fourth die before they reach one year of age. In 1914, 879,096 children were born in England and Wales, and the deaths of infants during their first year of life were 91,971,¹ equal to a death-rate of 105 per 1,000 births. A third cause of fewer children being born is the reduced birth-rate which now obtains. We are told in a report by the Medical Officer of the Local Government Board that if the birth-rate in England and Wales had been the

¹ Corrected figures.

ENGLAND AND WALES: MORTALITY FROM ALL CAUSES PER MILLION POPULATION.

1906-10, 1911-1914 and 1915.

	Males.			Females.			Persons.		
	1906-10	1911-14	1915 (civilians only.)	1906-10	1911-14	1915	1906-10	1911-14	1915 (civilians only.)
Crude	15,636	14,870	17,732	13,809	13,041	13,936	14,692	13,926	15,653
Standardised	15,806	14,951	16,311	13,218	12,318	13,063	14,431	13,556	14,597

same now as in 1876, 467,837 more infants would have been born in 1914. The following table shows the net result of these three causes in 1914 :—

Fœtal deaths in antenatal period ...	138,249
Infantile deaths during first year of life	91,971
<hr/>	
Total deaths up to age of one year...	230,220
Fewer births owing to reduced birth-rate	467,837
<hr/>	
Total loss to England and Wales in 1914	698,057
<hr/>	

“The number of children who have survived their first year by this depletion by death in 1914 is 787,125,¹ so it is evident how great the loss is, both relatively and actually, in England and Wales alone.”

Now we have extended the above calculations, and, taking as our standard the position of 1877, which is the point when the decline began, we calculated that we are short, owing to the reduction in birth-rate alone, in less than forty years, of 8,573,223 lives.²

That is the potential loss. We must add to them other losses to arrive nearer the truth. Of these 8½ millions, let us say that one-third reached marriageable age, and married, and that their families consisted of two children, and of those children we allowed for one in seven dying soon after birth, then we have left about 2,500,000

¹ Corrected figures.

² I am indebted to Dr. T. H. C. Stevenson for a detailed table showing this loss year by year from 1877 to 1915.

children to add to the above. Consequently, the direct and indirect loss in forty years may been about 11,000,000¹ lives on the falling birth-rate account. And this loss multiplies itself generation after generation. What mind can grasp the extent of the loss of life, loss of wealth,—for every normal life adds to the capital of the nation—loss to society, to commerce, to literature, to God, represented by these appalling figures ?

But this account is by no means complete. These figures represent the number according to birth-rate returns. To these must be added the number who died in infancy—the infantile mortality total. We have seen that this amounted to 91,971 in 1914. After allowing for many inevitable deaths, an estimate on that basis shows that the loss by infant mortality for forty years would be about 3,000,000.

Not yet is the account complete. To these results must be added the number of foetal deaths. These, as we have said, were not until last year compulsorily notified throughout the country, and we must fall back upon carefully prepared estimates from the boroughs, etc., which had

¹ The figures are of course only approximate ; they probably are an under-estimate of the truth. Mr. Whetham, who cannot be accused of favouring the position which we adopt in this book, who is indeed the leading class-eugenist, admits that "it is now certain that at least half the children who would be likely to prove the most valuable citizens, and best worth educating, are annually withheld from the community."

organised registration under the Local Government Board, and upon the experiences of doctors. Dr. Amand Routh shows for 1914 that foetal deaths amounted to 138,249. And there is every reason to believe that that loss has been going on year after year. If so, the number of foetal deaths for forty years is somewhere about 5,500,000.

Let us put the figures together thus :—

Direct and indirect loss by declining birth-rate,					
say	...	...	...	...	11,000,000
Loss by infant mortality	...	...	...	...	3,000,000
Loss by foetal deaths	...	...	...	...	5,500,000
Total loss in forty years					19,500,000

It may be true that many of them, if we had had them, would have been sources of weakness, a result probably of their environment, but many more would have been splendid citizens.

After making full allowance for the inevitable infantile and foetal deaths the total is still appalling and to it must be added the immediate loss on land and sea of hundreds of thousands of selected lives of our brave men, a loss which, if we could reckon it, would amount in a century or two to unimaginable proportions. And our vast Colonies are nearly empty !

V

There is another consideration which opens up profoundly interesting and at present only partially answered questions, namely, the re-

spective numbers born and surviving of the sexes. Numerous theories have appeared in the course of the last two centuries both as to the racial-physiological causes determining sex and the distribution of sex in various countries. On the latter point the statistics which are available vary from the generally accurate returns of our own country and colonies, the United States of America, and several European countries to those of Eastern lands, which are generally untrustworthy. The statistics cover two points, (1) the number of boys born compared to girls, (2) their subsequent survival and geographical distribution. On the first point it may be accepted as true in both hemispheres that more boys are born than girls. Let us notice the facts, before discussing theories to account for them. In Western countries Greece heads the list with 879 girls to every 1,000 boys, and Portugal is second with 899. Some other countries may be given in the descending order as before. Roumania, 902 girls to 1,000 boys; Bulgaria, 927; Spain, 938; Galicia, 941; Norway, 944; Serbia, 945; Ireland and Sweden, 946; Austria and Italy, 947; Finland and European Russia, 948; Hungary, 949; Denmark and Holland, Germany and Australia, 950; Scotland and Belgium, 956; France, 960, and England at the bottom with 966; the difference between the first and last being 121 more boys per 1,000

girls in Greece and in England only 34. Or to take the comparison we are most interested in during the war, whereas Germany has 50 and Austria 53 more boys than girls (per 1,000), France has 40 and England 34. And Australia and New Zealand are level with Germany. It appears also that the numbers of boys born in England and France are lower than in any other country, and fell to 1,032 to 1,000 girls in the March quarter of 1915,¹ which was the lowest ratio recorded since registration began. The total number born in 1915 was 415,205 males and 399,409 females.

But here an interesting phenomenon must be noted. It has been frequently stated that during a war there has been a temporary increase in male births. The Registrar-General has discovered that this is now taking place. He says: "At the time of writing the ratios (between male and female births, the latter being reckoned at 1,000) for the four quarters of 1916 are known to be 1,050, 1,051, 1,045 and 1,050 respectively, whilst for the year extending from 1st July, 1915, to 30th June, 1916, that is, for the first complete year during which the births registered have been fully affected by war conditions, the ratio is 1,047, a figure considerably above any recorded during the preceding fifty years and within measurable distance of the general

¹ 1898 was the same.

European ratio, which for many years has been much in excess of our own."

What may be the natural causes of this increased excess of male births over female during war times is difficult to determine; of course war marriages, of which we have had a great number, increase the general rate. But over and above the relative proportion caused by the increased war marriage-rate there has appeared to be an increase of males after all wars. Speaking in our human way, it looks like the conscious and deliberate effort of Nature to repair the waste and damage done to manhood by war, the answer of life to death.¹

The latest returns show that the mortality amongst boys during the most critical periods of infancy is greater than amongst girls.

PROPORTION OF DEATHS TO 1,000 BIRTHS (1915).

ALL INFANTS.						
	Under 1 mth.	1-3 mths.	3-6 mths.	6-9 mths.	9-12 mths.	Total under 1 year.
All	M. 43.16	21.74	21.24	19.16	17.56	122.86
causes	F. 32.40	16.18	16.88	15.24	15.36	96.06

During the second and fourth years more girls die than boys, and by five a numerical equilibrium is reached, but between twelve and sixteen boys outnumber girls. Then the youth

¹ Düsing has developed the idea of the self-regulation of the proportions of the sexes. See "Evolution of Sex," 1901, p. 41.

leaves the shelter of the home and goes out into the world and encounters liabilities of disease and accident and physical and commercial stress and failure, and numbers emigrate; the young woman too faces the risks of marriage and the general accidents of life, but these leave her physically better off in the long run than men, and in the later periods of life there are more women than men; their survival expectation is greater.

In another chapter we shall also see that in certain Eastern countries more boys were born than girls, and at survival age they also had more men than women. To repeat the comparison before adopted between Germany—Austria and England—France, we find that Germany, which had per thousand births 50 more boys than girls, had 29 more women at survival age than men; and Austria, starting with 53 more boys, had 42 more women at the survival age. England starts with 34 more boys and shows 69 more women surviving; whilst France starts with 40 boys in excess and has 33 more women surviving. Here France seems to be better off in the end and England worse off, but our greater emigration has to be allowed for.

Apart from theories of sex determination, what may be the cause or causes of this vital phenomenon? First, it seems doubtful, looking over the world and accepting our information

for what it is worth, whether there is a decided tendency for females to increase or males to decrease. It is not possible to obtain all the facts, especially from Eastern lands, and we have therefore no means of reliable comparison, but it is legitimate to infer, from the large sample of the world-population under review, that the conclusion that neither sex tends to swamp the other remains sound ; that is, for the world as a whole. For particular countries the facts give a different and more reliable result.

It may be useful to dwell upon the facts as to England and France. As to England, the emigration of males no doubt accounts for a large part of the difference between the sexes in middle life and old age ; and we have seen how that may be, in part, corrected—with incalculable benefit to the future of our Colonies and the Homeland—by a thoroughly well-organised national scheme of emigration of women of suitable physique and age who should be wisely distributed in our Colonies. This presents no insuperable difficulties whatsoever. We have only to put the whole matter into the hands of one Department of State where there is a Minister responsible to Parliament. There would be plenty of scope for invaluable voluntary aid in finding and caring for these migrants ; but their numbers and destinations should be regulated by representatives of the Colonial and Home

Governments and not left to chance or passage brokers.

There is also another aspect of the problem which can be largely remedied, namely, the shameful mortality which we have noticed amongst infant boys. This, of course, is part of the urgent and vital task of lowering general infant mortality. Those who want further details may be referred to the returns of the Registrar-General, to the illuminating reports during the last ten years of Sir Arthur Newsholme, and also to the reports of Sir George Newman on the health of our school children, which reveal a state of things that is an additional stain upon our national character. In another chapter we have analysed the latest reports and returns, and have indicated where the unfavourable environment exists in our industrial centres which kills a deplorable number of male infants, more than half of whom could be saved. But much more remains to be done. We must establish a comprehensive National Ministry of Health, a proposal which is already being taken up by the Government, thanks to Lord Rhondda. That Ministry must secure that the nation's mothers and children are efficiently cared for from the beginning to the end of life. Then we shall save the greater part of our boy babies and bring them up to manhood sound in body and mind. All these reforms are within our reach. It is not a far-off ideal which

cannot materialise in our time. It can become a veritable reality, beginning this year amidst this war and changing our records completely within a few generations. Of this possibility we have most encouraging proof in the fact that a reduction in infant mortality from about 150 to under 100 has occurred since 1900.

As to the causes which determine sex, we are still all at sea. Since Drelincourt in the eighteenth century enumerated 262 groundless hypotheses and added another himself there have been as many more speculations. Prof. J. A. Thomson lucidly set out the problem and the different ways of attacking it, and classified the five main theories in an excellent paper contributed to *Scientia* in 1912. It is not travelling far away from our purpose to state what these theories are.

“First theory : That environmental influences operating on the sexually undetermined offspring (after fertilisation) may at least have a share in determining the sex.

“Second theory : That the sex is undetermined until the germ-cells unite in fertilisation, when it is decided by their relative condition, or by a balancing of the tendencies they bear, neither sperm nor ovum being necessarily decisive.

“Third theory : That the sex is fixed at a very early stage by the constitution of the germ-cells as such, there being female-producing and male-

producing germ-cells, predetermined from the beginning and arising independently of environmental influence.

“Fourth theory: That maleness and femaleness are Mendelian characters.

“Fifth theory : That environmental and functional influences, operating through the parent's body, may alter the proportion of effective female-producing and male-producing germ-cells.”

Prof. J. A. Thomson adheres to the view stated by Prof. Patrick Geddes and himself in *The Evolution of Sex* (1899), and the balance of expert opinion so far as we have observed inclines in his favour. He says he is unable to get away from the conviction that there is no sex determinant or factor at all, in the morphological or in the Mendelian sense, but that what settles the sex is a metabolism rhythm, or a relation of nucleoplasm and cytoplasm, or a relation between anabolism and katabolism.¹ “That the sex difference is but one expression of a fundamental alternative in variation, to be seen throughout the world of life.”

Any other cause² of the actually decreasing

¹ The interpretation suggested by Profs. Geddes and Thomson has found experimental demonstration in Prof. Riddle's investigation of the sex-ratio in pigeons (*Journal Washington Academy of Science*, 1917). It is shown that eggs with relatively low metabolism and high storage capacity develop into female birds.

² Prof. Whetham (in “*Heredity and Society*,” pp. 74-5) is responsible for the statement that “it appears that there is a tendency for females to be born in the earlier years of married

number of boys born is somewhat obscure. We are not in a position to form an opinion whether or not there are other recondite racial causes at work which, at present, we cannot understand. The problem may be part of the one touched in another chapter, namely, whether there is race-weariness or race-exhaustion. If there is an enfeeblement of racial vitality it may possibly be that it would show itself in the direction of a disturbance of the male element in propagation, that racial failure would begin at the very core of life.¹ Or again, it may be questioned whether the artificial interference with conception has the effect of weakening the potency of the male element in sex, and as artificial restriction is the cause of the general decline in the birth-rate, it may also be the particular cause of the decline of the number of males born. We are here probing experimentally, and can only suggest what may be happening from such

life and for males in the later periods," and that "families limited to two or three children are inevitably slightly below the average quality to be expected from the parents." If this is true, it is, surely, a serious factor against restricting the birth-rate.

¹ Against the above suggestion it has been stated that in the case of pigeons the male parent appears to have nothing to do with the sex of offspring and the same may be true in mammals. And Prof. Whitman has shown that hybrids between two genera of pigeons, when not permitted to lay many eggs, produce mostly or only males; but when made to lay many eggs they produce males predominantly from their earlier stronger eggs, and predominantly or only females from the later eggs laid under stress of over-reproduction.

meagre data as we observe. Perhaps it is more legitimate to hold this latter opinion rather than to accept the assertion that the race is weakening, especially as the decline of the birth-rate not only coincides with the introduction of practices of restriction about which there is no doubt, but the actual decline in the proportion of boys born, apart from the general decline, also seems to be not unconnected with the beginning of these Neo-Malthusian interferences with conception. We do not wish to press the point unfairly, but the benefit of whatever doubt there is ought to be given to the race and we ought to go to the extent of adding that the uncertain psychical and physical effects of Neo-Malthusian practices upon the parents and, maybe, upon the unborn child are an additional reason why we should hesitate to accept Mr. Ellis's sovereign remedy of a low birth-rate which holds no promise of making good our grievous losses of manhood by the war, that we may maintain our position amongst the nations, and may people our Dominions beyond the seas.

CHAPTER III

THE INFLUENCE OF INDUSTRIALISM ON CHILD LIFE

OVER one quarter of the total deaths of all ages during the years 1911-14 occurred in the first five years of life: 2,036,466 persons died and 575,078 of them (28·2 per cent.) perished in infancy or earliest childhood. Of these premature deaths 384,950 occurred before the first birthday, that is, during the first year of life twice as many died as during the next four years.

What are the causes of this appalling loss of human life, of which, as will be shown later on, one half and more is thrown away. Let us keep close to the actual figures in dealing with the causes so that we may put our finger upon the immediate sources of danger and death. During the first year of life 34·1 per cent. die from Congenital Debility; between 0-5 years a total of 132,266 from this cause alone. Now what is meant by congenital debility? Sir A. Newsholme frankly says that a considerable share is congenital syphilis, that is, in origin, a

vice disease. This last year the nation has been aroused as never before to face this hitherto hidden plague, hidden by the heavy cloak of hypocrisy and prudery, masquerading as the reticence of modesty, which we cast over this ghastly epidemic because we were too cowardly to face it, or to let mothers and our young people know these terrible truths of our so-called civilised life. When Mrs. Josephine Butler and those who worked with her or followed in her footsteps spoke or wrote about this subject in earlier days they were denounced by almost the entire medical profession, and were literally hounded off platforms and shunned as ignorant fanatics.¹ Now, forsooth, that the nation has awakened to the fact that these diseases are slaying not only our young men, but our mothers and their babies, now that at long last the eyes of all our medical men have been opened and they are advocating the right remedy, the memory of Mrs. Butler and the early pioneers has been scarcely recalled. When Mrs. Butler was nearing her death she wrote to the present writer, "I must pass away and be forgotten." No, not forgotten by those who know the story of her noble fight against the C.D. Acts which the military upheld and under which syphilis became almost a protected disease; Acts which some of them still demand should be re-introduced.

¹ See "Reminiscences of a great Crusade," by Mrs. Butler.

Of the other leading causes of infantile death 18·4 per cent. are attributable to diarrhœal diseases, due to wrong and dirty food in summer-time. Bronchitis and pneumonia account for another 16·7 per cent., "both of them due to infection commonly favoured by uncleanness and by indiscretion in clothing or by foulness of the air of dwelling rooms." Approximately Sir Arthur Newsholme finds that between ages 0-1 four-fifths of the deaths are due to infection, and during 1-5, 23·9 were caused by measles and whooping cough, 5·0 per cent. by diarrhœal diseases, 12·6 per cent. by tuberculosis, and 20·3 by bronchitis and pneumonia. Of the 575,078 deaths, 304,334, or 52·9 per cent., were caused by six diseases which are largely controllable. The Report on Child Mortality in which these facts are recorded reveals losses and disasters to our country greater than any we have suffered on the field of battle; and it should be sent out freely by the Government to every adult person in the United Kingdom. In it Sir Arthur Newsholme deliberately declares that "In every area a very high proportion of the total present mortality can be obviated; and it is well within the range of administrative action to reduce child mortality within the next few years to one half of its present amount."

There is another source of waste of life largely

preventable about which the national statistics do not at present provide the data. We mean still-births. These became compulsorily notifiable, after the twenty-eighth week of pregnancy, as from 1st September, 1915. Sir A. Newsholme estimates that these would equal the total deaths in the first year after birth. And as we have seen, Dr. Routh estimates that about 140,000 children annually are born dead. And Dr. Saleeby informed us that still-births are very predominantly of males; before birth, as after, the male has less vitality. And one of the chief causes of still-births is again syphilis, which is more disastrous to child life than the tubercle. As regards the prevention of measles and whooping cough, except, says Sir A. Newsholme, for the recent efforts initiated by the Local Government Board, "*these two diseases represent an almost completely neglected field of work for the saving of child life.*" (Italics ours.) In short, diarrhoea is the most fatal of the individual acute diseases in the first year of life; measles in the second and third years; and diphtheria in the third year of life. In the third, fourth, and fifth years pneumonia and measles are about equal. And more than half of these diseases can be prevented. "Then why not," asked King Edward, when referring to one of them, "prevented"?

The latest returns of infant mortality deserve

special attention because they show its geographical distribution.

Table X. from the National Statistics shows how the infant mortality of 1915 was distributed between the sexes and throughout the country. For infants of both sexes jointly the rate varied from 131 in the county boroughs of the North to 78 in the rural districts of the South.

The fact, says the Registrar-General, that infant mortality is considerably higher under the conditions of town than of country¹ life is well known, and the rate for the rural districts is exceeded accordingly by 19 per cent. in the case of the smaller towns, and by 36 per cent. in that of the county boroughs, but only by 24 per cent. in the case of London. The comparatively small excess in London shows to what a large extent the adverse influence of urban surroundings on infant life may be avoided.

The geographical variation of the mortality dealt with by the table is remarkable, especially in view of its constancy from year to year. In each sex and in every class of area the English mortality was highest in the North and lowest in the South.

As to other effects of industrialism we shall deal with them later in this chapter, and the facts there given should be added to the above.

¹ The opposite is the case in some countries, e.g. Germany, especially South Germany.

TABLE X.—INFANT MORTALITY (DEATHS UNDER 1 YEAR PER 1,000 BIRTHS), 1915.

	Males.					Females.					Both Sexes.				
	North.	Midlands.	South.	Wales.	England and Wales.	North.	Midlands.	South.	Wales.	England and Wales.	North.	Midlands.	South.	Wales.	England and Wales.
London	—	—	125	—	125	—	—	100	—	100	—	—	112	—	112
County Boroughs ...	147	129	103	124	137	114	102	84	103	107	131	116	94	114	122
Other Urban Districts	135	114	97	136	121	106	86	78	104	93	120	100	87	120	107
Rural Districts ...	119	95	88	106	101	92	74	68	88	79	106	84	78	97	90
All areas	139	114	110	125	123	109	88	87	99	96	124	102	99	112	110

But it should be borne in mind that, to get back to the causes of these diseases of children, we have to take into account the factors of bad housing, insanitation, want of a sufficient supply of water, industrial employment of married women outside the home, contaminated food kept in foetid atmospheres, and maternal ignorance. On this latter point of maternal ignorance the Chief Medical Officer devotes a special section of his report. He says that maternal ignorance is sometimes regarded as a chief factor in the causation of excessive child mortality. "It is a comfortable doctrine for the well-to-do person to adopt; and it goes far to relieve his conscience in the contemplation of excessive suffering and mortality among the poor." "There is little reason to believe," he pointedly remarks, "that the average ignorance in matters of health of the working-class mothers is much greater than that of mothers in other classes of society." And he notes one vital advantage of the working-class mothers—they give their infants "the supremely important initial start of breast feeding in a larger proportion of cases than do the mothers in other stations of life."

There is no reason to assume that the one mother is more ignorant than the other. "But the ignorance of the working-class mother is dangerous because it is associated with relative

social helplessness. The one mother can pay the greatest attention to her personal hygiene, can command good nursing, milk kept under cleanly conditions, prompt and adequate medical assistance for herself and baby, freedom from chronic fatigue and illness by which mother and babe suffer together, and housing and sanitary conditions infinitely superior to the poor working mother in overcrowded tenements, who has to keep the home going single-handed, if not to go out to work herself, who is frequently in a dirty condition herself during the time when she is the sole environment of the child, and whose poverty makes her maternal ignorance perilous for herself and her children." Both are ignorant, but in the case of the richer mother ignorance is rendered more or less innocuous by skilled assistance.

The Women's Co-operative Guild inquiry amongst working women fully supports this view. The letters they received from working women show that many of the ills of themselves and their children resulted from their own ignorance of the functions and duties of motherhood. "Much of the suffering," says the Guild in view of the mass of letters before them, "entailed in maternity, much of the damage to the life and health of women and children, would be got rid of if married women had some knowledge of what lay before them, and if they could

obtain medical advice and supervision during the time of pregnancy and motherhood. It is not the women's fault that they are ignorant, for the possibilities of knowledge have not been within their reach." ¹

The waste of life resulting from all this is revealed in letter after letter. In one, a woman married at 19 had 11 children and 2 miscarriages, her husband earning 20s. a week; a second had 5 children and 1 miscarriage in 9 years; a third 5 children and 5 miscarriages in 12½ years. Out of 386 women who wrote to the Guild, 348 had 1,396 live children, 83 still-births and 218 miscarriages.

I

The immense importance of environment upon the causation of child mortality is strikingly shown by the elaborate statistical returns of 274 towns given by Sir A. Newsholme. We have space for only a few examples, but they will suffice to illustrate one of our leading points in this book. Taking the Metropolitan Boroughs, the lowest and highest death-rates per thousand births from all causes from age 0-1 are—Hampstead 74, Lewisham 82, Stoke Newington 83, Shoreditch 148, Finsbury 133, Bermondsey 131. If great towns are sampled they show Hornsey 67, Ilford 70, Bournemouth 77, Stoke-

¹ "Maternity," p. 7.

on-Trent 161, Wigan 159 and Burnley 172. Smaller towns give Woking 66, Beckenham, Tunbridge Wells, Finchley, Southgate 67 each, but Ashton-under-Lyne 169, Farnworth 168, Stalybridge 166. The aggregate rural districts 90, the aggregate great towns 122, aggregate small towns 113.

The second, third, fourth and fifth years of life tell the same story. In the second, Lewisham shows 17·9, Hampstead 21·2, Shoreditch 67·1, Finsbury 58·6, Ilford 14·4, Middlesbrough 70·6, Reading 14·9, St. Helens 69·2, Croydon 21·5, Oldham 54·5; in the third to the fifth years, Lewisham 19·8, Hampstead and Stoke Newington 20·1, Shoreditch 44·8, Finsbury 40·1, Bethnal Green 38·1 and so on. If the aggregate results for the first five years of life in the same groups are taken there is no variation.

LOWEST.			HIGHEST.		
Hampstead	...	112	Shoreditch	...	241
Lewisham	...	116	Finsbury	...	216
Stoke Newington	...	121	Bermondsey	...	201
Chelsea	...	128	Bethnal Green	...	201
Woolwich	...	128	Poplar	...	195
City of Westminster	...	131	Southwark	...	192
City of London...	...	135	Stepney...	...	191

Or take one or two samples of the greater and smaller towns for the same period—

LOWEST.			HIGHEST.		
Hornsey...	...	92	Burnley...	...	257
Ilford	...	96	Wigan	...	254
Bournemouth	...	109	Middlesbrough	...	251
Ealing	...	110	St. Helens	...	242
Southend-on-Sea	...	110	Barnsley	...	241
Hastings	...	111	Stoke-on-Trent	...	239

If the whole of the returns are considered the results are consistent throughout. The bad environment of congested areas of our industrial life is everywhere inimical to child life, and that which injures the child also damages the adolescent and the adult. Measles, bronchitis, pneumonia, whooping cough, are highest in the great towns, measles and whooping cough being in one large area three and a half times greater than in rural areas.

Lastly, amongst the causes of this wastage of child life must be placed alcohol. There is an almost complete correspondence over a long series of years between the annual curve¹ of infant mortality and of proceedings for drunkenness, and the consumption of beers and spirits. Sir Arthur Newsholme courageously says that there can be no hesitation in ascribing to this cause an important share in the causation of the excessive child mortality in such towns as Burnley, Wigan, Middlesbrough, Barnsley, Stoke-on-Trent, Liverpool and Preston. "If abstinence from alcoholic drinks could be enforced in these and many other towns in which child mortality is excessive their experience in this respect undoubtedly would rapidly improve."

¹ See Report of the Medical Officer of the Local Government Board, 1907-10 (Cd. 6909).

II

Other parts of the United Kingdom tell the same story. Of the fatal effects of bad environment Dr. Maxwell Williamson, Medical Officer of Health for Edinburgh, in his lecture of 3rd January, 1917, before the Scottish Labour Housing Association in Glasgow, and the Medical Officer for Glasgow, Dr. A. K. Chalmers, in his various reports¹ gave some remarkable figures especially dealing with overcrowding. Dr. Williamson stated that in Edinburgh 37·2 per cent. of the population lived in houses of one or two rooms, that in Aberdeen the percentage was 38·6, in Glasgow 62·5, and in Dundee 63. In the last named city there were 15,854 people (or 9·9 per cent. of the population) living in one-roomed houses and 85,324 (or 53·1 per cent. of the population) living in two-roomed houses. In this respect Dundee was surpassed only by Paisley, where actually 64·9 of the people lived in one- or two-roomed houses. To state it more generally, in Glasgow, Dundee, Paisley and Greenock more than half the population lived in one- or two-roomed houses, whilst in

¹ "The Influence of Housing on Health," by A. Maxwell Williamson, M.D., B.Sc.

"Health and Housing" and "The House as a Contributory Factor in the Death Rate," by A. K. Chalmers, M.D., D.P.H.

Leith 49·8 per cent. did so. Looking again at Edinburgh, Dr. Williamson says that the population living more than two in a room amounted to 99,824 or 32·7 per cent., the section living more than three in a room was 38,973 or 12·8 per cent. and the section living more than four in a room was 12,609 or 4·1 per cent. The statistics from this standpoint for Glasgow were as follows : 55·7 per cent. of the population lived more than two in a room, 27·9 per cent. lived more than three in a room, 10·7 per cent. more than four in a room and 3·4 per cent. more than five in a room.

The proof that such conditions of housing were closely associated with mortality returns was not lacking. When we think of human beings so closely packed, many of them suffering from infectious fevers and tuberculosis, we are prepared for Dr. Williamson's revelations as regards Edinburgh. He discovered that a significant connection existed between death-rates and the number of houses consisting of one or two rooms ; in the various wards of the city he notes that the death-rate increased almost precisely in proportion with the increase in the number of these smaller dwellings. Thus in Merchiston, where there were 811 one- or two-roomed houses, the death-rate was 12·2, whilst in St. Giles' Ward, where there were 2,913 such houses, it rose to 21·2. Further,

(and this fact is particularly important in connection with this chapter on the wastage of infant life), in Merchiston 159 children under five years died, whilst in St. Giles the number was 797. And according to his 1914 annual report, for Merchiston Ward the infantile mortality rate was 83, whilst for St. Giles it was 151 per 1,000. Dr. Chalmers, the Glasgow Medical Officer, in his elaborate analysis of the housing conditions of his city and their connection with the death-rate shows that, taking 100,000 deaths and allowing for age and sex distribution, the one-apartment house yields annually 2,024; two-apartment 1,683; three-apartment 1,263; four and upwards 1,032. For deaths under one year the four-apartment is only one half of the one-apartment rate.

It may, we think, be taken for granted that a similar parallelism between density of population and the death-rates exists in the other large towns of Scotland, and that Dundee, with its regrettably high infantile mortality and with 63 per cent. of its inhabitants living in houses of one or two rooms, furnishes an only too arresting illustration of the effect of housing upon child and especially upon infant welfare. In Section V of this chapter we give the facts as to overcrowding for a number of English towns to which reference should also be made. We have separated them from this

section in order to deal with the birth-rate in those centres.

If only one half of the 575,078 child lives lost between 1911-14 had been preserved and their natural end postponed (which should be the aim of preventive medicine) to the seventieth year instead of occurring before the fifth, what incalculable benefits, commercial, social, educational, spiritual, might have accrued to the nation and to posterity. It may very well be asked whether our industrialism and town life has been worth the sacrifice of so much child and adult life. But the sacrifice need not be offered up. It can be avoided, and our industrialism improved thereby. It would be as foolish to argue that our industrialism should be arrested as to argue, as some have done, that science should not be furthered because the Germans have turned it to the service of Satan.

III

The influence of modern industrialism on the physical basis of reproduction is also awakening public attention. To what extent and in which directions is it working to the detriment of the future of the people? Has it enfeebled the reproductive faculties temporarily or permanently or not at all? Has it struck at the roots of racial life? Has it, in short, produced physical and moral degeneration?

To answer these questions would require in the first place a comprehensive and exhaustive inquiry throughout the whole of our industrial areas which the Government is not likely to undertake. But some tentative inquiries and many special investigations and reports dealing with various towns and with trades have been made during the last thirty years. This mass of evidence is available and in the main it bears out the conclusions of the latest report of the Medical Officer of the Local Government Board, who on several points gives us, for the first time, new information. Many of these particulars have already been referred to, but it remains to deal specifically with the conditions, of the working classes, associated with industrial employment in the large industrial centres of England and the effects upon child life. These will afford the latest facts which will enable us to approach to a fuller answer to our questions.

Several praiseworthy efforts have been made to discover what is the influence of environment upon mothers and children who live in centres engaged in coal mining, pottery manufacture, textile industries, manufacture of iron and steel and metal goods. Taking a few examples of the geographical distribution of infant mortality we find that on both banks of the river Tyne the death-rate is very excessive. On the north bank, Newcastle shows 199 per 1,000 births,

Wallsend 180, Tynemouth 189. On the south, Gateshead 211, Blaydon 228, Hebburn 211, Jarrow 184, South Shields 201. In the adjoining county, "in nearly every sanitary area" there was "excessive child mortality"—Hetton 240, Leadgate 238, Seaham Harbour 230, Stanley 230, Houghton-le-Spring 227. Middlesbrough is treated separately, an unenviable distinction. In the West Riding area we have Leeds 202, Keighley 196, Bradford 174, Huddersfield 167, Stanley 219. The heaviest death-rates round about Sheffield are : Ardsley 254, Monk Bretton 250, Barnsley 241, Rawmarsh 237, Cudworth 230, and the lowest in this group, Bolton-upon-Dearne 205. Lancashire and North Cheshire area give Burnley 257, Longridge 229, Preston 225, Oldham 223, the lowest being Great Harwood 136. For West Lancashire and North Cheshire group, St. Helens 242, Liverpool 235, Widnes 231, Ince-in-Makerfield 288, the lowest being Wallasey 135. South Lancashire—Manchester 214, Stalybridge 249, Ashton-under-Lyne 247, Salford 219, the lowest Cheadle and Gatley 108. North Staffordshire area—Stoke-on-Trent 239, Newcastle-under-Lyme 224. South Staffordshire and Birmingham area—Bilston 237, Tipton 222, Birmingham 200, West Bromwich 215, the lowest Sutton Coldfield 100. The South Wales area reveals the same story—Blaenavon 217, Tredegar 211, Rhondda 207, Merthyr Tydfil 200, Neath

199, Swansea and Maesteg 193, the lowest Chepstow 90.

In the southern area Plymouth 184, Exeter 158, Chatham 172, Devonport 150, Portsmouth 144. Of some other large towns not in these areas we notice : Nottingham 206, Ilkeston 207, Chesterfield 191, Bristol 162, Northampton 146.

IV

A special study has been made of Middlesbrough and St. Helens, which best illustrate the conclusions which we are approaching. The medical officer, Dr. Dingle, has made a very careful analysis of the births and deaths of children in certain wards of the town and the highly instructive results are as follows :

MIDDLESBROUGH 1911-14.

BIRTHS AND DEATHS PER 1,000 BIRTHS AT AGES UNDER 5 FROM ALL CAUSES, FROM MEASLES AND WHOOPING-COUGH, AND FROM BRONCHITIS AND PNEUMONIA IN CERTAIN WARDS OF THE TOWN.

Ward.	Births in 4 years.	Death-rate per 1,000 births from		
		Measles and Whooping- cough.	Bronchitis and Pneumonia.	All Causes.
Ayresome ...	1,309	15.3	35.1	145.9
Acklam ...	1,194	33.5	49.4	206.0
Cannon ...	1,816	49.0	92.5	328.7
Cleveland ...	1,325	37.0	68.7	251.3
Exchange ...	818	19.6	39.1	205.3
Grove Hill ...	729	15.1	26.1	146.7
Linthorpe ...	863	19.7	44.0	190.0
Newthorpe ...	2,008	50.3	67.7	302.8
St. Hilda's ...	1,748	69.2	83.5	369.0
Total for the borough	11,810	Aver- age: 37	61	251

Here we note that in St. Hilda's, Cannon and Newthorpe Wards the *death-rate is two and a half times as great as in other wards, and measles and whooping-cough were four times as fatal in some wards as in others.* Middlesbrough is a modern town, most of its buildings having been erected during the last thirty years, so that they ought to be sanitary and to provide adequate accommodation and air. But the housing in the inner wards is as bad as in Glasgow, and it has the terrible child death-rate of 369·0 in one of its wards. "In visiting the poorest streets," says a visitor, "one was struck with the fact that workmen earning good wages were willing to continue to live in houses in which decent living was almost impracticable. In these houses there was inadequate bedroom accommodation; often there were no sculleries, and food was stored in the living rooms. The Corporation subsidise the replacement of pail closets by water closets, but many of the former remain. Even when the conversion to water closets has been made domestic insanitation commonly persists. The standard of domestic cleanliness in the inner wards of the town is deplorably low, and there was general untidiness and an appearance of domestic helplessness."

There is much heavy drinking in the town, which is shared by the women. Sir A. News-holme has a practical suggestion to make in

dealing with this matter. He says it ought to be seriously considered by the employers of labour whether they cannot do more than has hitherto been done, before the men leave the works, to slake the excessive thirst produced by working at a high temperature. And he more boldly adds that if the public houses in the town, and within a few miles of it, could be closed for six months, the high proportion of the population who are now living under conditions of housing inimical to health and to self-respect would secure an immense improvement in health and efficiency even in their present houses, and would at the end of the trial period be in a financial position to combine to secure the building of new and satisfactory houses in the outskirts of the town.

“In my judgment,” he says, “Middlesbrough need not continue to be the centre of destruction of human life and health which it is at the present time; and reform can be secured by efforts, partly sanitary and partly social, which are quite within the reach of the inhabitants of the town. This may involve the transplantation of a considerable portion of the population from the inner to outer wards of the towns, but, even without this, great improvement is practicable. It should be added that the Corporation have already done much excellent sanitary work, and that there are many social agencies at

work for improvement of the people. What is required is that the communal conscience and the conscience of each inhabitant of the town should be awakened to an extent which will determine combined efforts on the part of all."

St. Helens gives a similar result.

ST. HELENS—1911-14.

BIRTHS AND DEATHS PER 1,000 BIRTHS AT AGES UNDER 5 FROM ALL CAUSES, FROM MEASLES AND WHOOPING-COUGH, AND FROM BRONCHITIS AND PNEUMONIA.

Ward	Births in 4 years.	Death-rate per 1,000 births from		
		Measles and Whooping- cough.	Bronchitis and Pneumonia.	All Causes.
North Eccleston	1,767	38.5	48.7	225.2
South Eccleston	1,949	25.1	26.2	199.6
Central ...	770	48.0	74.0	322.0
North Windle	1,408	27.0	33.4	221.6
South Windle	839	54.8	60.8	354.0
Hardshaw ...	1,350	31.9	51.9	248.1
East Sutton	1,639	23.8	45.2	211.1
West Sutton	1,033	39.7	70.7	316.6
Parr ...	2,154	36.7	52.4	223.8
Total ...		Aver- age : 35	49	242

"The death-rate at ages 0-5 in St. Helens varied in the four years 1911-14 from 354 in South Windle Ward to 200 in South Eccleston Ward, the corresponding extremes in Middlesbrough being 369 and 146.

"The death-rate from measles and whooping-cough in St. Helens ranged in its wards from 24 to 55 ; in Middlesbrough from 15 to 69.

"The death-rate from bronchitis and pneumonia in St. Helens varied from 26 to 74 ; in Middles-

brought from 26 to 92. In each town the constituent wards showed great differences as to death-rate. The differences between wards were more marked in Middlesbrough than in St. Helens. In other words, although the general position of St. Helens was slightly less bad than that of Middlesbrough, its high death-rates were more uniformly distributed over the whole borough than those of Middlesbrough." The sanitary conditions of St. Helens are inimical to child life. The reports of Dr. Cates, the medical officer of health of the town, show that in 1915, out of 19,282 sanitary conveniences 13,100 were water closets, 3,704 tub and pail closets, and 1,500 privy middens. A considerable number of houses are in a dilapidated condition, and many of these should already have been closed and demolished. Yard paving is often very defective, and some of the back yards are extremely filthy. And overcrowding is prevalent in the borough.

V

Let us add some further facts as to the fatal influence of environment, because it is the best answer to the statements of those who glorify heredity and discount environment.

Overcrowding, it should not be forgotten, is almost always associated with other insanitary

conditions, provision for the commonest necessities of life being either absent or so primitive as to be a constant source of infection—stuffy, dirty atmospheres, lack of ventilation, little or no storage for food, noxious effluvia, etc., etc. Child life is, as we have seen, more precarious in large towns than smaller; and much more so than in rural districts. But here again medical officers would qualify any necessary connection between size of town and the amount of loss of child life. The real test is the number of people per room in each tenement, as we have seen in Glasgow. Wherever there is high child mortality there is a high proportion of overcrowding. Tables have been carefully prepared of forty great towns and forty smaller ones, having the highest and lowest child mortality and their relative conditions as to overcrowding in rooms indicated. Again we have only space for a few examples which we take at random. The following figures are also quoted for another reason, which will be referred to in our next section.

PROPORTION PER CENT. OF POPULATION IN PRIVATE FAMILIES WHO LIVE IN A CONDITION OF OVERCROWDING, *i.e.*, IN TENEMENTS WITH MORE THAN TWO OCCUPANTS PER ROOM. THE BIRTH-RATE PER 1,000 IS ALSO GIVEN FOR THE PURPOSE NOTED IN SECTION VI. FOLLOWING.

LARGE TOWNS.

Large towns amongst the twenty highest death-rates, 0-5 years.

	Per cent. of over- crowding. (Census 1911.)	Birth- rate. 1913.
Burnley ...	9.5	22.8
Wigan ...	12.9	28.1
Middlesbrough ...	13.4	31.1
St. Helens ...	17.0	32.2
Liverpool ...	10.1	29.8
Salford ...	10.1	27.1
Gateshead ...	33.7	29.2
Sunderland ...	32.6	30.9
Rhondda ...	5.6	33.1
Nottingham ...	4.3	22.7

Large towns amongst the twenty lowest death-rates, 0-5 years.

	Per cent. of over- crowding. (Census 1911.)	Birth- rate. 1913.
Hornsey ...	3.2	16.2
Bournemouth ...	1.6	15.6
Hastings ...	5.5	14.5
Bath ...	4.8	15.7
East Ham ...	6.4	25.5
Walthamstow ...	7.4	24.4
Croydon ...	4.3	21.9
Southport ...	3.5	15.2
Leyton ...	5.5	22.3
Willesden ...	13.0	24.8

SMALLER TOWNS.

Small towns amongst the twenty highest death-rates, 0-5.

	Per cent. of over- crowding. (Census 1911.)	Birth- rate. 1913.
Ince-in-Maker- field ...	16.5	35.7
Stalybridge ...	5.0	23.7
Leigh ...	8.0	27.9
Hindley ...	10.4	29.3
Widnes ...	12.6	31.9
Stanley ...	34.2	32.5
Blaydon ...	41.2	32.8
Tipton ...	16.8	34.2
Hartlepool ...	28.3	32.3
Hebburn ...	42.1	37.2
Ashington ...	32.2	37.1

Small towns amongst the twenty lowest death-rates, 0-5.

	Per cent. of over- crowding. (Census 1911.)	Birth- rate. 1913.
Finchley ...	4.4	21.7
Tunbridge Wells ...	2.9	15.4
Reigate ...	3.0	15.8
Rugby ...	1.3	20.9
Sutton ...	3.6	17.0
Sutton Coldfield ...	2.1	19.2
Worthing ...	1.9	15.7
Salisbury ...	1.2	20.9
Wood Green ...	5.1	22.2
Colchester ...	1.8	19.8
Winchester...	2.6	17.6

The following seven Metropolitan Boroughs have the highest child mortality in London :—

	Deaths under 5 per 1,000 births.	Proportion per cent. of tene- ments with less than 4 rooms.	Proportion per cent. of overcrowded tenements.
Shoreditch ...	241	73.6	36.5
Finsbury ...	216	80.8	39.9
Bermondsey ...	201	61.2	23.4
Bethnal Green	201	70.5	33.2
Poplar ...	195	58.2	20.6
Southwark ...	192	71.1	25.9
Stepney ...	191	67.5	35.0

The inferences from these statistics are certain. The environment provided in every centre of our industrial occupations, apart from the question of the employment of women, which will be dealt with in a moment, is destructive of child life. Of that there is no doubt. We have exchanged life for gold which perishes, and during the last fifty years have lost a multitude of human lives which, in all probability, would now have been here had it not been for the shocking conditions under which they were born.

VI

But these statistics have another reading, for which we have also quoted them at this length. We have been considering the death-rate in this environment, but another outstanding feature of these returns is that, in spite of the heavy labours of the mother, causing, as it must, premature births and other disasters, in spite of filth and overcrowding, life, abundant life, is born. The

general birth-rate for 1916 is 21·6, but the birth-rate in some of the worst centres is more than half as high again ; higher, indeed, than the general birth-rate before it began to decline in 1875.

We are aware that there are some gentlemen who deeply deplore this high birth-rate amongst these working-class parents, many of whom earn good wages. Mr. Harold Cox, in his superficial evidence before the Dominions Royal Commission, in which he obviously sought to bolster up his own peculiar political notions, boldly told the Commission that he was glad these stocks quickly died out.

Sir Rider Haggard asked him : " Perhaps you have heard, have you not, that with people who begin to breed in the cities, three generations, as a rule, sees them out ? ¹

Mr. H. Cox : " Yes, I wish them to cease more quickly."

How many people there are in this country who come from stocks which began to breed in cities, it is impossible to estimate. But Mr. H. Cox knows that they will soon perish—and he is glad of it. Of course, he includes the Jews !!

Efforts, says Mr. Madison Grant, in his latest volume,² which is dealt with in Chapter IV, indiscriminately to preserve babies among the lower classes often result in serious injury to the race.

¹ We do not, of course, accept this statement as accurate.

² " The Passing of the Great Race."

"It is a mistaken regard for what are believed to be divine laws and a sentimental belief in the sanctity of human life." There is another reason why these babies should die. "It is highly unjust," Mr. Grant writes, "that a minute minority should be called upon to supply brains for the unthinking many of the community." It will be recalled that Prof. Biffen bred into a good stock of corn the quality of immunity from rust possessed by a poor stock with excellent results. Now we humbly suggest to Mr. Grant that the "unit characters" of his "race-aristocrats" should be suitably preserved, and that he should discover some way by which they could be used for reinforcing the unthinking many!

Mr. Havelock Ellis says at the conclusion of his essays: "The falling birth-rate should be a matter of joy rather than of grief. But we need not therefore fold our hands and do nothing. . . . We cannot and should not attempt to increase the number of children. But we may well attempt to work for their better quality. There we should be on very safe ground." Here then is the scheme by which Mr. Grant could help Mr. Ellis to realise his fondest dreams. Here, then, is a golden opportunity to ensure a long posterity, a certain height, perhaps blue eyes and a cranial index¹ which

¹ This has been accepted as one of the most certain external hereditary race-marks which distinguished the classes. But Mr. R. R. Marett, an excellent authority, says that head form largely results from being "subjected after birth, or at any rate after

would break the eugenic record. Surely a Shakespeare would spring up in every village in the course of a generation or two from such selective reinforcement! But to prevent disappointment, we hasten to add that it would not be sufficient merely to secure the fertilised egg-cells in order to produce a genius. Dr. Chalmers Mitchell wittily reminds us that even Milton required an environment. "The piece of Miltonoplasm, for so I may call the fertilised egg-cell by which, on this Laputan theory, Milton was determined, required the presence of a peculiar environment for nine months before it could be born as a healthy human child, the whole past history of the English language and of contemporary English 'Kultur' to make it an English-speaking boy, the Hebrew cosmogony, the poets of Greece and of Rome and Italy, our own Shakespeare and the multitudinous splendour of the Elizabethan age, the struggle between Puritanism and the Church, between King and Parliament; the rise and fall of the Commonwealth, a vast turmoil of epic days, to shape the poet's mind and to inform his music with colour and passion, with stately harmonies and the light of

conception, to one and the same environment." And he gives many examples from the observations of Prof. Boas on American immigrants in support. "If, then," he humorously adds, "the hereditarily long-headed can change under suitable conditions, then what about the hereditarily short-witted?"—"Anthropology," p. 76.

heaven and the depths of hell. 'Potentialities and aptitudes!' Grant that they were fixed at the moment of conception, and what further are we? The whole past history of sentient men, preserved and perfected from age to age in his traditions and his religion, in comely speech and in the treasures of literature, were needed to make the possible real."¹

Let us tell Mr. Cox and those who talk after his manner, that these poor children of our industrial centres, if they had the better chances which others enjoy, would in many cases prove themselves to be of greater and longer worth to the human race. These deep-seated prejudices which divide our population into racially inferior and superior groups are laughable when they remain harmless, but it would be perilous to give their present advocates the opportunity of experimenting upon the life of the nation. Instead of discouraging the working classes to have families, instead of openly declaring that their children should be allowed to die more quickly in the shocking environment in which they have been often placed by our lust for gold, and that the sanctity of human life is a sentimental belief, the nation must sweep away the vile, insanitary holes in which they are condemned to drag out their lives, and give them healthy homes and surroundings. Their children would then have a fair

¹ "Evolution and the War," Dr. Chalmers Mitchell, p. 80.

chance to live and to grow up to be of good service to their country.

VII

There are a few further points which need pressing home. The fertility rates according to the social position of the various sections of our populations, which the last census returns will disclose, have not yet been published; so that we have to rely upon earlier statistics. Some facts were disclosed in the Registrar-General's returns for 1911 which may be quoted. Take a number of social groups, and the birth-rates per 1,000 married men and the death-rates of infants.

(See Registrar-General's Report for 1911.)

Occupation.	Birth-rate per 1,000 married males under 55 years of age.	Death-rate under one year per 1,000 births.
Earthenware workers	84	172
Miners	107	160
Textile workers ...	50	148
Medical practitioners...	52	39

These figures are highly instructive. They show, as Dr. Stevenson remarks, that "the educated and comfortable classes have few children, of whom, under the favourable conditions provided, few die; unskilled labour produces many children, and loses a large proportion of them." Here, we must carefully remark, there is no biological law at work; if the educated and comfortable class had had as many children

as the unskilled labourer, they would have survived. The high death-rate amongst the latter is very largely a question of adequate care. And the contrary of this is equally true. If only few were born there would be a relatively high death-rate in the same environment provided for the above unskilled labourers; the textile workers referred to in the above table are an example.

Special attention should be directed to the following facts given in the tables from which we have already quoted, which show that a high child mortality is associated with a low birth-rate—a fact which upsets the contentions of the school who ask for a low birth-rate and therefore a low death-rate.

LOW BIRTH-RATES AND HIGH CHILD MORTALITY.

Town.			Birth-rate per 1,000.	Death-rate per 1,000 born.
Bolton ...	...	...	21·8	200
Blackburn	...	...	21·8	202
Nottingham	...	...	22·7	206
Burnley	...	...	22·8	257
Oldham	...	...	23·0	223
Leeds ...	...	...	23·2	202
Preston	...	...	23·9	225

Now why should not this alleged biological law have operated in these towns which have a low birth-rate but a very high death-rate? Simply because the effect is not of law, but the result of preventable environmental causes. The classical example of France, too, which is always held up by Neo-Malthusians for our

imitation, has the lowest birth-rate, but it was accompanied by a high infant mortality. And Ireland shows that the contrary is true for she has a low infant death-rate and a high birth-rate, of course in proportion to the number of possible mothers.

It would be beside the mark for Neo-Malthusians to reply that the rural conditions for Ireland are favourable to this result. That is exactly what we are contending. A high birth-rate and a high death-rate as is found for instance in

Town.			Death-rate per 1,000 born.	Birth-rate.
Rhondda	...	...	207	33.1
Poplar	...	...	195	31.9
Ince-in-Makerfield	...	...	288	35.7
Sunderland	...	...	192	30.8

and similar places are examples of the adverse influences of overcrowding. Change that and you save child life, and under more favourable conditions obtain a higher survival rate.

There is a not unimportant point to be noted about the high birth-rate in districts where there is a high death-rate which we do not remember to have seen noted before. Why, it may be asked, do we continue to get a high birth-rate under such conditions? No doubt want of control has something to do with it, but we believe that the deeper truth is that the natural love of children is irresistible amongst the poor people, so irresistible that when one

dies after another they still desire more to take their places and are willing to make all the sacrifices to satisfy their love; their natural instincts are not dwarfed and stultified by the artificial distractions of some better-class persons. How shameful it is, then, that they should be herded together in insanitary areas and that this great natural love of children should not be turned to the best account by the nation, instead of being almost wholly neglected and left to be the prey of greed and death. The high birth-rate amongst the poor is to be highly commended under such tragic circumstances; if the other classes were compelled to exchange places and live night and day, year after year, in the same distressing conditions there might be no birth-rate at all, their natural affections might perish and their duty to the nation and the race be wholly forgotten. That is but a just inference from their present conduct in this matter of the births, even in the infinitely more satisfactory surroundings in which they now live.

Further, it may reasonably be argued that this high birth-rate in the districts named above and others like them would to some extent naturally decline if the children born survived. If, as we have said, the pathetic love of children which is so observable amongst the poor was satisfied by their little ones being kept alive,

fewer children would be desired. Children they must have, but there is no doubt they would be satisfied with smaller families *if they lived*. The argument that a high birth-rate is necessarily associated with the working classes is unsound. It is no more necessarily associated with them than with the richer classes, where we should expect to find it, because the rich can afford to have children.

There are some workers amongst the poor who do not want the people to have more children because they have been exploited by capitalists and militarists. And we confess to having considerable sympathy with their views. But remove these grave abuses of power and money—give the workers better homes and wages, establish international peace, and this opposition would be almost entirely overthrown. It is not that these earnest advocates dislike children, but they see that the children of the people have been used to keep them under and to sink them to deeper depths of poverty. And they see too that those who are better off have fewer children and more leisure and money, but they do not realise what price they have paid for their apparent better lot or what regrets tug at their heart-strings. They accordingly endeavour to bolster up their appeals to the poor to have fewer children by pointing to the comforts of the rich.

Their object is obvious, but unfortunately their arguments are merely another exhibition of a short-sighted policy which would work for their own undoing in the end, and make the fewer people greater slaves than they are now without any compensating advantages. We have written elsewhere¹—"The question is wholly one of degree. It is not merely bulk which we want as a nation. There must also be fair quality. But given quantity under normal healthy conditions of environment, and the quality will in the main look after itself. And now, more than ever before, the nation needs quantity. Places of the noble dead have to be filled. The thousands of empty silent cradles in the land must be set rocking with bright-eyed healthy babes. For generations to come we shall not have too many, we can never have too many of the right kind. And with comparatively few exceptions all may become the right kind in their respective spheres. It is more a matter of bringing up than of what they bring with them as their inheritance from the loins of grandparents and parents."

Life, then, is given to us in abundance ; but it perishes long before it flowers in the exhausted and poisonous soil we provide for it. It is born but to die before it is of any use to family or nation. The outcry about the declining birth-

¹ "Cradles and Coffins." (Pearson & Co.)

rate in face of these irrefutable facts is a piece of downright national hypocrisy which ought to shame us into silence until these ghastly results of our mad race for wealth, which had squandered and trampled upon life—infant and adult—in its desperate efforts to reach its ill-gotten gains, are wiped out. These gigantic evils can be largely mitigated within the next few years at a price below a single month's cost of this war, in which more and more young life is being poured out like water on the ground. We have been anxious about the possible invasion of these islands by a foreign foe and have freely spent our billions in making them secure. But this vast invasion, not into territory, but into our life, an invasion of death which has slain, not its thousands, but its hundreds of thousands, which goes on continually, *that* we have scarcely begun to resist, and have not spent upon the defence of the life of our children and our workers a thousandth part of what we are spending upon war. If the future is to be secure, this nation with both hands must pour out its gold to provide happy homes for its people. It must save the life that is born and bring it up to maturity if it is to save its territory and to endure.

CHAPTER IV

HEREDITY AND ENVIRONMENT

A NOTE or two should be made upon the subject of heredity and environment. We have purposely left the consideration of this question until the previous facts as to the influence of environment had been given.

Human life is apparently played upon by two main currents of influences, one coming from ancestors and parents, the other surrounding it from birth to death. In both cases the influences as they affect, internally and externally, any particular life are the results of multifarious combinations and permutations which are reacted upon by the living person, the ultimate issue—physical and psychical—being the individual as he, in part, knows himself and is known, although probably the greater part lies below his own consciousness.

“We are influenced,” says Prof. Stanley Hall, “in our deeper, more temperamental, dispositions by the life-habits and codes of conduct of we know not what unnumbered hosts of ancestors,

which like a cloud of witnesses are present throughout our lives, and our souls are echo-chambers in which their whispers reverberate."

Sir Francis Galton attacked the problem of heredity by the statistical method and he formulated a generalisation called "The Law of Ancestral Inheritance," which gives the share which various ancestors may have had in the inheritance of any individual organism. "The two parents between them contribute, on the average, one-half of each inherited faculty, each of them contributing one-quarter of it. The four grandparents contribute between them one-quarter, or each of them one-sixteenth; and so on, the sum of the series $\frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{4} + \frac{1}{8} + \frac{1}{16} + \dots$ being equal to 1, as it should be. It is a property of this infinite series that each term is equal to the sum of all that follow: thus $\frac{1}{2} = \frac{1}{4} + \frac{1}{8} + \frac{1}{16} + \dots$, $\frac{1}{4} = \frac{1}{8} + \frac{1}{16} + \dots$ and so on. The prepotencies and subpotencies of peculiar ancestors, in any given pedigree, are eliminated by a law that deals only with average contributions, and the varying prepotencies of sex in respect to different qualities are also presumably eliminated."

In endeavouring to form some estimate of the exact value of the experiments in which racial peculiarities appear to be dominant over the individual, we must bear in mind that they deal with physical characters. They are

inferences from characters in which we can experiment, the combs of cocks, feathers of pigeons, height of peas, the colour of eyes, etc., and Mendel's so-called laws have only been applied to a few instances of human inheritance. To reason from them to the social worth and spiritual and mental qualities of the population of our industrial cities with a view to distinguishing between children born to high estate and children doomed to degradation is not science. Man enters into a great inheritance of customs and traditions, laws and religion, art and literature, which, even if we grant a great deal to heredity, exercise an immeasurable and decisive influence over him.

Professor Bateson, the leader of British Mendelians, said to his Australian audience at the British Association meeting in 1914 "that with little hesitation we can now declare that the potentialities and aptitudes of physical as well as mental characteristics, sex, colours, powers of work or of invention, liability to diseases, possible duration of life and the other features by which the members of a mixed population differ from each other, are determined from the moment of fertilisation." And Mr. Madison Grant, in his new work, just published,¹ in which he boldly applies these very limited experiments

¹ "The Passing of the Great Race," by Mr. Madison Grant, with a preface by Prof. H. F. Osborn. (Bell & Co., 1917.)

to re-writing European history in terms of race, says that these distinctions "are transmitted in accordance with fixed mathematical laws . . . that they do not change during the lifetime of a language or an Empire." That is to say, to quote Prof. H. F. Osborn, who introduces Mr. Grant's book, "the great lesson of the science of race is the immutability of bodily characters with which is closely associated the immutability of psychical predispositions and impulses." In commenting upon a similar extravagant assertion by Prof. Bateson, Dr. Chalmers Mitchell says "there is nothing but theory to support" such a statement; "whether such view be true or not, I do not know; no one knows." We shall have occasion presently to notice to what extreme use this modern doctrine of heredity is put.

But first it may not be altogether useless to re-state one or two points in the dispute. Heredity is the name given to the genetic relation between successive generations. It concerns those qualities which we have at conception in virtue of our hereditary relation. But the influences of environment commence to play upon the life months before birth. Dr. Saleeby has rightly called alcohol, lead, arsenic and such like, "racial poisons," because they may affect (a) germ-cells in either parent before conception and (b) the blood and nutritive fluids of the child-

bearing mother and in consequence the germ-plasm and nerve-paths of the unborn child. Who, indeed, can tell what messages are transmitted from mother to child by what Dr. Ballantyne suggestively calls "the mysterious wireless telegraphy of ante-natal life"? Who can surely distinguish between inherited nature and ante-natal nurture? Some writers talk about our great-grandparents being our environment. From that point of view our environment obviously includes the infinite range of relations stretching back to our humbler ancestors, and of the whole life of the earth itself, perhaps of the stars also, since they too, it has been alleged from of old unto this hour, have fateful influences upon us.

This illustrates the subtle difficulties of visualising what actually are or are not hereditary factors. The moment we try to do so we are brought up against the insoluble question—What is life? Is it physical or spiritual? Is it an entity *per se* independent of matter, whatever that may be, or is it a result of matter in a high state of organisation which may disappear like the brightness of the fender. When we think about heredity do we refer to the qualities which life itself possesses unmodified and unmodifiable by contact with its physical basis, whether in grandparent or parent? And if so, what do we know about them upon which

we could act in cutting out before birth what we suppose might be undesirable lives? Next to nothing. Or do we mean that in the germ-plasm there are, amongst other items, "unit characters"¹ which form an hereditary basis of life, are enshrined in the parental body and handed down uninfluenced by internal or external environment from one generation to another. Some writers seem to imply that they are peculiar to the race to which we primarily belong and continue to assert themselves however "mixed" the race may become.

August Weismann apparently discovered that the fertilised egg-cell which is the product of the two parents develops into two portions. One portion goes to form nerve-cells, digestive cells, etc., which, in being specialised for their peculiar work in the body, lose the capacity to reproduce the whole body; the other portion forms the sexual cells and gives rise in due season to the young. Prof. J. A. Thomson in his graphic and lucid style illustrated the process thus in his South African lectures: "May we think for a moment of a baker who has a precious kind of leaven; he uses part of this in baking a large loaf; but he so arranges matters, by a curious

¹ By a unit character is meant any quality or group of qualities of an organism which are transmitted independently, intactly and without blending. But many other parts of the natural inheritance do not seem to behave like Mendelian unit characters, but as blending characters and therefore changeable.



contrivance, that part of the original leaven is not mixed up with the dough, but is carried on unaltered within the loaf, carefully preserved for use in another baking. Nature is the baker, the loaf is a body, the leaven is the germ-plasm, and each baking is a generation."

This theory has largely displaced the theory of the transmission of acquired characteristics¹ which, on the face of things, seemed to have a good deal in its favour. But although much expert opinion based upon Mendelian experiments and statistical work is in favour of Weismann's theory, it is by no means unanimous. Someone has said that it is true because it is what we would have expected if we thought about it. The same reasoning certainly establishes the other theory. But let us notice to what extent the advocates of their so-called heredity apply their "science." Mr. Madison Grant being the latest exponent, we shall be safe in quoting him. Heredity, then, compels us to get rid of all our religious notions about the brotherhood of man. "There exists to-day," he writes, "a widespread and fatuous belief in the power of environment, as well as of education and opportunity to alter heredity, which arises from the

¹ "As to the long-drawn-out controversy as to the possible transmission of 'acquired characters,' it may be said that neither the yeas nor the nays ring out so confidently as they did ten years ago, and elsewhere it has reached a logical deadlock."
—Prof. J. A. Thomson.

dogma of the brotherhood of man . . . such beliefs have done much damage in the past and if allowed to go uncontradicted may do much serious damage in the future." He says that these religious notions of the brotherhood of man "are happily becoming obsolete" and that "in the beginning all differences of class, of caste, and of colour marked actual lines of race cleavage." And these racial differences must continue to hold sway.

We have ourselves heard it stated by some eugenists that the children, for instance, of Government officials, say in the Foreign Office or Diplomatic Service, are born to fill their fathers' position, they form a "specialised aristocracy," and that children from a lower stratum of society cannot possibly come up to that higher level and undertake those duties because they are not in the true line of descent. And we know from Mr. Grant that they are right according to "the science of heredity." They are, indeed, not only a special class, but they belong to an "aristocracy of race" which must always remain apart, even if the earth crumbles. The lower classes are intrinsically lower, the middle were middle from the creation of the world, and the upper were made so by God.

Mr. W. C. D. Whetham and his wife, in "Heredity and Society," have partly stated this with a little more caution but with a significant

illustration from the middle classes. They say that when we "recall the gradual building up of the social life of the country, we are aware that, through long centuries, much of the national stock of political, administrative, military and legal talent had been separated out by a process of like-to-like mating and the formation of a class, which, if not apart, was undoubtedly distinct from the general mass of the population From intermarriages among the picked members of this class, we obtained a constant and assured succession of men of a certain type of ability and character." But "out of the hundreds of thousands of chance alliances, usually in the middle classes, and seldom of a very low social standard, some one marriage will give birth to a man of eminence, but, in what department of life he will be eminent, there is no means of predicting." Of course! of course!!

Mr. Madison Grant deplores the efforts of religious teachers and educationists to override these racial distinctions. "In America," he writes, "we have nearly succeeded in destroying the privilege of birth; that is, the intellectual and moral advantage a man of good stock brings into the world with him. We are now engaged in destroying the privilege of wealth; that is, the reward of successful intelligence and industry, and in some quarters there is developing a tendency to attack

the privilege of intellect and to deprive a man of the advantages of an early and thorough education. *Simplified spelling is a step in this direction.*" We have put the last illuminating sentence in italics. And our liberal organs might reflect upon this scientific declaration against them. "If England," writes Mr. Grant, "has deteriorated, it is due to the lowering proportion of the Nordic blood and the transfer of political power from the vigorous Nordic aristocracy and middle classes to the radical and labour elements, both largely recruited from the Mediterranean type."

Mr. Whetham puts this nice point in another suggestive way. "In nothing," he says, "are the various sections of the community more greatly differentiated than in their standards of honesty, good behaviour and fair dealing. A man of one class would feel it degrading to take advantage of an opportunity which another type of man thinks it criminal folly to let slip . . . inherent differences like these probably constitute the greatest obstacles to any successful government by a group of associated persons coming from widely contrasted social spheres. . . . as time goes on the standard especially of the smaller local elected bodies will suffer a slight but progressive lowering of quality." We ourselves had noticed this in the West End, but we did not realise that it was due to

racial differences which true education cannot remove.

Mr. Grant also tilts at the position of the Church. And here again this latest exponent of modern heredity condemns the Church's attitude. "The Church," he writes, "assumes a serious responsibility toward the future of the race whenever it steps in and preserves a defective strain. . . . Before eugenics were understood (he assumes they are understood now) much could be said from a Christian and humane viewpoint in favour of indiscriminate charity for the benefit of the individual. The societies for charity, altruism or extension of rights, should have, however, in these days, in their management, some small modicum of brains, otherwise they may continue to do . . . more injury to the race than black death or small-pox." Christianity, he says, tends to "break down class and race distinctions. Such distinctions are absolutely essential to the maintenance of race purity. The Roman Church has everywhere used its influence to break down class distinctions."

These classes, too, says Mr. Grant, have always been a minute fraction of the whole, "but they were able to use the brute strength of the unthinking herd as part of their own force and were able to direct at will the blind, dynamic impulse of the lower classes. True aristocracy is government by the wisest and best, always a small minority in

any population." And without this race-aristocracy "there can be nothing except the slave wearing his master's clothes, stealing his master's proud name, adopting his master's tongue, and living in the crumbling ruins of his master's palace." This reminds us of a story about Frederick the Great, who, when a troop of men hesitated to rush at a battery belching forth death, shouted from his superior height, "Dogs, would ye then live for ever?" Mr. Grant also mournfully prophesies in the name of the science of heredity which has revealed these immutable distinctions that, with respect to this world-war, "one of its most certain results will be the partial destruction of the aristocratic classes everywhere in Europe. In England the nobility has already suffered in battle more than in any country since the Wars of the Roses. This will tend to realise the standardisation of type so dear to democratic ideals. If equality cannot be obtained by lengthening and uplifting the stunted of body and mind, it can be at least realised by the destruction of the exalted of stature and soul."

Heredity, according to this politico-sociological school, is spelled, like God, with a capital and is exalted to the throne of Eternal Destiny. But it is neither God nor demon, neither inevitable law nor persistent force. Like that misused phrase "a law of Nature," it is a term to express the

relations of observed phenomena, that and nothing more. And as regards race, the more reliable anthropologists frankly admit that it "baffles us almost completely." "I view the clamorous pretensions of the Mendelian Eugenist," says Dr. Chalmers Mitchell, "with a mixture of hope and fear . . . they have given us, I hear, a rust-proof wheat, many quaint flowers and a prescription for breeding streaky bacon, and they will give us much more. But on their own showing—and Prof. Bateson is emphatic on the matter—they have not yet moved a single step in the direction of showing how to breed Miltonplasms." And Prof. J. A. Thomson, perhaps the sanest biologist of our time, who presents the best case for the Mendelian school, says that Mendelian phenomena are known in rats, mice, rabbits, snails, silkworms, and some other animals; in peas, beans, stocks, wheat, and some other plants. The characters which illustrate it are such as size, colour, markings, crests, horns, hairiness, peculiar features such as the waltzing habit in mice, and elusive properties, such as broodiness in hens. But against this Prof. Thomson would place a multitude of cases where the mode of inheritance is *not* known to be Mendelian; thus Prof. W. E. Castle has recently declared that "aside from colour, there are very few valued economic characters in our domestic animals which are not inherited after the manner of blends," *i.e.*, in a non-Mendelian

manner. Mr. Grant, however, dogmatically declares that "Moral, intellectual and spiritual attributes are as persistent as physical characters, and are transmitted unchanged from generation to generation." We have now seen to what uses the alleged discoveries of certain Mendelians are to be put, and we think our conclusion is justified—that whatever truth (*and we are very far from under-rating its great value*) there may be in heredity it has to be purged of that kind of politico-biology and extravagant pretensions before it can be of much assistance in guiding the life and development of humanity.

One day, towards the end of his long life, when we were discussing the subject of heredity and environment with Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace, he emphatically exclaimed: "Leave heredity alone until we have made the environment of every child from conception to death the best possible for its full and free development, and then we can begin to think about the influences of heredity, which may be small." Environment, he felt, was practically all, so far as we are concerned, and it was unmitigated humbug to talk about hereditary class distinctions being rooted in Nature. "An individual is, of course, a product of nature and nurture, but it is one-tenth the former and nine-tenths the latter." We may not be inclined to go so far as Dr. Wallace, but there is ample warrant from experience, especially in this war, that we

should do well to give our almost undivided attention to improving the physical and moral environment of all classes for the next few generations. That is the predominant object and argument of this book. We have to stamp out venereal poisons, tuberculosis, insanity, infectious diseases, which are environmental and not hereditary, slums and a thousand other evils which "flesh is heir to," but only in the sense that they have been imposed upon us as a physical legacy and are not really of us. "To improve the race," says Mr. R. R. Marett, who is one of the best anthropologists amongst us, "by way of eugenics, though doubtless feasible within limits, remains an unrealised possibility through our want of knowledge. On the other hand, to improve the physical environment is fairly straight-ahead work, once we awake the public conscience to the need of undertaking this task for the benefit of all classes of the community alike."¹

The bearing of these considerations upon the birth-rate is not obscure. The differential birth-rate, by which is meant that the lower classes breed faster than the upper, is an artificial phenomenon due to economical and social environment. One is not more fertile than another. In the lower class, poverty, which implies grossly deficient education and want of self-control, may result in recklessness in bringing children into the

¹ "Anthropology," p. 95. Pub. Williams and Norgate.

world ; in the higher classes there may be an equal deficiency of self-control, but quacks and money have provided the means of limitation, or there may be, as there ought to be, more real self-control for prudential and hygienic reasons. The proper adjustment of the birth-rate so as to provide the normal relative proportions of children of all classes is to be effected, not by keeping the under dog under, not by levelling down, but by levelling up, and by the creation in all classes of an active sense of parental, social and racial responsibility.

Into the speculative question, which is intimately allied to the problem of heredity and environment, of life being a creative spiritual energy born not of earth but from above, inhabiting various bodies, acting and reacting upon them, developing itself thereby and entering upon another life where more spiritual bodies await its use, we must not enter. But it is an important question, nevertheless, which should be borne in mind throughout this entire discussion.

I

A few words must also be said in this connection upon the subject of the struggle for existence and its application, or rather misapplication, to human society. The term "struggle for existence," which nowadays has a special significance

when applied to human society, was used by Darwin to cover the struggle in the vegetable and animal kingdoms in a "large and metaphorical" sense, "including dependence of one being on another and including (which is more important) not only the life of the individual, but success in leaving progeny." Dr. Wallace, in his conversations with the writer, vigorously maintained that Darwin had the widest possible conception of this struggle as including not only the fierce fight for food and shelter between individuals and varieties of the same species, but the finer and more noble struggle for mutual protection and assistance, for all that which Kropotkin called mutual aid. It sums up the whole of the infinitely complex modes of life—the struggle for light and food and foothold when life multiplies itself with exhaustless extravagance and fills sea and earth and air with open mouths, and the no less fierce struggle against tempest and famine when the helpless cry for love and parental sacrifice and fellow sufferers for co-operation and kindly consideration. And friendly service rather than the competition which obsessed the mind of earlier evolutionists predominates. Kropotkin has pointed out one telling illustration of mutual aid in the insect world which often shames man. It is apparently a law among ants "that an ant who has satisfied its own hunger must never refuse to feed another." And the criterion of success in

this struggle is that the animal attains reproductive age and leaves offspring. To this supreme end the internecine warfare for mere existence is frequently consciously subordinated, and thus nobler and finer feelings have come to birth and made life not only worth preserving but propagating.

When, therefore, we use the term struggle for existence as applied to human society, it is also in this larger and truer sense. The writer heard Mrs. Besant in her unregenerate days, when she was merging out of atheism into socialism, and was on the eve of launching her propaganda against further increase of population, liken the human family to pigs struggling round a trough. No doubt that side is often seen in the life of the millions who are ever on the verge of destitution, and whom parental love pathetically and too often vainly tries to shelter by rags and to succour by self-starvation. And this revolting side of the struggle is made the more repulsive by contrast with the parasitic aspect, especially amongst those of the well-to-do who before the war led a somnolent life inside the body politic, satiating themselves with its blood, effectually protected, with the minimum of exertion, from all dangers without, but a life which led to moral degeneracy. Parasites there were in slumdom, but they were few and battered upon a poverty even worse than their own.

The idea of the struggle for existence is, however, wider than the widest meaning which Spencer, Darwin, or Wallace put upon it. We now are told that it commences, not at birth, but amongst the hereditary unit characters in germ-cells which come from parents and grandparents and which go to our making. Of what that struggle consists we cannot imagine, but it may well account for the emergence now and then of some genius who towers high above the mediocre level; the pre-conceptional struggle may throw up transcendent qualities which, if not crushed by later environment, mark out this life and that for spheres of enduring usefulness.

But the struggle for existence as we see it in the vegetable and animal kingdom is, we repeat, greatly modified in human society. True, there is amongst us overcrowding as close as in a neglected garden; innumerable lives are sacrificed by ignorance and neglect almost as soon as they are born; and many more are damaged and bear the marks throughout their days, whether long or short, and in consequence they fail to reach the reproductive age or to leave strong progeny. Many individualities are hopelessly smothered, but love, which is one of the mightiest factors in preserving and sustaining life, has built hospitals and discovered a thousand ways of keeping alive a multitude who would otherwise have perished. The hard checks to population

have been largely overborne where they have not been wholly removed in human life, and the birth-rate has increased to that extent. It is impossible to estimate what would have been the state of affairs if, as some amongst us still desire, the unmitigated struggle for life had been allowed to exert its full sway over human lives. The diseased and broken would have gone to the wall, the weakly, many of whom the world honours and who have, indeed, supplied a larger number of immortals than the ranks of the physically strong, would have failed to reach maturity. Coupled with this preservation of the physically weak and as a consequence of it, the old have been kept alive beyond the days of their natural strength and the term of human life itself has been extended. This has also had an effect upon the birth-rate which is often overlooked. One result of our conquest over diseases which slew our forefathers is that we have amongst us a larger proportion of old people than at any previous stage in our history ; and, owing to the decreasing birth-rate, a smaller proportion of young people. The nation as a whole is ageing. It is now a middle-aged race, and the loss of youthful vitality and enthusiasm may have given rise to that sense of race-weariness which is apparent in many sections of society. Dean Inge, in writing to us, says he would be more disposed to accept our contention of race-weariness if an increase of

suicide went along with it. Now there has been a serious increase in insanity for some years.¹ But the answer to that contention is that, whilst many from the highest motives may refuse to bear more children because life is too hard, they drag on themselves hoping for a brighter to-morrow,

¹ The Board of Control of Lunacy and Mental Deficiency in their second Annual Report (1915) say that on January 1st, 1916, the number of notified insane persons under care in England and Wales was 137,188. This number is less than that recorded on January 1st, 1915, by 3,278. This decrease may be contrasted with an increase of 2,411 recorded for the year 1914, and an average annual increase for the ten years ending December 31st, 1914, amounting to 2,251. So that if that average rate had been maintained during 1915, the number under care on January 1st, 1916, would have been 142,717, or 5,529 above the actual record. It is noteworthy that this is the first occasion since reliable statistics have been available (*i.e.* 1859) on which there has been a decrease in the numbers under care as compared with those of the year preceding. Except in 1885, 1886 and 1890, when such increase amounted to 452,735 and 728 respectively, the numbers have been nearer 2,000 than 1,000, and since 1893 above the former figure in all but four years, a maximum yearly increase of 3,235 being recorded in 1904. It is therefore natural to infer that the diminution is only temporary, and bears some relation to exceptional conditions—social and economic—arising from the war with which it coincides.

The decrease commenced to take place coincidentally with the closing of nine asylums on their conversion into war hospitals, and the consequent and unavoidable limitation of admissions to cases most urgently needing treatment. Later in the year one other asylum was similarly converted.

Although the reduction in the number of admissions was therefore, at least to some extent, factitious, it may be reasonably inferred that it may have been influenced by the increase of employment and resulting improved conditions amongst the working population leading to an actual diminution of nervous and mental disorders. It should further be pointed out that during the year an increasing number of soldiers, who had become insane, were receiving treatment in military hospitals, and not being certified they are not included in our figures.

and law and instinct are powerful influences against self-murder.

It must at once be admitted, especially in view of later chapters, that it seems desirable to segregate lunatics, the incurably feeble-minded, criminals, and confirmed alcoholics, who, however (and this must never be forgotten), may be the work of our own hands, and their feeble-mindedness due to some removable physical cause. Mr. Whetham says that the existence of this class of people is directly due to that interference with natural selection which is the outcome of the unregulated humanitarianism of Western society. But we know that, on the contrary, many may, indeed have been of superior calibre before birth, figs and not thistles until, for instance, the parasite of syphilis infected them. In some States of America segregation is achieved by surgery, but the risks of that kind of social operations, even when the case seems certain, are such that it is very unlikely that society will acquiesce in its extension. It will always be limited to the very few, and then only applied by the voluntary desire of the persons immediately concerned.

II

But that does not cover the whole question involved, which is that natural selection in the forms in which we habitually think of it has

very little bearing upon the maintenance of all that part of our civilisation which is intrinsically worth preserving, and that to substitute for natural selection a State-applied artificial selection, borrowed from the stud farm and dignified by some less offensive term, is an undertaking which would baffle the combined wisdom of all our Solomons, who had better keep to making machines and conducting electricity round the world and revolutionising our material environment, and leave the direction of the reproductive energies of humanity, which are easily disturbed and little understood, to a wiser generation.

Dean Inge has presented us with a vivid outline¹ of a highly organised socialistic State which permits its population to expand, which strikingly contrasts with the Merrie England of more picturesque if less candid writers, and its alternative, a glorified sort of France on the lines of Plato's ideal State. In the former, the State would organise us all on the lines of greatest efficiency, both for peace and war, our parks would become allotments, the work of the scholar and thinker reduced to a minimum, wages would be low and hours of work long, and all inefficient citizens weeded out. (In another part of the same article the Dean says—and we call special attention to it—that “the

¹ *Edinburgh Review*, January, 1917.

danger at home is that the larger part of the population is now beginning to insist upon a scale of remuneration and a standard of comfort which are incompatible with any survival-value.") And when war comes, which would be well-nigh inevitable, "it must be a war of complete expropriation or extermination," to which by comparison the horrors of this present conflict would be as nothing. "Who would care," he exclaims, "to live in such a world? But does Nature care whether we enjoy our lives or not?" Which raises the deeper issue adumbrated in another chapter, and one which even our courageous Dean had better leave unasked. The other horn of the dilemma, according to him, is that the State must know how many it can support and limit its population accordingly. "The object aimed at will not be constant expansion, but well-being. The energies liberated from the pitiless struggle for existence will be devoted to making social life wiser, happier, more harmonious and more beautiful." "Have we any reason?" (he again frankly asks another fundamental question) "to hope that this policy is not contrary to the hard laws which Nature imposes on every species in the world?"

This choice of Hercules does not, we think, confront humanity. The former choice appears to contain almost fantastic misreadings of the

conditions of survival. If the higher scale (and it is low enough in all conscience) of wages and standard of comfort which the majority of our population are but beginning to insist upon is incompatible with any survival-value it would seem that to be on the verge of starvation is to ensure eternal life. "Dame Nature," he says, "cares nothing about the babble of politicians and trades-union regulations." Which is true, and true of other babbling and other attempts at regulation, for instance the regulation of vice, which the Dean wholeheartedly denounces, and the artificial regulation of population which he advocates to bring about the world-wide glorified France with its nicely adjusted balance between cradles and coffins.

What a hotch-potch of class or race prejudice, narrow vision, distrust of democracy and even remnants of serfdom, flavoured with solemnly expressed biological prophecies and what Morley aptly calls an unlovely leanness of judgment, all these extravagant claims for heredity present. There cannot be the smallest doubt that the first alternative will not be accepted by the people who have borne the larger sacrifices in this war; and as to the second, France herself before the war, and more surely after the war, with her splendid manhood broken or dead, stands as an answer and a warning which no nation can mis-read. That way lies death.

The obvious fact is that, except in extremely rare cases, we have insufficient knowledge to determine who shall or shall not have children and who shall or shall not be born. The subject is too great for us to handle. The risks of over-population are more easily to be borne than the chances of depriving the race of worthy men and women. What right, indeed, have we to prevent the birth of lives? The earth is not ours. We are only here for a period. We have no right in the name of race or State, God or man, to keep others away; they might be as good as we are, they might become saviours of men. In view of the position taken up by Mr. Grant and other political exploiters of the alleged laws of heredity in opposition to environment, it is, indeed, an assumption of a prerogative to which they have not the shadow of a claim.

Heredity and environment, nature and nurture are not antagonistic but complementary conceptions. Some say that heredity is alone of importance for the race because the effects of nurture are not transmitted. But if this were undeniable it is at least equally certain that the expression of the inheritance depends upon the appropriate nurture; that however important for the individual his inheritance may be it is as important that he should have for its realisation the best and fullest nurture possible; and nurture

includes not only the conditions and advantages immediately surrounding the individual, but in addition the supreme value of the social heritage which is independent of any germ-plasm.

The conclusion to which we have previously referred is again forced upon us. We must improve the environment into which we are born, educate for parenthood, give more persistent and enlightened care to motherhood, change beyond recognition our whole system of national education, of housing and of industrial life, and transform our social ideals and standards of living for several generations before we can even begin to tamper with life before birth. In spite of many setbacks life has, throughout the ages, always tended to improve. It has been on the up-grade path and it is still in process of being made perfect through sufferings.

Later Darwinians, like Bateson, have accumulated much evidence to show that the progress of life has not entirely been accomplished by means of small variations, but that from time to time Nature has made big strides and that it is likely man arose by a mutation. To this warrantable inference should be added the views of Wallace that in the past there have also been three breaks in the evolution of the world of life when something from a higher sphere was imported into the process of development—first, when the organic succeeded the inorganic,

secondly, when consciousness entered into life, and lastly, when mind and soul awakened. These "big-lifts" in the evolution of man imply others, for man has become a religious as well as a social animal, he has established relations with a spiritual kingdom and dreams of immortality. These profound conceptions have exerted an entirely new control over the struggle for existence and, although the ape and tiger in man are slow of dying, will eventually purge humanity of these remains of his former lowly estate.

CHAPTER V

PENALTIES ON PARENTHOOD

PARENTHOOD runs right through nature and without it there would be neither butterfly nor man. And Nature has taken ceaseless care to produce life in prodigious quantities to allow for the innumerable hazards and losses which surround it. Biologists, as we have seen, have given us many examples of the abounding provisions of Nature to keep the species in being.

The natural penalties on parenthood are, then, enormous in number and most effective in keeping the balance of life at a level, which makes general existence possible and fruitful. Accidents, diseases, famines, earthquakes, storms, and all that is implied in that picturesque and expressive phrase "struggle for existence," are Nature's penalties, which operate almost unhindered by any artificial defences until the human kingdom is reached, and even then the ingenuity of early and untutored man in protecting himself and his offspring was very limited. It is only in civilised times, and at a comparatively late period, that man has put up a big fight against his enemies. War, too, is being set

back in spite of this the greatest and bloodiest and, please God, the last contest in history. But as we have seen in the previous chapter, there are still many enemies of infant life to be slain, still far too many mothers die or are damaged in child-birth¹ owing to hard work and grossly incompetent help in the hour of need. And slumdom, that shameful product of our civilisation, claims thousands of lives every year before and immediately after birth.

And we have also seen that there are some cultured men and women amongst us who deplore the removal of these natural and "civilised" checks to parenthood. They believe that disease and war weed out the weaklings and give a better chance for the better sort, which obviously includes themselves. Misinterpreting or misapplying the idea of the survival of the fittest as far as man is concerned, they rejoice over every coffin and are inclined to weep over most cradles, sometimes over their own. It is a pseudo-scientific and semi-human defence of checks upon the propagation of the alleged unfit which our civilisation has protected by providing the love of mother and father, home and physician. Dr. Saleeby has pithily described these amiable people as the better-dead school; and some of them, so dense is their sense of

¹ This point should receive the particular attention of the new Ministry of Health. The Medical Officer of the Local Government Board has issued a special report upon it (Cd. 8085).

humour, have accepted the phrase without seeing that it might apply to themselves !

Now in addition to the artificial checks of preventable diseases and removable poverty, society has loaded parenthood with other and no less crushing burdens. In order to raise money to carry on the affairs of State, Governments have reared up financial barriers to the discouragement of family life. The National Council of Public Morals (20 Bedford Square, W.C.) has followed up the work of the Birth-rate Commission¹ which it established, and is proposing efforts to lessen these obstacles to parenthood. It appointed a Committee to consider the most practical manner in which it could promote worthy parenthood, and as an outcome of its deliberations the following petition was prepared, and is being extensively signed as we go to press. The petition speaks for itself, and we believe this effort to relieve parents from the present heavy financial burdens will be applauded by the whole country.

The petition says that—inasmuch as it is imperative in the interests of the nation and the Empire that the decline in the birth-rate, especially where the environment is favourable to the development of the child, should be arrested ; and inasmuch as many parents have been led to restriction of family from worthy

¹ The report has been issued under the title, "The Declining Birth Rate, its Causes and Effects." Chapman & Hall, 10/6.

motives of affection and prudence, such as the desire to secure for their children as good and as assured a position and vocation in society as possible ; it is incumbent on society for its own advantage to lessen, through the State, as far as is practicable, the burden resting on parents in respect of their children, without weakening the sense of parental responsibility or encouraging any recklessness in the assumption of such responsibility. The petitioners believe that this object can be attained in the following ways :

1. Marriage should not be fiscally penalised by the assessment of the husband's and wife's income jointly ; but there should be separate assessment of each, as marriage when consummated in parenthood involves increased responsibilities. Instead of the almost negligible reduction of income-tax now allowed for each child, there should be a reduction so substantial as would enable parents without undue anxiety to face the responsibility involved in each increase of family.

(a) Any such reduction should not be limited to incomes under £500, but should be determined rather by the obligations for education necessarily incurred by the parents.

(b) The amount of the death duty payable on small estates should not be determined exclusively by the total amount left to all the children, but, partially at least, by the amount received by each child.

(c) As indirect taxation upon the necessities of life falls most heavily in proportion to the number of children in the family, direct taxation with adjustment to the parental responsibilities involved should to as large an extent as possible take its place.

2. A reduction of the cost of education, especially secondary and university, is imperative if the nation and Empire are to have at command as abundant, varied, and thoroughly competent service of the higher type as is necessary for safety and progress. In serving its own interests the State would be removing one of the chief obstacles to the increase of family in homes best suited for the bringing up of children. Fitness to benefit by the educational advantages offered should be thoroughly tested; but it is a loss to the nation even more than to the individual that any child's talents should be undeveloped from the lack of educational opportunity. As in the education that is dependent on local rates efficiency is often sacrificed to economy, it is urged that education should be made to a much larger degree than at present a charge on Imperial funds in order to encourage local effort. The raising of the leaving age in the elementary schools, desirable and even imperative as it is, must be recognised as greatly increasing the burden upon parents by depriving them of the wages the boys or girls would be

earning, and it is only right that some adequate compensation should be devised.

3. Thoroughly competent professional aid should be at the disposal of every mother in her confinement as much for the public as individual advantage.

4. The housing of the people, which has a direct bearing on the decline of the birth-rate, is a crying scandal, and calls for immediate and effective action on the part of the State, on not merely a local but even a national scale, so as to make the existence of "slums" impossible—providing, amongst other things, for a regular and effective inspection (as regards sanitary conditions) of the dwellings and precincts.

It is to be hoped that, in spite of the excessive war taxation, the Government may favourably respond to this petition in 1918.

Note should also be taken of the divorce laws and the results of their operation. There are a million persons in the country now permanently separated. It surely is in the interests of public morality that, especially amongst the working classes, they should have a just opportunity to re-marry. To this end the Divorce and Law Reform Union is asking the Attorney-General to bring in a one-clause emergency Bill to be cited as the Matrimonial Causes Act of 1917 which reads as follows :

"From and after the passing of this Act all decrees for a judicial separation and all orders

for a separation by any court of summary jurisdiction shall after a period of five years from the date thereof have the same effect and force as a decree absolute for dissolution of a marriage, unless the husband and wife so separated shall have resumed cohabitation before the expiration of the said period of five years.”¹

All these are artificial checks to parenthood which should be removed if we, as an Empire, really desire to people our Colonies and to hold our own in the world. And many believe that it is in these directions we can most effectively arrest the declining birth-rate. Sermonising on the patriotism of parenthood seems to be almost futile. Parents want some substantial relief from the burdens of taxation, some practical and tangible encouragement to undertake the increasingly onerous responsibility of having and rearing children to reproductive age.

Germany with her usual thoroughness has set herself to accomplish this task. She has asked for ten million additional babies during the next decade, and has offered graduated relief from taxation, free medical attendance, free school and university education, better housing accommodation, higher wages for parents, shorter hours of labour, and many other attractive inducements. Church and State are even smiling

¹ As we go to press a Bill is being presented to Parliament in which the period is reduced to three years.

upon illegitimacy. Of course the military party which offers these advantages has an eye upon the Army and Navy. And it is difficult to believe, unless permanent peace is secured, that the people will comply with their sugared demands. Nevertheless, they show the directions in which it is necessary to move if we are desirous of letting life bring forth its best in the best possible environment.

I

From what we have already written the reader will have inferred that we do not accept without considerable qualifications the conclusion that the causes of the falling birth-rate are fundamentally economic. Nevertheless, the economic aspect which is not so difficult of apprehension as is sometimes represented, presents the most effective point of attack. A man with small means who desires to marry and at the same time to make advances in his profession will find himself seriously handicapped with a large family; and he either marries late or adopts preventive measures for prudential reasons. Either course of action may be much against his ideals, especially the latter, which may be actively injurious to the happiness and highest desires of his wife, resulting in lifelong regrets, if worse things do not happen. It is a dilemma which confronts many people nowadays, and they have to settle between themselves on which

horn to remain. Their dilemma is not self-created; they are the unhappy victims of a state of things which is deplorable, but which appears to be in their individual instances unalterable. They dare not stand aloof from the society into which they have been born and educated; they cannot deliberately adopt a lower standard of living—cheaper houses, fewer social functions, humbler dress and habits—without prejudicing, perhaps killing, their chances of success.

How to bring about the wholesale reform which will lower the present extravagant and artificial scale of living is a much greater problem. It looked, before the war, to be almost insoluble. But the war will probably unravel the whole subject. The unimaginable losses in this struggle with death have revealed, as by a flash of light, the paltriness of much that we thought indispensable. The serving side by side of all classes in the trenches, hospitals and workshops, the splendid spirit of self-sacrifice which is abroad everywhere, the heavy financial losses which have fallen and will still fall for generations upon the whole Empire, all these overwhelming disasters must bring about deep and abiding changes which perhaps nothing less grave and formidable could have effected. The war may cut the knot of this crucial problem at a stroke and free us all from economic pressure due to our having become slaves of false estimates of our positions

and what was expected of us. This war should free the healthy maternal instincts of women for children and a home from financial and social entanglements which strangled their natural affections and left them barren, shrunken and often pitiable objects whose finery only served to emphasise the fact that they had lost the best half of their womanhood.

In this war, too, we have witnessed the doubly tragic losses of only sons of good families and great houses. Alas! these only sons have left broken and lonely parents who might in some cases have had other branches to the tree of their lives, but they would not, and their pedigree is now snapped. That bitter lesson may be taken to heart by parents in the hard times ahead of us all.

But what of the other classes, the lower middle, the skilled working men amongst whom the same decline has occurred, as their maternity benefit societies' records show. If the so-called upper classes reform will their example be followed by less favoured ones? Will it become fashionable, not to have large families as in the early Victorian period, but families adequate to their respective means and the needs of the Empire? Surely example will go a long way in these matters too. The middle classes have in their way and to the extent of their means sought all the distractions available—week-ends from home, motor-

cars, expensive amusements, and a social scale which always tended to rise above their means. And to all these things should be added the insecurity of employment and the dread of sickness and of old age meagrely provided for. In all walks of life, save the very lowest, these are real burdens. There are, of course, many other causes. Housing conditions, as we have seen, have almost everywhere been against the family life of the nation. Children are a nuisance to landlords, and parents with large families, even with two or three children, find it most difficult to obtain accommodation in respectable districts near enough to employment, and at a rent within their means. The Empire, after the war, must seriously tackle the question of providing homes for the future generation. It will be useless to leave it to private enterprise, to the good will of builders and owners. The problem is too vast, it requires large capital and a comprehensive scheme which the nation can alone supply and direct. The Churches, too, should take up this *homing* question, which lies at the root of much immorality, of their serious Sunday School losses, and of many other phases of the decline of their influence upon men, women, and children.

The men who come back from the battlefields will not be content to earn the inadequate wages of pre-war days or to work the long hours

or follow the same soul-deadening employments. There will be a social revolution. Let us hope that it will be peaceful, but it may not. They have sacrificed their hard-won trade rules and regulations, they have left their jobs in workshop and office, they have trusted the nation to see to it that they do not suffer permanently by reason of their patriotism, and the nation will be called upon to keep its plighted word. If capitalism attempts to take advantage of labour and to profit by its sacrifices there will be an upheaval. The mass of the people have suffered and their kith and kin have died or been broken in this war, and they will see to it that it does not occur again without their consent. They will refuse to go back to the bad conditions under which they lived in the long grey unsightly streets and to the wage which left so small a margin that they were almost always near the brink of poverty even as skilled workmen. From top to bottom of society a better way of life will open out, we shall get back to more natural and sweeter manners, the finer instincts of men and women will have greater play, the true race-qualities which have hitherto preserved us as a people and which have been seen to noble advantage in this war will be brought out and valued at their real worth, and motherhood and fatherhood honoured above riches and pleasures and society.

II

In "Potash and Perlmutter" the senior partner who purchased a motor-car was uncertain, after he had driven it for weeks, whether it was an asset, which he expected, or a liability, which he feared. If children are brought into the world there can be little doubt that, nowadays, they are a serious liability. Before the Factory Acts and compulsory education and the raising of the school age (to be raised again this year), children were probably regarded as a growing asset in many a working-class family; and in those days large families were general. There were other circumstances which favoured the larger family, such as the almost total absence of counter attractions to home life both for parents and children, and the greater restrictions upon the sphere of woman's activities outside the home, when marriage and family life were the apex of interest. It is instructive and humiliating to read the speeches in Parliament of men of high character, who fought against the noble efforts of Lord Shaftesbury to protect children from cruel labour in mine and chimney sweeping; and the debates over elementary and compulsory education. One argument, which is not without prophetic significance, predominated: parents, they said, would refuse to have children, as they would become a burden instead of a considerable financial gain; these Acts would mean the break-up of family

life, and our industries would come to a standstill.

And there are many amongst us who share that belief and who profess the opinion that compulsory education has ruined the working classes, made the middle classes too independent, and obscured that strong division between the upper and the lower which God did not write upon the Table of Commandments which He delivered to Moses because He had ingrained it into human nature itself. To what extent the increasing liabilities cast upon parents has lowered the birth-rate it is impossible to gauge, or how often fathers resolved not to have more children because they would not contribute to the common purse until after 13 or 14. But, as we have noticed, the general fashion of having large families gradually broke down, and, as smaller families brought relief to parents, the profitable change spread throughout almost all classes, and the early Victorian family passed away with the crinoline.

But our view is that it is not by any means an entirely economic phenomenon ; the economic man still remains a fiction. In this matter of having or not having children after marriage we have to take into account allied psychological factors which undoubtedly play a more potent part than finance in the ultimate results. Monetary considerations do not exhaust the causes of the declining birth-rate, even in the classes most

affected. Dean Inge has some pointed remarks which seem to the writer to be closer to the controlling facts of the situation. "A low birth-rate," he says, "may indicate a tendency to withdraw from the struggle for existence, and to sacrifice the future to the present. There have been signs that many of our countrymen no longer think the strenuous life worth while ; part of our resentment against Germany resembles the annoyance of an old-fashioned firm, disturbed in its comfortable security by the competition of a young and more vigorous rival. It is even suggested that after the war we should protect ourselves against German competition by tariff walls. This abandonment of the policy on which our prosperity is built would soon bring our overpopulated island to ruin." We need not debate the last two sentences, but they are quoted because they illustrate a prevalent impression that our nerves are in an unstable condition, that we have lost the sense of security and of self-control, and are in consequence uncertain about ourselves and the future, and we desire to have something beyond our own arm wherewith to stand against the advancing hosts who challenge our position. We have not space to enter into the statistics of our trade to show where and how the lead has been taken from us and the centre of some important industries transferred to our competitors. The account, indeed, is of serious omen. It

has been openly stated that this was one of the deeper causes of the war, an attempt to knock out our competitor with cannons as we had lost the commercial game beyond recovery, and that the violation of Belgian territory afforded us a God-sent excuse to cover our ulterior, if unconscious, purposes.

Let it not be thought that the writer accepts that hellish attitude. The war has steadily disclosed that the enemy, whatever he may have gained by his commercial penetration, has lost his soul in the enterprise. And we have by this war rediscovered our own. But the point of our argument lies deeper. The feeling of uncertainty about the future, the increasing tendency to become agents and middlemen and not makers, to indulge in ever multiplying pleasures at the risk and loss in numberless cases of business, points to an unstable physical condition which may also have played its part in diminishing our active potency if the cause does not lie in some deeper physiological disturbance which has affected the rhythm of our reproductive life. Whether this is an effect of all the other causes indicated or whether our tendency to withdraw from the strenuous life is a premonition of more than a temporary exhaustion of fertility from obscure racial causes is doubtful. The action and interaction of causes and effects where complex economical, psychological, social

and moral factors are intermingled are extremely difficult if not impossible to differentiate. And all that we can do is to restore ourselves to normal conditions where we know we have gone astray, to put ourselves in the way of social, physical and moral health, and to leave the recondite causes alone until they have been discovered, when we shall be in a stronger position to face them or to resign ourselves with dignity to the unavoidable consequences.

CHAPTER VI

MIGRATION

THE Right Hon. W. Long, M.P., in receiving, as President of the Local Government Board, the Report of the National Birth-rate Commission, said that he much preferred the term migration to emigration, and there is no doubt that for practical as well as sentimental reasons migrant is a more acceptable name (it is commonly used by scientific men) for those who leave the Motherland to found new homes under the old flag ; for the homing instinct sends them forth, and, as we have seen in this war, they are not "lost to our Colonies," as Mr. Whetham asserts, but they remain members of the family of Empire and a great asset upon which we can rely. The long-delayed step of making every colonial a citizen of the Empire will certainly be taken when the war is over.

As we have seen, there has been a notable change recently in the opinion of some leading advocates of a restricted increase of population, mainly occasioned by the sparse population of our Colonies which we hold but have failed to people. An instance may be given.

Dean Inge, at the close of his candid and thoughtful article in the *Edinburgh Review* (January,

1917) upon the birth-rate, says that, although it seems to run counter to the general purport of his article, he is of the opinion that if facilities for migration are given by Government action, it will be not only possible but desirable for the increase in our population to be maintained during the twentieth century. He says, "The British Empire is very far from being over-populated, and in Canada and Australasia there is probably room for nearly 200,000,000 people." And when "the future of our Dominions is secure, the part of England as a World-Power will have been played to a successful issue, and we may be content with a position more consonant with the small area of these islands." Dr. C. W. Saleeby has always been an ardent advocate of an increase of population for the same reason. In the course of his able lectures on Imperial Eugenics at the Royal Institution, March, 1917, he said: "The disproportion between our numbers and territories is unnatural and dangerous. Rome is the only similar case in history and is our *memento mori* now. The earth is for life, and the fulness thereof. Our falling birth-rate and rising death-rate, if so continued, mean the doom of an Empire which we must occupy as well as own, people as well as police, and to which, unless we do so, we have neither biological nor moral right."

Neo-Malthusians like Dr. Drysdale and Dr. Dunlop have, on the contrary, developed an

almost unscrupulous advocacy of the small family system, even to the extent of urging parents to have no children during the war, which, in view of the irreparable losses of our splendid young manhood in our Army and Navy, not only of the old country but of our Dominions as well, is a policy revealing a narrowness of outlook and a smallness of spirit that are scarcely possible to parallel. It is a policy which discovers the crude materialistic character of their Malthusianism; and it should not be forgotten that Mrs. Besant ultimately repudiated this Malthusian policy, and that she deliberately withdrew from circulation her population book which did so much for that League. With the loss of such advocates as we have previously referred to, and the weakening of their own position by such peculiar notions as are revealed above, this kind of Malthusianism is not likely to secure too many distinguished supporters for some years to come.

Now, the Final Report of the Dominions Royal Commission, just issued, supplies invaluable data and some very pertinent recommendations upon the whole question of migration to our Colonies, which are of utmost value at this juncture and which for the first time afford us a more comprehensive and reliable survey of the numbers available for migration, their ages and sex-distribution, the districts where they are most needed, and the manner in which they should be migrated if they are to be successful.

The principal fact upon which we desire to lay stress at this moment is the unsatisfactory condition of sex-distribution throughout our Empire from the point of view of the future population of our Colonies. It should at once be said that the excess of females over males is not a phenomenon peculiar to our country ; it is a general result from many causes, some of which have been dealt with in other chapters, and is prevalent over Western Europe. The facts as to our Empire can be briefly stated. In 1911 there were in the United Kingdom 1,329,000 more females than males ; and in the self-governing Dominions 762,000 more males than females. The Commissioners add that the surplus in the United Kingdom is unfortunately increasing under war conditions, and it is likely to be still more marked before the war is over. In the Dominions, on the other hand, the war has caused, temporarily at any rate, some alleviation of the disproportion. The above figures have also to be qualified in various other ways. For instance, the ages of the surplus women show that some 527,000 are over 45, and are therefore too old for emigration ; and are needed to meet the increasing demand for female labour and the after effects of the war, which no one can foresee. But for the moment these figures may stand. And to them should be added the facts as to migration in the forty years from 1871 to 1911. During that period 590,000 more males

than females emigrated from England and Wales alone. Incidentally the Commissioners usefully remark that "It is clear that such a condition of affairs creates undesirable problems both in the United Kingdom and in the Dominions." And the Australian census of 1911 also shows that of persons of less than four years' residence in the Commonwealth there were only 320 females to 1,000 males in the age group 15 to 24 and only 403 to 1,000 in the age group 25 to 44. These figures illustrate clearly the moral need for the migration of a greater proportion of younger women.

These are the broad facts which have to be faced. And so far as migration is concerned they are largely due to the haphazard manner in which emigration has been conducted. It appears to be in the hands of various Government departments, voluntary emigration societies, and passage brokers and other persons like them whose financial interests have not always been consonant with sending out the best individuals of either sex. The Commissioners frankly say that "In the past, no power has existed, nor has any effort been made, to regulate emigration from the United Kingdom." And this regulation should certainly be undertaken in close co-operation with the Dominion authorities, who must make the best use of the migrants. The returns collected by the Commission show that in metropolitan Australia

there were 1,082 females to every 1,000 males (a number higher than that for England and Wales as a whole), and in the four chief towns in New Zealand the corresponding figure was 1,032 females to 1,000 males. Even in Canada, where the excess of males was more marked than in Australasia, the number of females in towns over 15,000 was 948 to every 1,000 males in comparison with 866 females to every 1,000 males for the whole of the Dominion. The Commissioners add that "in marked contrast were the disproportionate number of the sexes in the country districts. In Western Australia, outside Perth, there were in 1911 only 618 females to every 1,000 males. In British Columbia, outside the towns, there were but 511. This disproportion appears to be due not only to the fact that many men in the country districts were unmarried, but that many married women lived in towns in the Dominions whilst their husbands were at work in the country."

There is, therefore, here a double problem: the sending out, under strict Government supervision, of a suitable proportion of male and female migrants from this country, and an equally wise distribution of the sexes under even stricter supervision as they arrive.

The Commissioners reach some interesting and suggestive conclusions. They say that:—

First, if an *equal* migration of males and females

from the United Kingdom could be assured after the war, there is no great likelihood that the surplus of female over male population in the Mother Country would become larger.

Secondly, if the conditions of life overseas should make it possible for the Dominions to adopt the policy of ensuring the migration of the sexes in equal numbers, and particularly if they could increase the number of younger women emigrating, they would be doing much to increase their population in the next and succeeding generations. . . .

Fourthly, the problem in the Dominions is largely one of better distribution of female population between town and country. If, therefore, the Dominions, as they develop, can absorb a greater number of women in their country districts, they will have taken a decided step towards the solution of many problems.

Dean Inge, in the article already referred to, says that "the British Isles are even dangerously full, so that we are liable to be starved out if we lose the command of the sea." Now the starving out process may not be caused by over-population, although, of course, it is obvious that had we 10,000,000 fewer mouths to fill, the food, if we then had the same amount, would go further. But it must also be borne in mind that more mouths mean more hands to work; and no one will contend that we cannot do much more in

cultivating our own soil than we have done since the attraction and pressure of our improperly distributed industrial machinery depleted the countryside. Apart, however, from these considerations, which could be largely amplified, and which show that the problem is not simply one of getting rid of so-called surplus population, we must take seriously into account some other facts about the effects of emigration upon the population of the Motherland where it has been the most depleted.

The Commissioners inquired into the very important problem of the proportion of the volume of migration to the natural increase of population, especially at the reproductive ages, in view of the industrial requirements of our own country and the healthy increase of our population. The Emigration and Immigration Statistics supplied by the Board of Trade show that 65 per cent. of the total net emigration of males over 12 in 1913 took place in the age groups 18-30, and that net emigration "*was greater than the normal increase by natural growth of population at those ages.*" We have in another chapter referred to this factor as bearing in a marked manner upon the age-constitution of our population. It is at once obvious that the result of this emigration upon the Mother Country is considerably to weaken the reinforcement of young life, or in other words to

keep down the number of children and to increase the age of our population and consequently our death-rate. This is markedly the case in Ireland and Scotland. The amount of migration from the former country, both male and female, has been, say the Commissioners, "so great that the outward flow was in past years far in excess, and even in 1913 somewhat in excess, of the natural increase of population." And in the case of Scotland the figures for 1901-1911 show that the volume of migration exceeded the natural increase. If, they conclude, "persons between 18 and 30 alone are considered it is found that in both Scotland and Ireland the net emigration was more than double the natural increase." In regard to Scotland we have elsewhere put the same facts in another form. "The normal increase in 1912 in Scotland was 48,404, that is the result of subtracting the deaths from births. But Scotland lost by emigration 58,459 in the same period, therefore in 1912 the total population in Scotland actually decreased by 10,055."

Dealing with the occupations of migrants, they significantly add (and it is partly an answer to Dean Inge's argument about our being starved out during this war), "by 1914 it was generally recognised, and the view is one in which we entirely concur, that the purely rural population of the Mother Country was not in excess of her

own requirements." They also concur in the conclusion of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company's representatives, who in their evidence before the Commission stated that "an active campaign in Great Britain to remove men from the farms was a mistake and that they had consequently reduced to a large extent their activities in the Mother Country."

The movement of population is determined by many underlying causes, famine, war, pressure of trade, enlargement of territory, the healthy and natural desire of young life for adventure in other lands, but it is of the utmost importance in a land like our own that the natural increase of population should not be depleted by migration to such an extent as to wipe it out entirely, or to deplete essential industries like agriculture upon which our life may in the end, as we now see, depend. And it is obvious that the cry of over-population must be strictly scrutinised, and corrected, not by limiting births whilst our Colonies are nearly empty, but rather by increasing births and systematically distributing our population according to sex,¹ age, and occupation, and the actual requirements of the lands we are in duty bound to humanity to people efficiently if we claim to retain them.

¹ In reference to the migration of young unmarried men from this country to the Colonies, Dr. Saleeby has asked the question: "Do we believe in monogamy everywhere, or as would appear, in polygamy at home and polyandry overseas?"

CHAPTER VII

BIRTH-CONTROL AND THE RACIAL INSTINCT

THERE are two other aspects of the problem of the rise and fall of life which should receive frank treatment, namely, the increasing practice of birth-control and the necessity for better sex education of adolescents. Let us consider these subjects in this chapter and then state the attitude of the Churches towards the use of artificial restrictions.

The immediate operative cause of the declining birth-rate is its deliberate control by married people. That is proven, although in the nature of the case documentary and statistical evidence cannot be produced. The fertility, *per se*, of the people is not affected, the marriage rate is fairly constant, yet the number of children born falls lower and lower each year. And the people actually concerned will that it should be so.

Practically all writers who know the subject assign the same cause for the phenomenon. Parents, especially mothers, still love to have children about them, parental affection has not

waned, there is nothing essentially wrong with the morality of the married state, there is no hidden fault at the core of life. The explanation is simply that people have adopted methods of prevention for their own reasons.

It is quite probable, as is now and then alleged, that some young people settle before the wedding day how many children they intend to have, if their marriage is fertile. And, although that may strike some of us as indelicate, as lessening the romance and beauty of the happy springtime of life, it cannot be described as a sign of depravity or frivolity of mind or soul. No doubt it would have horrified our mothers and grandmothers and have branded the young people with the mark of the beast. But, looked at calmly and reasonably, there is nothing to shock, perhaps little to bring the blush of shame to the cheek of the fairest bride to consider such a subject, fraught for her with momentous consequences involving health and life or death. Indeed, it may well be that the entrance upon married life with eyes full open to all it means, and with a wholesome determination to assume only such responsibilities as can be reasonably borne, is a much cleaner and finer thing than to set out in ignorant irresponsibility of its functions, duties and consequences.

If, then, the volitional control of births within the married state has become a normal proceeding,

if it is fast losing its apparent indelicacy, if it is spoken about without raising vicious passions, if it is becoming the "correct thing" to do, as it will be shortly the correct thing to insist upon a medical examination for both parties to the marriage bond, we must give up the futile attempt to keep young people in the dark and the assumption that they are ignorant of notorious facts. We cannot if we would stop the spread of sexual knowledge; and if we could do so we should only make matters infinitely worse. This is the second decade of the twentieth century, not the early Victorian period.

Let knowledge grow from more to more—
But more of reverence in us dwell.

It is, then, no longer a question of knowing or not knowing. We have to disabuse our middle-aged minds of that fond delusion. Our young people know more than we did when we began our married lives, and sometimes as much as we know ourselves, even now. So that we need not continue to shake our few remaining hairs in simulating feelings of surprise or horror. It might have been better for us if we had been more enlightened. And if our discussion of this problem is to be of any real use we must at the outset reconcile ourselves to the facts that the birth-rate is voluntarily controlled, that brides and bridegrooms know how it is done, and many will certainly do it. Certain

persons who instruct us in these matters, may hold up their pious hands and whiten their frightened faces as they cry out in the public squares against "this vice," but they only make themselves ridiculous. Their influence in stemming the tide is nearly *nil*. Indeed, they are in danger of acting as unconscious purveyors of vice rather than as examples of virtue. We are not throwing cold water upon honest efforts to preach upon these questions, because there are times and seasons when it may be most effective. But the preacher, the time, and the subject have to be carefully chosen.

These frank admissions would seem to give away the whole case. There would appear to be nothing more to say or do. If the knowledge of the ways and means of limitations thus pass from lip to lip in common circulation, if it is as impossible to suppress it as to suppress marriage itself, if the falling birth-rate has acquired such a momentum that it will go on until the furthest limit is reached, we may as well put a full stop to the argument and take to making coffins instead of cradles, although on second thoughts that may be a declining trade too, for fewer cradles should somehow mean fewer coffins. At any rate, even if our arithmetic is weak, we see clearly enough that we are wasting our breath shouting against a hurricane to stop when it is

blowing off the roofs of our houses and threatening the very foundations.

Now that is not, as it may seem at first blush to be, a hopeless attitude to assume. On the contrary, it is a distinct gain to clear our minds of false prudery, of cloistered notions, of wrong estimations of our own standards of propriety and virtue, of the natural tendency to judge others by what we have been brought up to believe to be the proper rules of sexual conduct. And if we are fully conscious of these considerations we shall be in a better position to begin looking at the problem as a whole. For, instead of having disposed of it by these candid admissions, we have actually added to its difficulties. But it is necessary that cobwebs woven by prejudice, ignorance and fear should be blown away if we are to attempt a useful analysis of the subject of this volume and to discover some more hopeful way than "suppression" of bringing the men and women concerned to a wiser frame of mind in view of our national and racial future.

I

What, now, is meant by birth-control? The control of the birth-rate simply means the deliberate adoption of artificial preventive means, as distinguished from natural checks, to stop conceptions which are not desired. It

is obscure who originally discovered these various methods, but it is generally accepted that they were first disclosed to the public in our country somewhere about 1876 by Mrs. Besant and the late Mr. Charles Bradlaugh, who issued a pamphlet, written by Dr. Knowlton, describing them. It is certain that from that time the birth-rate began to decline in the United Kingdom. The birth-rate in France began to fall in 1845; it rose slightly after the Franco-German War, as it appears to have done after other wars, and then fell again, and it has gone on falling until the death-rate has exceeded the birth-rate. It is evident that the means of prevention were widely known in France before the information reached our general population, and of course must have been known to doctors and the better educated people amongst us years before 1876. The knowledge seems to have reached the mass of the German people about 1890 and the Italians in 1880. At the time of writing, a vigorous attempt is being made in America to challenge the constitutionality of Section 1142 of the Penal Code, designed to prevent the dissemination of information on birth-control. Mrs. Sanger and two other women have been convicted under the Code, and appeals have been lodged before the Supreme Court. A *Birth Control Review* has just been published and organisations are being established in many

cities devoted to this growing effort to enlighten the American people. They ask, "Shall 8,000 women in New York State die from abortion every year because of their ignorance of the means of prevention?" It is said that there are nearly 100,000 cases of abortion every year in America and that they would be all prevented if these expectant mothers were properly informed of preventive means. A Birth Control Clinic, on the lines of those in Holland, has been opened in Brooklyn and forcibly closed by the authorities. It is evident that a great crusade is to be waged in America which, like the persecutions in England, will have the effect of spreading this knowledge far and wide and of repealing the present law.

We may assume that all other nations have come by the information from one source or another, but mainly through commercial channels, for the distinguishing feature of this practice is that it has been taken up by the people without much help from the medical faculty, who, it might have been supposed, would have been not only the pioneers but the regular sources of information. How far the trade has created the demand it is difficult to say; that it found a market ready to receive the goods, and easy, if at first private, channels of making them known, is sure. Before long the trade became more open, and nowadays shops may be seen

in some of our leading thoroughfares, mainly in the districts where places of amusement are congregated, where the goods are boldly displayed in the windows and large advertisements, sometimes illuminated by electricity, attract public attention to them.

This aspect of the trade is most objectionable to all decent citizens, and scarcely a week passes without our receiving a complaint about them from some indignant mother or father whose children have noticed them. Elsewhere¹ we have written that one of the distinguishing marks of present-day vice is that it has become commercial, and that middlemen like white-slave traders have stepped in to organise the trade in the bodies of men and women. And that is the case with regard to preventives. They are not purchased by a doctor's prescription to a chemist who keeps them out of sight, but by tradesmen who make a special business in them and use every advertising artifice to create a public and indiscriminate public demand. They have thus become part of the stock-in-trade of vice and are no doubt used extensively for illicit purposes.

There are certain arguments in favour of allowing this symptom of a deeper evil to remain an open sore in the most frequented parts of our cities. First, the trade is not and, we imagine,

¹ "Master Problem," pub. by Stanley Paul & Co.

will never be made illegal. If it could be regulated by the medical faculty and confined to registered chemists many people would be prepared to leave it alone. But such regulation is, we fear, not possible nowadays. We have gone beyond that stage and cannot be put into leading strings even when they are in the hands of wise doctors. Whatever control of that character might have been possible years ago, it cannot be exerted now. And it is said that it is better, in spite of its offensiveness, to keep this sore open to the public gaze. To close it would be to drive it inwards, to breed deadlier maladies. We have before us a terrible example of the unwisdom of such a course in the alarming discovery of the enormous and perilous extent of venereal diseases and in America of widespread abortion—which some say is also increasing amongst ourselves. We shut our hospitals to the treatment of venereal diseases, the medical faculty had little experience in curing them, and we drove the sufferers into the hands of quacks, their only refuge. These diseases have grown underground and have now revealed themselves like a volcanic eruption, and we are panic-stricken to discover about 3,000,000 cases in our country to-day, many of them centres of dire infection which are poisoning our racial life. It is probably better, as we have said, that the trade we are dealing with should be public and not secret, that it should be in the

streets which we all frequent and not hidden away in some remote quarter where it would flourish unmolested. It is thus a constant challenge to us to be on our guard, to be up and doing something for the moral life of our nation. We might be in danger of forgetting the depth and extent of vice and of believing all is well and fair if we were not frequently reminded, even offensively reminded, that vice is at our doors and even nigh unto our own hearts.

There is also another aspect of this trade in preventives which seems to make it less repulsive. Now that we know much more about venereal diseases we are made aware that these preventives may prevent infection, that they may be hygienic precautions the sale of which should be left as free as vice is prevalent. We have met quite a respectable number of extremely rigid purists (we do not care to call them puritans) who will not listen to this argument, because they say men and women who indulge in vice ought to suffer the full penalties, they ought to catch venereal diseases. Now, if they alone caught them and did not pass them on to innocent wives and husbands, there might be something, although it would be very little, to say in favour of this merciless attitude towards sinners. But as we now well know, there are tens of thousands of innocent sufferers, and if preventives do prevent some innocent people from contracting these foul diseases they should be made easily

accessible and even thrust in the face of those who are disease-carriers.

This discussion has, apparently, gone off into a side track, although it was necessary to follow it in order to carry the whole matter along with us to the conclusion. What then is the upshot of these considerations? Simply this, that preventive methods have been discovered, that they are being more widely made known, that they are as a fact being much used, and that in consequence the birth-rate continues to fall, especially amongst the better educated classes. The effects upon the nervous system are at present obscure, some doctors contending that shock and reaction follow the arrested or perverted act and others that they have discovered no harm of any kind; the fact being that the subject has not been studied on a scale wide enough to arrive at any generally acceptable conclusion. It would appear that some nervous, perhaps deeper-seated disturbance would result from such artificial checks, especially to women. Of course, where poisonous abortifacients, like *emplastrum plumbi*, which (April, 1917) after prolonged negotiations has been scheduled as a poison,¹ are used, dire ill, even death, results. But without going into details which are undesirable it should be stated, what is obviously to be inferred from the wide use made of them, that

¹ See "A Great Reform Accomplished," published by The National Council of Public Morals, 20 Bedford Square, W.C.

some methods are less harmful under certain physical conditions, which, however, are not very likely to exist in the exciting circumstances surrounding the act. We are anxious to state the case judiciously, and perhaps we ought to add that the condition of the health of the parties, their nervous temperament, the special nature of the particular case, whether normal or illicit, have all to be taken into account, and that methods which might be apparently free from physical harm to one might be actively dangerous to another. Perhaps these considerations had better be left at that point. After all, the means used are not the centre of the problem, although they bulk largely in the public eye; they are secondary to the main issues, and do not change the character of the deeper causes of the declining birth-rate.

II

From the broad, questioning attitude assumed in the last division let us come closer to the subject of parenthood and of the racial instinct by the exercise of which we are born. The racial act should be one of grave responsibility; to bring a human being into this world, even into ideal conditions which rarely exist, is the greatest thing man and woman can do. Alas! it seems frequently to be the most irresponsible act we commit. How many babes are born of drunken

debauchery? "Young man," said Diogenes to a stupid child, "thy father was very drunk when thy mother conceived thee." Dr. Bezzola, commenting upon the nine thousand idiots returned in the Swiss Census of 1900, says that there were two acute annual maximum periods for the conception of idiots (calculated nine months before birth); these were the periods of carnival and vintage when the people drank most. And Matthews Duncan says that "observations collected by Hufeland, Burdach, Sequin, Roesch and others have demonstrated that children procreated during the drunkenness of the parents may be born with a general obtuseness of the senses, and are affected with idiocy." How many babes, alas! are conceived in momentary and unthinking impulse, brought forth in despair and curses, and into conditions which poison them before they open their eyes—not born, but damned into the world. What in all the wide world is a greater and more pathetic tragedy than an unwilling mother with an unwanted baby by a dissolute, irresponsible father? And apart from extreme cases there are many decent-living mothers and fathers who would infinitely prefer to have no more children in their particular conditions, but of whom children are born. Let anyone live, as the writer has done, in the slums and poorer quarters, or even in middle-class districts of

our great cities and talk with men and women and he will soon discover that parenthood has become a burden which they do not want to increase. It is the same in the higher circles, although the excuse of poverty and the dread of a penniless old age are absent.

It might be thought that under such circumstances the parental function would be rarely performed, that the risks of conception would be avoided even if the other consequences were far greater than they are, that it would, indeed, be a gravely responsible act. But it is not so, in spite of the very conditions which should impose the strictest control upon sexual relations and should rightly inhibit union to infrequent occasions. And the reasons have been already referred to. Passion, engendered by a thousand and one vicious influences, seizes the throne and reason and worthier ideals are cast down in the dust of shame and vice and we are lowered in soul and body.

There seems to be no mating season amongst men corresponding with the rhythmical habits of some of the lower animals. For some reason, not yet disclosed, we have shed that peculiar control which it might have been better for the race had we retained. At least it seems so under our social conditions. There are some amongst us who preach that sexual union should only take place when a child is

desired, notable amongst them being the Bishop of Southwark. In "Cradles or Coffins," we suggested that the Bishop had only looked at one side of the racial act, he had forgotten that it has other, perhaps secondary but important uses, and therein lies one of the differences between the lower animals and man in this respect. Human nature is highly complex ; personal, family, social and racial consequences are intimately intertwined and this act in a special degree is concerned with them all. It links them together, and to separate one from the other is an act of moral surgery which cannot be performed with safety or success.

It may be argued that our modes of life have brought about this confusion and have bred in us unlawful desires which should be suppressed. Possibly. And we have argued to some extent on similar lines. But we have to take civilised life as it is lived amongst us, with the sexes thrown together at all times, and desires quickened by influences it is extremely difficult to cut off.

Some writers maintain that parenthood is the supreme end of human life. But married life exists for more than parenthood. Beautiful, even holy, as it is, it is obvious that woman has other functions than child-bearing. What, over and above maternity, of her own self-expression and development in which she has frequently surpassed man ? She too carries a

golden torch, and in the history of the world she has inscribed her name high upon the records. If we are to deepen the sense of responsibility for the parental act we must look to woman to accomplish it. With man it will continue to be a passing pleasure even when the consequences are well appreciated. The physical risk and burden fall upon the woman, and to her, during the child-bearing period, it is a serious event which might cost her her own life in bringing another life into being.

We must begin this most desirable reform by educating the girl to realise before her wedding day the responsibility she incurs. How many girls give way to men before marriage in sheer ignorance of the consequences which are likely to follow, an ignorance which has been fostered by their mothers, who, well knowing what "a fall" means, nevertheless allow their daughters to remain in the dark because they are ashamed to teach them themselves and foolishly resent the attempt of school teachers to do so! And in adopting this unfortunate attitude they are actuated by the earnest desire to keep the mind of the girl pure! If parenthood is to be made more responsible we must break down this unwholesome reticence between mother and daughter, and reveal the laws of sex to the girl even more than to the boy. It is the old story, we begin our sex education too late,

as we have all along begun our care of the health of the people. It is too late when the child begins to go to school, it is too late when the young people are about to marry, it is almost useless afterwards. It is too late to begin medical inspection at school age; we must go further back to the child in the home, to the infant in the cradle, to the unborn babe, and further still to the expectant mother and still further to the adolescent girl, the potential mother of the future. Is it too much to ask of doctors, teachers and parents, of Church and State, to unite in the twentieth century in courageously discharging this imperative duty to the coming generation?

III

We have been frequently asked whether we do not believe that in this age we are sex-obsessed, and we reply "No," except in individual cases. Sex is at the very centre of life; upon it life depends. Many women have rightly demanded that men should exert greater self-control of the sex impulse than they do of other impulses. Of course, self-control is one of the primal conditions of existence, for without it man goes to the wall, and sex-inhibition there must be if we are to live a complete and successful life. But sex is the master passion, and cannot be wholly compared with any other demand

of our nature. Sex-obsessed some morbid men and women may be, but not the race. Rather we are inclined to think that ideal sex-attraction is weakening owing to our unwholesome ways of living and that women are in danger of losing their most precious heritage and qualities thereby.

That some men and women are sex perverts goes without saying. But they have existed in every age, amongst aristocrats and peasants alike. In our day, owing to lateness of marriages and the stress and strain of living up to social standards beyond our resources to maintain with ease and comfort, and the consequent dislocation of normal sexual relations in marriage, there is a large amount of commercialised prostitution and a whole army of dissolute men and women battens upon our weaknesses. And the preventive facilities openly offered in our market places are an added danger. But all this is compatible with some disturbance of the sexual instinct. We do not know that there is any specific physiological evidence to sustain this suggestion. At the Birth-rate Commission we heard the evidence of several doctors and read a large body of written evidence from other countries, and although no doctor stated as a fact that he had noticed signs of enfeeblement, an impression was created that the effect of some of the evidence

was in favour of that position. If there is not sex-obsession may there be partial sex-exhaustion, due not to any alternating natural causes corresponding with the rise and fall of diseases, but rather to artificial obstructions reared by our civilisation?

These barriers have also surrounded sex with unhealthy and unworthy attractions. A veritable trade is done in the half-nude, and nudity even in pure art itself has become shamefaced, modesty itself is losing its inestimable charm and protective shield. Sex-relations, even in marriage, are regarded as something unholy, and the whole subject of sex has been swamped in seas of innuendo and nastiness. It seems to be almost impossible to hold clean and frank views of sex without being misunderstood or put down as improper. Mrs. Grundy is a vicious old woman masquerading in fig leaves; she is not the personification of virtue, and she must be banished from decent society. She is often only the handmaiden of vice. Are we to be always treated as impossible idealists when we insist that sex is essentially sweet and clean? That it is little short of being divine in its essence, and that all the attempts to smother it and hurry it out of sight and to refer to it in whispers which speak louder than trumpets to opening ears, are an insult to Nature and are calculated to expose the vicious aspects of sex and to hide its real virtues. If we are to avoid this result we have

to begin to accustom the young to regard the sex instinct as a "racial instinct," as something which exists, as it in reality does, not primarily for the individual but for the race. It is a trust for posterity. Certain peculiar and lasting joys are the outcome of its proper use and development, which is Nature's way of preserving it, for without it life would die. But the racial act is for the race. And the wise parent or school teacher will put the sex-awakening of the boy or girl in that setting from the very beginning. It is a sacred trust, the precise use of which will be disclosed as manhood and womanhood dawn. This view enables the mother and father to speak about it at the right time with comparative freedom, without damaging the precious veil of modesty with which, like petals, Nature has enwrapped it until the time of flowering. Alas! how soon this protective covering is rudely torn by vicious companions who have been left to pick up their ignorant notions from any source. And how imperative it is therefore that parents should educate themselves on this delicate matter that they may fortify their children with the truth of sex and against its all too current perversions.

Elsewhere¹ we have discussed how and when and by whom this knowledge may be imparted, and we have argued that the parent, minister,

¹ Master Problem

doctor and school teacher should be definitely enlisted in this co-operative labour; together they certainly can meet all the difficulties which arise and which often seem insurmountable to the parent who trembles lest he should anticipate the natural disclosures which take place in the normal development of the child's body and put into the mind of boy or girl thoughts which he supposes are absent, but which are merely dormant and become vocal long before he is aware of their presence. There can be little doubt that the ideal way of dealing with the subject of sex-instruction is by indirect methods and by taking it as a part of general education. But ideal methods, like ideal parents and children, are a rare production and we have often to be content with the second best. Under our general circumstances, where the child is suddenly taken from the shelter of home and thrust amongst older children who have learned bad habits and are precociously anxious to impart them to others, it becomes an imperative parental duty to give direct warnings to the child before it is exposed to temptation, and we are suggesting that the easiest and the best attitude to adopt is to look upon sex as a racial rather than an individual question, and to treat it accordingly; whilst of course being fully aware of its strong personal aspects which are the danger points in its premature development.

The personal aspects of the racial instinct soon become predominant. The fires of sexual passion are fanned into flame by a multitude of causes, amongst which low ideals of womanhood, overcrowding in small homes, wrong food, alcohol, suggestive stories and pictures, and deficient education play a large part. It is verily impossible, human nature and society being what they are, to disentangle this pure instinct from the animal baseness which clings to it. Prevention in babyhood is the only remedy likely to be effective. The child in the cradle must be watched and guided, the adolescent must be definitely warned and educated, the young man and woman must exert self-control if they are to avoid pitfalls and possible moral disasters. To keep this instinct sweet and wholesome for its highest uses is to keep the whole soul right and pure.

CHAPTER VIII

THE ATTITUDE OF THE CHURCH TOWARDS BIRTH-CONTROL.

By the Church we mean all the leading branches in this country—Roman, British, Nonconformist, Jewish. Their attitude when they have faced the problem of the declining birth-rate has differed in important particulars, but on the whole they have been opposed to the use of all artificial means of prevention. The Roman Church, through the confessional and the trained priest, has questioned, guided and censured her communicants without flinching; she has not been ashamed or squeamish about handling an unsavoury subject, even of speaking boldly upon it from her pulpits whenever the occasion demanded it. Generally speaking, she has borne consistent testimony—uncompromising opposition to any interference with the natural birth of children. And she has inculcated reliance upon her sacraments and teachings to foster and maintain that self-control which is the most desirable form of

birth-control. She is often blamed, we think unfairly, for advocating an unlimited birth-rate, that is to say, as many children as nature will allow, regardless of the financial and physical resources of the parents. We have not discovered any trustworthy evidence to prove that that is her correct attitude. Undoubtedly she takes up a hard position against so-called Neo-Malthusianism, but it does not follow that she therefore advocates improvident marriages and reckless reproduction, as her opponents aver. She admits perfect continence in marriage, but she never allows the gratification of desire which forestalls results. She sees that this crucial subject vitally concerns her own stability, authority and progress in the world ; and she is not going to be starved of children without exerting the most determined effort to avoid it. If this nation is to become Roman Catholic again, she wants as many as she can obtain, especially from Catholic parents. And even if that object is but a dream, she needs more children to hold her own and to extend and strengthen her comparative influence. We may, if we are so minded, regard this as an example of the astute far-sightedness and centuries-old patience of Rome, which plays a long game. We are not, however, concerned with what may be her ulterior motives, but with her straightforwardness and definite teaching when dealing with the birth-rate problem. She says it is her

problem much more than that of the State or of economics. And she would compel the State, had she the power, to provide every necessary means to encourage mothers to rear children. Whether her authority is effective over her own members in a Protestant country is a subject upon which we are ignorant. But the results of a special inquiry, conducted by Mr. Whetham, into thirty marriages recorded in *Who's Who* and the *Landed Gentry* between Roman Catholics gave an average of 6.6 children against 3.13 for the general community. She does exercise disciplinary measures and even forbids the sacraments where she believes her teaching is deliberately evaded, and that, to a Catholic, is a powerful inducement to obedience. Of course it is obvious that we are not in this book concerned with celibacy in the Religious Orders. The permanent spiritual and social value of celibacy, which is voluntarily assumed for the better discharge of lofty avocations, must be fully and gladly admitted, even by those who are outside the Catholic Church.

The position of the Church of England is perhaps not so clear and authoritative. But a document specially drawn up by the Bishops and issued to the clergy for their guidance was put before us. First there is the resolution of the Lambeth Conference of Bishops, and this is followed by the document issued to the clergy.

“The Conference regards with alarm the growing practice of the artificial restriction of the family, and earnestly calls upon all Christian people to discountenance the use of all artificial means of restriction as demoralising to character and hostile to national welfare.

“The Conference affirms that deliberate tampering with nascent life is repugnant to Christian morality.

“The Conference expresses most cordial appreciation of the services rendered by those medical men who have borne courageous testimony against the injurious practices spoken of, and appeals with confidence to them and to their medical colleagues to co-operate in creating and maintaining a wholesome public opinion on behalf of the reverent use of the married state.”

Later a document was drawn up by a number of Bishops, and it is sent to the clergy who apply for it. Some extracts are allowable :—

“In view of this advancing evil of restricted births the Bishops wish to make the following suggestions :

“(B) *Considerations as to Conjugal Duty.*

“(i) The first principle seems to be that the right and normal view of married life, intrinsically and apart from the pressure of conditions, such as we shall speak of in the next paragraph, is that the sexual instinct and the course of nature bounded

by care and self-discipline should be recognised as of God's ordering, and the blessing of children, be they few or many, welcomed as from Him.

“(ii) To speak of this as if it were mere self-indulgence, reckless of future consequences to parents and offspring, is entirely false, cruel and superficial. On the contrary, it often means a brave and trustful confidence that the natural and temperate use of a state appointed by God, and entered into with His blessing, can only work out for good ; and is accompanied by a courageous readiness on the part of the father and mother to face the responsibilities and carry the burdens which the bearing and rearing of a family impose upon them. Experience continually confirms this confidence. Large families are admirable schools of vigorous, dutiful and unselfish character.

“(iii) There have, however, always been cases in which prudence, or other forms of duty, call for exceptional conduct ; and it is strongly and reasonably urged that modern conditions of life in a country like ours have greatly enlarged the number of such cases. The health or strength of the wife may be unequal to the bearing of more children ; the conditions of the home may give no hope of their decent housing ; or poverty may make it apparent that they could not be maintained and brought up. In some cases such considerations as these warrant an anxious desire that the number of the family should not be

increased ; and it is necessary to consider whether there is any right course to be adopted by those who may rightly feel this desire.

“(iv) It seems in this connection important to insist upon the principle, essential to the Christian character of marriage, that it is subject throughout to conditions of reasonable and conscientious self-restraint. Marriage does not mean the exchange of a state of self-control for one in which no control is needed. So to treat it, as it is to be feared many do, is not Christian, but grossly sensual ; it is altogether lacking in due consideration for the wife ; it is the unspoken cause of much which is now felt and said on the side of women about the relation of the sexes. All marriage, and especially prolific marriage, demands of the man that he should go for certain periods without intercourse ; in cases of special fertility, a considerable proportion of married life may have to be lived in abstinence. In many a case of the wife's ill-health, such abstinence may be prolonged or even permanent. Christian chastity in married people means the power to bear all this without injury to the wife or sinful indulgence with others. Such chastity will by some be found exceedingly hard, but it is entirely consistent with health ; and it is to such a case that Christians should apply to the full their reliance upon God's grace earnestly sought by faith through prayer and sacrament. It seems to

most of us only a legitimate application of such self-restraint that in certain cases (which only the parties' own judgment and conscience can settle) intercourse should be restricted by consent to certain times at which it is less likely to lead to conception. This is only to use natural conditions ; it is approved by good medical authority ; it means self-denial and not self-indulgence. And we believe it to be quite legitimate, or at least not to be condemned.

“(C) *What we Condemn.*

“ In direct contrast or opposition to the first principle [referred to above (B) (i)], it is now claimed by many that where, for reasons already given, there is desire or need to limit the family (or even to avoid parenthood), recourse is allowable to drugs or appliances which profess to give security against any results from intercourse, and, therefore, allow indulgence without fear or restraint.

“ It is at this point that we desire to give our clear warning and to offer our unhesitating judgment.

“ We believe that, broadly speaking, such use is at once dangerous, demoralising and sinful.

“ (i) It is condemned, we believe, as unnatural by healthy instinct in men and women. A society in which it is practised will lose delicacy of feeling and the refinement which is not the exclusive property of any particular class, but comes of

keeping the natural instincts of modesty and reserve untarnished.

“(ii) It errs against the first principles of true purity by isolating the physical side of sexual union and making it an object in itself apart from its proper purposes.

“(iii) It puts in a false light the distinction between married and unmarried in point of self-control; inasmuch as it implies that there is no self-control to be expected from the former.

“(iv) The fact that medical journals of good standing refuse to accept advertisements of such drugs or appliances is very significant.

“(v) In the course of our inquiry, evidence has come before us that, besides the practices which we have been considering which are intended to prevent conception taking place, there is a widespread use by women of drugs taken after conception to destroy the embryo in the womb. About this no language can be too clear or strong. Whether it is effectual in destroying the life of the embryo or, as often happens, only weakens and impairs the vitality of the infant when born, it is a grievously sinful attempt to destroy the life which God has given, from which the conscience of every woman ought to turn away in horror.

“(D) *What we Counsel.*

“We believe that the counsel to be given to Christian husbands should be to have no dealings

with these methods ; to behave with full consideration to their wives as to the due intervals between births ; to make, if necessity urges, such choice of times as we have referred to above ; but then, if it should be God's will shown through nature that their family should be large, to recognise this as part of their appointed duty, and to accept the conditions of frugality, restraint of pleasures, and the like, which it imposes.

“ There remains the question of the duty of wives, and of the advice to be given them when they desire it. Upon this, we think it sufficient to say that they should do all in their power to make and keep their marriage wholesome, natural and chaste ; and to reinforce by their own even stronger and finer instinct the resistance to the misuse of marriage ; and that they should not shrink from the heavy burthens which marriage may entail upon them. They should realise that the practices which we have condemned lead to the loss of mutual self-respect, and are often perilous to the devoted affection of husband and wife ; that the incomplete and arrested fulfilment of the sexual act is attended with risk to the nervous stability, and that a childless married life, when it is brought about by these methods, often proves, in the long run, desolate and disappointing.

“ In the case, however, where the man, in spite of the wife's repugnance and persuasion, insists

on using improper means, we do not think that the woman's conscience should be burdened by the sense of sin, or of unfitness for the Lord's Table, so long as she keeps herself honestly clear of any willing compliance in the matter.

"But all this advice must be accompanied by a strong invitation to Christian men to be active in opposition to those social and economical influences and conditions which make the rearing of families hard and the true course difficult to follow."

How far this represents the opinion of the mass of the clergy or of the laity necessarily cannot be determined. And there is not any power in the Church to enforce these views upon its members. But the issue of this document is a significant and hopeful sign that these problems are profoundly influencing the Church of England and that she, too, is alive to their increasing importance.

The Jewish Church occupies a noteworthy position, because motherhood and family life have been held in highest esteem by the whole Jewish people from ancient times to this day and her leaders resolutely discountenance everything which would tend to degrade them or to break their continuity of family histories. The Chief Rabbi, in his evidence before the Birth-rate Commission, said, "Among the Jews the use of preventives is strongly condemned as unclean

and demoralising. The only exceptions that could ever be allowed are where there is danger to life ; this consideration overrides almost all moral rules. Every male Jew is bidden to marry and have children. A widower with less than two children must marry again. Childlessness is regarded as a misfortune or a disgrace. Marriages of persons physically or mentally unfit for healthy parenthood are severely forbidden. The welfare of the next generation is the object chiefly kept in view."

The attitude of the Nonconformist Churches is in principle the same as that of the other Churches. But there is no one organised authority to speak for all the Churches. By their very constitution, by the essential spirit of Nonconformity, the Churches and their members are free, obeying only the voice of enlightened conscience in such matters as these which we are discussing, and they frankly declare that that is the best position to assume. Nevertheless, a statement was drawn up by several leaders and presented to the Commission which states that, " In the Free Churches there has been no general discussion of, nor any authoritative pronouncement on, the question of the restriction of the birth-rate. While the liberty and responsibility of the individual conscience are very fully recognised, yet ministers do by public teaching and private counsel exercise a guiding influence on many moral questions. Moral guidance on this question has not, as far as

we can discover,¹ been sought by members of these churches from their ministers, nor by ministers, called in this way to face the moral problem, from the trusted leaders to whom they usually turn in a similar difficulty. If the question has been raised at all, it has not been generally felt to be so acute or urgent a problem as to secure any public attention. It may, however, be admitted that owing to the moral independence of many Nonconformists they are less likely to submit their personal practice to the judgment of their ministers than the members of Churches exercising a more direct moral guidance, and we may therefore not be justified in the conclusion that restriction of family is not practised among Nonconformists, although there is no evidence, other than the general statistics, as to the existence or the method of such restriction. The attitude on Christian morals commonly held does warrant the conclusion that the great majority of Nonconformists, if confronted with the problem, would unhesitatingly condemn the use of all mechanical or chemical means of prevention, and would strongly insist on the voluntary moral control of all natural functions."

The reader has now seen what may be called the official attitude of the Churches towards birth-control by artificial methods. We fear it may

¹ Steps are now being taken to secure a more authoritative statement of the position of the Free Churches.

not be far from the facts to say that the direct influence of the Church is probably weaker here than upon any other moral question because, excepting in the Roman Church, and there owing to the opportunities given in the confessional, the matter of having children is too intimate and delicate for Church members to consult their ministers about ; and certainly they rarely raise it themselves. Moreover, ministers, as a rule, do not speak with any special authority upon these subjects ; and it may be questioned whether there is any likelihood of their authority being greater in the future than in the past. Yet it cannot be doubted that, in view of the widespread evils resulting from vice, and of the serious weakening of family life, they will be found to be foremost in the work of repairing the mischief which has been done and of calling their followers back to nobler ideals.

How the Churches may strengthen their authority and influence in these profoundly important national and racial problems, in which religion is the only power capable of bringing the individual to sacrifice himself for posterity, is a complex and baffling problem. Perhaps the war will bring about a religious and moral revival amongst the people and the clergy which will transform the whole Church. In that is the hope of the future. If there is not a great and speedy awakening to these spiritual and vital questions this war will have been fought in vain.

CHAPTER IX

THE NEW MOTHERHOOD

THE emancipation of woman and her entrance into a life as free and full as the life of man is an event fraught with momentous possibilities for the future of our Empire and, indeed, of the world. It is too late as well as futile to attempt to impede the advance of womanhood either by political obstructions or pseudo-biology. The movement, long delayed, often set back by the over-zealous reformers in its own ranks, much misunderstood and seriously feared by many women too, has gained momentum since the war, and will certainly attain its political ends before long. And the present enormously increasing demand for woman's help in the industrial world, her wholehearted response, her endurance, her surprising adaptability, has laid almost every sphere open to her legitimate aspirations. It is impossible to prophesy what will be the outcome after the war, when the men return and want work, when the competition between women and men will be seriously felt, when the present dis-

parity between the sexes will be further accentuated and rivalry in marriage becomes keener. A year or two must elapse before things settle down and some kind of order prevails.

There will, without doubt, be trade unions of women, adult suffrage for both sexes, women members of Parliament, women at the Bar, and women taking a larger share in education, in local government and in the Church, the last stronghold of conservative exclusiveness. Industrial, social and political life will be largely transformed by her advent into these wider spheres. And by inevitable consequence the relation of the sexes, family life, the care of the rising generation, will be profoundly affected, and we must gladly say for the better in many respects. Men politicians have grossly neglected the welfare of the young, and have delayed legislation for their better protection until it was wrung out of them; for instance, at the time of writing, men are keeping down the raising of the age of consent to sixteen in order to protect themselves against possible blackmailing charges—that is, they prefer to defend themselves rather than the wronged girl. Had women been in Parliament our Children Acts and Factory Acts would have been in operation years before men passed them, our Public Health Departments and our education system would have been much more efficient, and thousands of infant lives which

have been lost yearly to this nation would have been saved by an enlightened Legislature in which woman's influence was strong. All that and more is possible in the future. There will be, too, a higher standard of morals amongst men in consequence of women being able to vote and legislate in their own moral interests. The double standard of morals, although Nature seems to favour it in punishing the woman to a greater degree than the man, will go, and that will be better for men themselves, in the long run. Women will have equality of opportunity with men in every sphere of life in which they can serve.

Let all that be granted, and there still remains the further and even more serious question, What will be the effect of woman taking her full half-share in the government of the land, and in the industrial sphere, upon the birth-rate and the home? Will both continue to decrease? Certainly woman will come to have a more direct and effective say in the matter of bringing children into the world. And she ought to have, because she bears the physical burden and runs the risk. She will become less and less the mere convenience of the man and more and more his intelligent and responsible co-partner in the infinitely important duty of child-production and child-rearing. That will be an immense gain. She will be better educated, have wider outlooks and sympa-

thies, take a more active part in starting the children in life and in inculcating truer ideals of the best vocation of women, and be a wiser and better mother and a better cared-for mother in every way.

Let us make that point plainer by repetition, because it has an important bearing upon the unclean methods of some Malthusians, the advocacy of which is their only *raison d'être*. In the early days of Mrs. Josephine Butler's crusade against the C. D. Acts she found it necessary to insist upon the right of every woman to the control of her own person. That was and is the unshakable foundation of our opposition to the regulation of vice, which subjects women to compulsory examination in the interests of the male sinner. Now in the new Charter of Women's Liberty that inviolable principle will be re-asserted with this enormous extension in its applications. Woman will claim full control over her person within the married state. The rule of love will not be broken, but the duty of blind obedience will no longer be accepted. That will be the ultimate result, and it will strengthen the marriage bond and increase the health and happiness of husband and wife.

What a frightful bungle we have made of sex, with regulation, vice areas, and the long procession of *demi-mondaines*, cursed for our sins, trailing like a serpent through our civilisations, century

after century, and with all their multifarious attendant horrors prostituting art, literature and song, poisoning our racial blood and bringing family and national life to the brink of dissolution.

Meanwhile, there will be serious dislocations, if not social revolutions. The birth-rate will continue to go down under the twin influences of men who will desire fewer children and of women who will be attracted to other spheres than home life. This has been the result in France and in our Colonies. Who, however, can doubt that motherhood, and not industry or politics, will in the end control womanhood; that the primal duties of the home and not the double task of factory and maternity will prevail; that the child will take its place in our midst again; that sex will remain enthroned, and gifts of frankincense and myrrh be offered at her shrine? Of this ultimate revival of love and family life there can be little doubt. The immediate and anxious problem is how best to bridge over the years between when the newborn attractions and distractions will captivate many.

Here is a golden chance for the Church, to which women still go in larger numbers than men. Our ministers may exercise moderating influences if they are alive to the ramifications of the new feminine movement, and can meet it with sympathy and keep women attached to the highest

influences of true religion. Through them they may yet succeed in retaining the children who are being lost to the Churches in thousands yearly, and they may, through the influences of their Sisterhood Federations, bring the men back to religion.

As to the present disparity in the number of the sexes, we have seen how this evil may be, in part, remedied. Although it has been stated that man by nature is polygamous, it is not a fanciful assumption to add that nature favours monogamy, inasmuch as she provides at marriageable age about the same number of males and females. At any rate, the census returns of many countries show that whilst at birth, as we have seen, there is a much larger number of boys than girls, when we reach the ages of marriage the sexes are more nearly equal, excepting in our Colonies, to which, as we have already recorded, many of our women might emigrate with advantage to themselves and the Empire. Bachelors and spinsters there will always be, either through choice or accident. One would have expected to discover that the number of bachelors and spinsters did not vary proportionately very much from generation to generation, that the average number over a period of ten to fifty years was fairly steady. No doubt, under reasonably secure conditions of existence which gave men and women a free choice in marriage, this would have been the case. But the facts do not support the theory. Social and

economic distinctions, unorganised emigration, unequal social laws, differences of education, rigid customs, and a thousand and one other causes come into operation and disarrange Nature's safe and happy way of providing one man for one woman. Many of these causes are pernicious and result not only in separating those whom Nature made twain, but in breeding a host of vices, amongst which that of prostitution is by no means the worst. Many attempts have been made to get back to Nature's intentions, but it requires, especially in a comparatively old civilisation like our own, a social revolution to effect any permanent change. But so far as one can observe, such a change is a not far distant event.

The relations of husband and wife in modern society are too complex a subject to enter upon here, and the data are not available for a just and informed exposition. But it is useful to note the evidence accumulated by the Women's Co-operative Guild as to the relations between husbands and wives in the classes with which it deals. They say that one is often struck by the fact that that relation remains so good under the most adverse circumstances. But there is clearly a consciousness among the working women, to put it in plain language, that "both in law and in popular morality, the wife is still the inferior in the family to the husband. She is first without economic independence, and the law therefore

gives the man, whether he be good or bad, a terrible power over her. Partly for this reason, and partly because of all sorts of old half-civilised beliefs still clinging to the flimsy skirts of our civilisation, the beginning and end of the working woman's life and duty are still regarded by many as the care of the household, the satisfaction of man's desires, and the bearing of children. We do not say that this is the case in every working-class home, or that there are not hundreds of husbands who take a higher view of married life and practise it. What we do say is that these views are widely held, often unconsciously, and are taken advantage of by hundreds of men who are neither good men nor good husbands, and that even where there is no deliberate evil or viciousness, these views are responsible for the over-work and physical suffering among women and for that excessive child-bearing." They add significantly, "It was perhaps inevitable that the mother should have been publicly overlooked, for the isolation of women in married life has, up to now, prevented any common expression of their needs. They have been hidden behind the curtain which falls after marriage, the curtain which women are now themselves raising."

Still it may safely be said that normal men and women would prefer to follow Nature's manifest intentions and marry if they had a free choice and reasonable prospects of support. No doubt it is

true that our artificial civilisation has bred in us desires for all sorts of distractions which are catered for with a lavishness never equalled in any other age, and these have competed with the more simple if more lasting joys of home life. But in spite of all these counter-pleasures the dictates of nature would be obeyed in far greater proportions if the conditions of marriage were more favourable.

From a moral point of view, which is the final test of all true worth, we have not the shadow of fear that the new womanhood means a better world in every way. There will be finer ideals, deeper religion, cleaner politics, "gentler manners and sweeter laws," better relations with other nations when women are united with women, healthier housing conditions, improved family life, and saner and happier sex-relations with men. And a better educated and more responsible womanhood will be in a stronger position to guard and purify the racial life and to discharge those fundamental duties upon which the destinies of humanity depend.

I

During the last fifteen years it has become generally recognised that we are alive nine months

before we are born, and that during that pre-natal period we are not beyond the reach of evil influences which might mar our future life on earth. It is a period which has been hitherto grossly neglected by mothers and doctors alike. Hundreds of thousands of expectant working-class mothers have been helpless victims in the hands of superstitious, dirty, microbe-infected, shockingly ignorant midwives, who have blinded and maimed new-born babes and have killed mothers or left them wrecks for many weary years.

In introducing the human letters of working women upon their maternal experiences, the Women's Co-operative Guild, which has a membership of 32,000, contrasts the conditions as to food, rest, medical care, under which the middle-class mother prepares for the advent of her children with that of the working-class mother. "A working-class woman is habitually deprived of them all. She is lucky if her husband hands her over regularly each week 25s. with which to provide a house, food and clothing for the whole family . . . the ordinary family wage leaves nothing over for the additional outlay in maternity . . . too poor to obtain medical advice, she learns by experience and ignorance, comforting herself with the belief that however ill she be it is only natural. Meanwhile she has to scrape and save to put by money for the inevitable expenses that lie before her. She often goes out to char or

sits at her sewing-machine. She puts by in money-boxes ; she lays in little stores of tea, soap, oatmeal, etc. At the time she ought to be well fed she stints herself in order to save ; for in a working-class home, if there is to be saving done, it is not the husband and children, but the mother who makes her meal off the scraps which remain over, or plays with meatless bones." One woman writes : " I can assure you I have told my husband many times I had had my dinner before he came in, so as there should be plenty to go round for the children and himself ; but he found me out somehow, so that was stopped." Another woman says : " Many a time I have had bread and dripping for my dinner before my husband came home, and I said I had had my dinner as I would not wait." And the letters remind us of hard facts, which are too frequently forgotten, about the incessant drudgery of home labour of expectant mothers. People forget that the unpaid work of the working-woman at the stove, at scrubbing and cleaning, at the washtub, in lifting and carrying heavy weights, is just as severe manual labour as many industrial operations in factories. It is this labour which the mother performs often up to the very day on which the child is born, and she will be at it again perhaps six or eight days afterwards. The last ten years have seen a partial awakening to the fact that the expectant mother needs care, instruction, dieting, relief from strain,

amply sufficient rest before and after confinement, and skilled assistance, that her unborn babe may have a fair chance to live.

Last year the present writer was taken home to tea by a friend. We had heard that he had a little daughter blind from birth, but we did not know the reason why. When the fair, frail, nervous creature of nineteen was introduced to us, we saw by her mother's face that she anticipated the questioning going on in our mind. Later she and her husband told us the story. She had had twins, this girl and a boy, and was seriously ill. She had employed a midwife from one of the nursing establishments and supposed she knew her work. Three days after the birth of these twins her husband went to her room to see them. He found the twins lying face to face in a separate bed, wrapped up in clothes, and unwashed. He at once asked the nurse what it meant, and she replied that it was unlucky to wash newly-born infants until after the third day. He at once called in another doctor and nurse, but in spite of all that the specialist could do his daughter had become blind. That is not an isolated instance of the ghastly results of superstitious ignorance.

It is too late to save the babe after it is born if there has been pre-natal neglect. Dr. Ballantyne, of Edinburgh, has given himself to the study of pre-natal conditions and is the leading authority on the subject. The whole motherhood of the

country is indebted to him for his persistent and successful labours, often derided even by fellow doctors, but now seen to be of inestimable value to the nation. One of woman's objections to bearing children, which has been publicly and freely admitted during the last twenty years, is that the risk and pain of parturition are too great. Mothers have instinctively felt that something more should be done for them, and no doubt many young women in this nerve-racking age have deliberately preferred not to become mothers on account of the suffering involved, much of which we know now is preventable. The person who has the first and last voice in this matter of birth-control is the mother. And if the nation wants more children it is the nation's duty to provide for every mother adequate relief from all unnecessary suffering.

If we had not, during the war, discovered so many examples of our grievous shortsightedness, we should be shocked to learn that until within the last few years no hospital accommodation whatever has been provided for abnormal or normal pre-maternity needs of married mothers. Unmarried girls and women and illegitimate babies were offered, particularly by religious organisations, more or less adequate assistance, always sorely needed, but for the grave maladies of married expectant mothers nothing was done in our hospitals. "Nowhere," says Dr. Ballan-

tyne, "were beds, much less a ward, set apart for the reception and treatment of either abnormal or normal gestations for the sick and pregnant woman. . . . There was no hospital accommodation to which such a woman could lay claim. Most general hospitals plainly stated that confinements or cases likely soon to be confined were not their business, and if the medical officers of these institutions did out of pity receive an expectant mother suffering from an intercurrent malady or from one due to the pregnancy, they were slightly uncomfortable until they had got her well enough to warrant her leaving the building again."

"To put the matter in a sentence, the medical profession had not begun to hospitalise morbid pregnancies. There were records in plenty of cases of disease during gestation, hundreds of varieties of malformation and monstrosity were reported and illustrated in medical journals, and the text-books gave a chapter to the description of the maladies of pregnancy often with the distressingly frequent advice that 'in order to save the mother it would probably be well to end the gestation, *i.e.*, to bring the offspring's life to a conclusion'; but medical men, and especially obstetric physicians, had not begun seriously to look at pregnancy as a condition requiring regular and intelligent watching over; they had not begun to investigate the biology

and physiological chemistry of even normal pregnancy, and, above all, they had made no provision in their general or special hospitals for the care and supervision of expectant mothers, well and ill."

It was not until April 6th, 1901, that the first appeal was made for a pre-maternity hospital; it is only within the same period that we have had schools for mothers and maternity clinics in various congested centres of population, and it is only this year that the nation is to be asked to support the formation of a National Ministry of Health which will care for the nation's mothers and children. And even now Dr. Ballantyne has to record his deep disappointment that grants in aid for residential treatment in hospitals and consequently for the provision of such pre-maternity beds are not to be available under any recent legislation.

In 1901 a generous citizen gave £1,000 to the Edinburgh Royal Maternity Hospital¹ for the upkeep of a bed and it was entrusted by the late Sir Alexander Simpson to Dr. Ballantyne. This bed soon grew into a ward and now there are nine beds seldom untenanted. Let us take one week's applications as an example of the great need for pre-maternity care. There were

¹ In 1916 the same donor gave a second sum of £1,100 for the endowment of a second bed in the pre-maternity ward of that hospital.

fifteen cases at one of the weekly clinics in July, 1916, and of the fifteen women four were found healthy and were given advice; the remaining eleven were abnormal in one way or another, and to a small or a great degree. Of the eleven, one was taken into hospital for treatment, one was given non-residential treatment at the end of the clinic, one was prescribed for, one was given treatment in the outdoor department, one was attended in a few days outside the hospital, and three came back the next morning for further examination under an anæsthetic. Of the last named three, two were taken in and successfully (for themselves and their infants) operated on, and one was told to return later. Finally, the three others were told to come back, one every week, another at the end of three weeks, and the third at the end of a month.

Take a few further instances (for which we are again indebted to the excellent book issued by the Women's Co-operative Guild) of gross ignorance and neglect from the lives of working women.

One of the mothers says that during her confinement "never once can I remember having anything but face, neck, and hands washed until I could do things for myself, and it was thought certain death to change the underclothes under a week. For a whole week we were obliged to lie on clothes stiff and stained, and the stench

under the clothes was abominable, and added to this we were commanded to keep the babies under the clothes. I often wonder how the poor little mites managed to live, and perhaps they never would have done but for our adoration, because this constant admiration of our treasures did give them whiffs of fresh air (?) very often."

Many mothers, recalling their age at the time of marriage, regret that, in addition to their youth (18 to 20 years of age), they had so little knowledge of their physical unfitness to bring children into the world through not being properly developed. "If I had only been told more about these things" is the echo of many a life lived in bravely combating the ills which might have been spared by wholesome advice and sympathy.

A mother of eight tells how, when her fourth child was born, owing to shortage of work for her husband they had nothing whatever to eat, until a friendly shopkeeper allowed them a few necessary articles of food. Their dinner was oatmeal gruel made with tinned milk. "The struggle left its mark on the physique of my children. One has since died of heart disease, aged ten years; another of phthisis, sixteen years; my youngest has swollen glands. . . . As I could not afford help during pregnancy, and I suffer from valvular disease of the heart, . . . my home became very dirty, the children

got ragged, meals worse than usual, and each doctor I consulted said I was not fit to do my work, and I had not to bother . . . No one who has not been placed in a similar position can realise how horrible it is to be so placed. My husband was always willing to help, even after working from six in the morning. I have seen women similarly placed, and their husbands throw their dinner in the fire. Oh! the horrors we suffer when men and women are ignorant."

With the gradual enlightenment and education of women in these matters, they are beginning to trace the cause of their children's physical defects to this lack of proper nourishment, to mental worry and over-work. And it is the thought of what may be in store for their children when they are born that adds a burden to the sensitive mother which cannot be told in words.

One illustration must suffice to show the brave determination of some women not to "let themselves go" in spite of hard times and unexpected privations, and what good material there is amongst the working classes.

"A miscarriage followed in consequence of the strain, and doctors' bills grew like mushrooms. The physical pain . . . threatened me with madness. I dare not tell a soul . . . I knew I must fight this battle or go under. Care and rest would have cured me, but I was too proud

for charity, and no other help was available. You may say mine is an isolated case. It is not . . . Working-class women have grown more refined ; they desire better homes, better clothes for themselves and their children . . . But the strain to keep up to a decent standard of housing, clothing, diet and general appearance is enough to upset the mental balance of a Chancellor of the Exchequer.

“ Dimly conscious of the evils of sweating, instead of buying cheap ready-made clothes, I fashioned all their little garments and became a sweated worker myself. The utter monotony of life, the lack of tone and culture, the drudgery and gradual lowering of the standard of living consequent upon the rising cost of living . . . was converting me into a soulless drudge and nagging scold. I felt the comradeship between myself and my husband was breaking up. I could give no time to mental culture or reading, and I bought Stead’s penny editions of literary masters, and used to put them on a shelf in front of me on washing-day, fastened back their pages with clothes peg, and learned pages of Whittier, Longfellow and Lowell as I rubbed the clothes and thus wrought my education. This served a useful purpose ; my children used to be sent off to sleep by reciting what I had learned during the day. My mental outlook was widened, and once again I stood a comrade and helpmeet

by my husband's side, and my children all have a love for good literature."

Surely the time has come when, for the sake of the nation to be, we should seek to "undo the heavy burdens and let the oppressed go free" in this realm of motherhood and home. And not only will the mothers be affected but the fathers also. In considering the mother, sympathy must be extended to the husband who for no fault of his own—except where lack of self-control or other bad habits help to make these sordid conditions—has to come back day after day to a peevish or ailing wife, neglected children and ill-kept house.

There is no need further to labour the point. Much has been done by the establishment of maternity centres, the appointment of health visitors and qualified midwives, but very much more remains to be accomplished. About 900,000 babies are born every year in the United Kingdom; 300,000 are cared for by private doctors and nurses, but 600,000 mothers remain to be treated. What happens to them? In spite of the splendid work of Alderman Broadbent, of Lady Barrett and of Dr. Eric Pritchard, who founded the St. Marylebone infant welfare work about ten years ago, and of the 107 infant welfare centres in London, and nine municipal ones, and about 1,000 others in various parts of the country, many thoroughly equipped, they only

provide for about 60,000 mothers, leaving 540,000 to pick up whatever help is available, which very often amounts to worse than none.

About 150 local authorities have taken up some form of Infant Welfare Centre, but that is not 40 per cent. of the whole. And as regards health visitors, we have less than a third of the minimum necessary to cope with the imperative demands. It has been estimated that £500,000 a year would supply these mothers of the nation with such skilled assistance and pre-natal and post-natal care as would save the lives of many mothers and thousands of infants yearly. Surely this will be forthcoming even whilst we are spending nearly £8,000,000 a day on war. The efficient care of the mother and her expected child is a national duty which cannot any longer be neglected. Sir A. Newsholme and Sir George Newman have rendered great service in furthering this work up to the extreme limits of their authority and power. But the time has come for a complete national scheme.

There is one other urgent reform which is still being pressed upon the attention of the Government and which should be alluded to here. We mean the control of the drink traffic and its influence upon maternity. In Chapter II we noted the bold suggestion of Sir A. Newsholme to remove the evil influences of alcohol from the mother and child after birth in certain

industrial centres, but Dr. Ballantyne would have us take into account its dangerous pre-natal influences. He has discovered that it produces effects upon the unborn infant, the embryo, and the germ, similar to, and not less disastrous than, those arising from lead, although in an immediate sense less deadly perhaps than syphilis. "It becomes abundantly clear that alcohol is a danger to ante-natal health and a menace to ante-natal life at every one of the stages of that existence and through each of the progenitors. The pregnant woman who takes to drink in the last weeks or months of her gestation is doing less damage to the unborn life than the man who soaks before marriage and continues to imbibe after it; tuberculosis also is more curable in an early than in a late phase; but one does not well to wait till even the first stage is reached in dealing with dangers which not only touch individuals but also the race. Alcohol is a danger from one conception, from one procreation, to another; there is no time under the sun when it is suitable or safe to court intoxication. The rest is detail; but it seems that it is detail which is baffling the strongest governmental powers even when reinforced by the example and the approbation of monarchs."

Pregnancy has been called the Marathon race of the woman's life; it tests every tissue and

structure of her body, and inevitably finds every weak part; surely she ought to be put into adequate training for the accomplishment of this vital task of giving birth to a child, surely it is the duty of the State to see that she wins the race. When the nation has thoroughly organised the care of maternity we shall have not only a new womanhood but a new motherhood, better instructed and fully cared for, which will bring forth a generation which will survive to call them blessed. And not motherhood only will gain, but fatherhood will become under such conditions more self-controlled, enlightened and responsible.

“We will serve them both in aiding her
The man be more of woman, she of man;
He gain in sweetness and in moral height,
Nor lose the wrestling thews that throw the world;
She mental breadth nor fail in childward care
. . . . seeing either sex alone
Is half itself, and in true marriage lies
Nor equal, nor unequal: each fulfils
Defect in each, and always thought in thought,
Purpose in purpose, will in will, they grow,
The single pure and perfect animal,
The two-cell'd heart beating, with one full stroke,
LIFE.”

CHAPTER X

WHY ARE WE BORN ?

WHY are we born ? "God alone knows," would be the reply of many. Let us, nevertheless, try to see the question as a whole in time and space and to consider some more suggestive answers, whether we agree with them or not. No doubt we shall be dissatisfied, but the subject may be worth another disappointment.

The problem "in time" is a vague phrase, and "in space" is even more indefinite. But the idea they adumbrate may be partially visualised. We are looking down upon this planet from our observatory and can see it rolling along in its orbit marked out by the finger of God. We even imagine ourselves on some far off star from which, if we could actually observe, we might descry that ancient garden in Indonesia with Adam and Eve, our earliest human parents, sewing fig leaves together to hide their knowledge of their nakedness. "In time" the stretch from "then" to "now" is a hand's breadth, the life of humanity a fleeting moment. In that moment, truly, humanity has packed big and stirring events which have left their mark upon the earth ; and we of to-day have come into a vast heritage of languages, laws, customs,

traditions, religions, bequeathed by races and kingdoms which long ago were dust.

To-day is the child of yesterday and the mother of to-morrow. This generation possesses the earth for a brief while, but another is growing up behind it as it passes away, and yet another is in the womb of time almost ready to be delivered. We are each a living link in this far-stretching chain of life from the lowliest form to man, and perhaps re-beginning again in God. That may be the cycle of being. Birth and death, then, are the same event as we look at them from above. One generation dies that another in which it is re-born may live. Life overtakes death and is always enlarging its boundaries. Life is ever fulfilling its purpose to grow and blossom. And death does not finally destroy it, but in death life sheds its temporary encumbrances—the ills that are imposed upon it, which hamper and thwart its evolution. There must be a coffin to precede the cradle; and in it more is buried than flesh and bones.

Life is essentially spiritual. All its innate qualities of mind and character are spiritual. These are its enduring manifestations. The fleshy envelopes, black, brown or white, which we see below us, are its abode for a season. But the generations that pass and repass are not generations of bodies but of souls. Perhaps the time comes in the development of life when bodies,

as we know them, are no longer needed. Prof. J. A. Thomson remarks in dealing with the transition from unicellular to multicellular organisms that "it was perhaps with the acquisition of a body that natural death began." We may use the suggestion for a much later transition amongst human beings.

It may be that the spiritual world enwraps this little sphere like the atmosphere and moves with it in space and time. Where are the billions of lives which once lived on yonder spot we call Egypt or Greece or Rome? Where are the billions to be who will walk these streets below my tower when we are gone aloft? Whence come they and why? And whither? Is it necessary they should come here on their spiral journey? Who is to call them to this earth life? What conditions are we providing for their abode with us? Turn the telescope upon slumdoms in Dublin, London, or Russia, and behold the hideous squalor amidst which baby after baby comes to this bank and shoal of time! Is it the will of God that they should awaken in that foul den to breathe foetid air and walk those poverty-stricken ways? Is it? Is it the will of God that this woman should give her health and life to bring bodies into this world to become slaves to avarice or food for cannon? For what purpose do they come if not to live to maturity? From our tower we

try to see the myriads of babes born—here, there and everywhere, and we see too the numberless hosts a span long, hurried from their mothers' side to the shallow grave, slain by ignorance and preventable diseases. Whose will is it they should come and go in a single night? Whose? The problem in time and space is not so vague and indefinite a phrase as it sounds; at least it serves to fix upon the purposes of birth, the why and wherefore of being. It brings the beginning and the end together in thought and sets us meditating whether and when it is worth while to be born.

I

The problem touches another, perhaps other worlds than ours—the great before and the great hereafter. Whether life fell upon the earth from a star or was spontaneously generated or climbed up from the inanimate to Shakespeare, we do not as yet know. Perhaps the origins of life and consciousness are beyond discovery by beings who are limited to five senses. This we do know, that man is now wonderfully and highly organised, and has capacities of becoming and doing far beyond our present powers of perception; so that to realise the intrinsic value of life we must look at the beginning with the end in view. For what it is, it was; what it will be, it is now; it carries

in its womb its own past and future. The babe born to-day comes with trailing clouds of glory which stretch out into the spiritual infinitudes on either side of the line we call life or death. They come—countless myriads, from whence? They go—all of them, whither? From God, so we are taught, to God, who is their home. This much is certain, there is a “from.” This celestial telescope which shows me the so-called canal lines on Mars and opens up the depths of the nebulae in Orion does not even help the imagination to pierce the veil separating the “before” from “now,” or the “now” from “hereafter.” Many intimations of the hereafter have been given to us according to saint and seer, but from that ante-natal gloom not the faintest sign is vouchsafed. It remains an impenetrable blank. Yet humanity has believed in it even more than in the life to come. If we challenge our inner consciousness we feel sure that we came from another world. It is said that some Easterns even remember their previous lives.

This, however, must be the starting point—we lived before we were born. We came here. We came, it is said, not of our own will, but of the will of the flesh. Byron makes Cain say :

And this is Life—toil
And wherefore should I toil
Because my father lost his place in Eden ?
What had I done in this ?
I was unborn, I sought not to be born,
Nor love the place to which my birth has brought me.

"Sought not to be born." Is it true? Had we nothing to do with our plunge into earth-life? Was it all because of the caprice of our parents? The reign of law, so far as observations and mathematical deductions reveal, is universal. If the falling of a tear-drop is pre-ordained, why should the coming of a human life—of a Darwin or a Dickens—be left to the sport of passion or blind chance? Why should we believe that the Spencers and Tennysons, the persons most concerned, had nothing to do with it, and that parents, who perhaps did not want them, were wholly responsible? Had their coming nothing of purpose in it, no connection with the work they did for humanity? Is it fantastic to believe that they came at a time when they were needed on earth, and to develop their own life and character? The reader will weary of this string of questions, but it is by questioning that the subject can be best approached. Questions create the right atmosphere for this probing of the problem as it emerges into being. And we merely question; there is, of course, no ground for dogmatising.

What, then, is the upshot of this bombardment of the gates of the unknown with queries? Do we hear only the echo of our own hopes and fancies in response? Perhaps. But it seems not unreasonable to favour the opinions that we came "from," that the so-called accident of birth was governed by law, that where the earth-life has

served some great purpose the soul born and the parents who gave it birth worked together consciously or unconsciously obedient to some higher vision, that it was not of chance or flesh, but of the spirit. If this seems likely of lives which fill a large place in the world, it may not be improbable of all lives. And if they do not mature, if they are strangled in their cradles, if they are in the end wrecked by disease and war or enslaved and stultified by greed and power, if they are stifled in slums and chimneys or buried in mines and submarines, if these lives are treated as of less value than property, and "cast away as rubbish to the void," if all this happens, and it has happened and does happen to a multitude that no figures can number, who or what is to blame? Whoever or whatever it is, the cause or causes are here on this earth. The qualities which lives bring with them from the great unknown may and probably do play a great part in their development, but the overwhelming causes of disaster are the works of our hands who preceded their advent.

Whence—and whither? This is not the place to enter into the arguments, theological, moral and scientific, for immortality. Few confidently dispute that there is a hereafter for us all. But suppose for a moment that it were demonstrated that death ends all, humanity would surely

curse the discoverer. To-day millions of young lives are being sacrificed and broken on the battlefield by the latest scientific weapons. Milk and glycerine have been turned into high explosives to blow the souls out of our fellow creatures. Man has prostituted science to the service of destruction and death. That is the pass to which we have come in the twentieth century. Millions are mourning their dead, millions are engaged in making instruments of death to slay others. Hell is let loose upon the world. And if there is no hereafter for the brave dead! And none for the living left to mourn them, without that supreme consolation! It seems to us, in view of our incompleting lives, that without immortality a good God is an impossible conception; He would be a monster of iniquity. And if there be no hereafter it is difficult to resist the conclusion that life is not worth living for the mass of mankind. In that event the illimitable sacrifices of this war would be little short of stark murder. It is not human for us to adopt the belief that there is no life to come; it makes impossible demands upon our reason, our moral sense, our faith and our humanity. "Sad," writes Dr. R. F. Horton in his intimate and charming *Autobiography*,¹ "indeed would life be unless we had the assurance that we shall meet and know each other again" . . .

¹ *An Autobiography*, by R. F. Horton. Allen and Unwin, 1917.

the life beyond is the "crowning summit of earth's laborious climb."

The problem, then, of the soul's incarnation should be considered in its relation to the two infinitudes—before and beyond; to the environment into which it is born, and to its purpose and work on earth. Life should be looked at as a whole if we are to make any real contribution to the question of birth-control, its meaning and consequences. But the question is simplified, if death ends all and life is what it is for millions of the human race. Then it would be lawful by all possible means to advocate the suppression of births—without compunction. No doubt parental affection and good environment would have their due influence in permitting many to be born. But if the means of prevention are at hand, and love is lacking and the home is a hovel, and the grave is the end, no call of duty to nation or race would override the decision of such parents to have no more children.

II

They come from the vast unknown—perhaps not less than a hundred millions every year—to all points of the terrestrial compass, born amidst savagery or civilisation, from mansion to workhouse, because even in this twentieth century and in our own land there is, as of old,

still no *home* for them on earth. They have arrived in the same way for perhaps five hundred thousand years or more, an endless procession of nomads to wander over the face of the globe in search of food and shelter, comfort and riches, to take the places vacated by others who have been before them, or to discover newer lands and greater wealth, to found tribes and races, kingdoms and civilisations where they could live together, marry and be given in marriage and propagate their kind, to establish homes and pedigrees and to enlarge their conquests of nature and of knowledge. They have seen the light of earth, some for a few hours or months, others for a few years more or less, and the longest lived, who nowadays are a handful, a little over a century. The places where man has been are strewn with the remnants of his handiwork which sand and soil have saved from the ravages of time, the universal destroyer. Messages, written in strange hieroglyphics on stone and leaves, representing his customs and ideals have been left here and there that future "humans" might learn who had occupied the lands before them. But with singularly meagre exceptions all his material possessions have disappeared; with even fewer exceptions the men and women themselves, their achievements and their very names, have perished. They have all been, and have all gone, and there remain

but the merest traces of their sojourn. "The magnitude of the universal forces enlarges the pettiness of man, and the smallness of his achievement and endurance takes a complexion of greatness from the vague immensity that surrounds and impalpably mixes with it." So generation has succeeded and will succeed generation. And, as we measure the vast reaches of time, one not far-distant day this old earth will be a slag and a cinder—

Wandering round the sun without its crew of fools.

A crew of fools ! Is that the cynical estimate of a bitter pessimist with a diseased liver or the sober judgment of a wise prophet who, sweeping his eye over the earth's surface, exclaims, "Behold, all things are vanity and worse than vanity" ? What is the purpose of all this coming and going, of this travail and triumph and death ? Is there any purpose which we can discover running through the whole course of human life and endeavour, or is it only a strange medley of interests which assumes the semblance of law and co-operation as one of the necessities of mere existence, but which at the basis is an ephemeral delusion ? These musty volumes of legal decisions and statutes of which our legalists are justly proud, revealing how our laws have been handed down from precedent to precedent, are they anything more

than monuments of human ingenuity covered over with a thin veneer of wisdom? Hoary with age they may appear to be, but the oldest was of yesterday. Religion of some kind seems to have become an early manifestation of the development of the human soul and human society; but who can determine its intrinsic or selective values and separate them from its vast body of superstition? Literature tells an intimate story of our ancestors, but how fragmentary it soon becomes when we get beyond the historical period! And our modern science is but a day old. How little of what we are building and writing to-day will survive our individual lives we are all too mournfully aware. We almost reverence the relatively ancient abbeys and castles because of the poignant feeling that, of all our monuments, scarcely one brick will stand upon another to the fifth generation.

What else is there which we ought to include in man's ways and works? We seem to have forgotten industry—this vast, wonderful modern industry with its piles of chimney stacks, miles upon miles of machines with almost human movements for making our clothes and implements, and multitudes of human attendants who feed them night and day as though they were gods; machines which, under our cut-throat competitive system, make the rich richer

but largely enslave the workers. Admitting fully all the benefits of the application of science to life in this present age, may it not be seriously questioned, when the cost in human life is reckoned up, whether the world is richer or better for modern industry? Much of it draws, as we have seen, men and women away from simpler and happier walks of life, depletes the country and overcrowds the city, and creates demands and an ever-rising standard of living and pleasure which seriously affect the birth-rate, the length of life and its real and abiding usefulness.

Still the endless procession of human lives goes on, in spite of all our doubts and failures. The checks of famine, disease, war, poverty, riches seem to be overborne in the end. We continue to multiply and replenish the earth. The ocean of life appears to be exhaustless. The fertility of man is amazing. It seems to rise and fall like the tides of the sea and to be as ceaseless. A combination of racial, geographical, cultural and industrial causes attracts life to one part of the globe for a few centuries and then it swings back again. The centre of civilisation changes from age to age. Races and civilisations are born, they flourish, they perish, and others, more complex, more brilliant, apparently more enduring, take their places.

There must be some ultimate purpose in it all. It is inconceivable that the whole universe is the sport of chance.

I come I know not whence,

I go I know not where

Willy nilly,

is a creed which none of us can recite with confidence or pleasure.

It is obvious that there are many objects controlling our lives or which we strive after. But almost all of them are of a secondary character. It cannot be contended that the true purpose of life is to make books or cannons or washing machines, or to dig for diamonds or to shoot our fellow-creatures, or to sell our bodies and souls to States and Kings or to industrialism in any of its manifold forms. Perhaps two of the controlling factors are those we have in common with the lower kingdoms of life and may be picturesquely described as hunger and love. We are all impelled by these two master passions which must be satisfied. They spell self-preservation and race-continuance—the two supreme requirements of the individual and the race. In these two desires are centred the whole struggle for existence. Homes and parenthood, art and song, life and literature are born of them. And around these twin primal impulses, alas! have gathered all the sins, diseases and frailties which have afflicted humanity. That hunger and love required for

their satisfaction the bewildering multitude of artifices and luxuries of our complex civilisation, no one can successfully contend. Indeed, in this war we are coming to see that we can lead a much simpler life with greater profit to body and soul, to the whole community and the race.

III

According to a theology which long held sway in our midst, we suppose the answer to our question, "Why are we born?" would be "probably to go to hell." And millions upon millions of "heathen" have likewise been consigned to perdition; an irretrievable and ghastly doom awaited them. It seemed to be in keeping with the perfect law of God that they were conceived in iniquity and dying in unbaptized babyhood or heathen darkness they fell into the jaws of Satan and the never-dying fires of the bottomless pit. According to these charitable professors of the knowledge of God, many of whom still tread this earth and preach their wicked creed, the vast majority of the human family, all, indeed, save those who shared their inhuman opinions, have gone, and will continue to go to hell. If this creed is true we should regret that another child is born on earth.

The early Scriptures tell us that man was sent forth to subdue and till the ground, in the

sweat of his brow. And throughout the ages the vast majority one way or another have obeyed the expulsion order. No doubt they received some benefits from their toil, and those who lived upon them much more, for the rule appears to have been nearly universal that the man who has done the roughest work for the longer time has had the smaller financial recompense. It is clear that whatever purpose the birth of the mass of humanity fulfilled, it was certainly not to accumulate money, an enterprise in which the people have miserably failed. It is, indeed, safe to say that the masses have lived on the border-line of poverty and ignorance all the time; and they have gone to a well-earned rest. This picture is very favourably coloured. If account be taken of the so-called heathen world with its superstitions, diseases and butcheries, and there are added to it the so-called civilised times with their more refined but equally shameful slavery, cruelties and vices, the whole picture might be faithfully reproduced in sombre hues. No joys the people had compensated them for their sweatings, and no evil they did deserved eternal punishment.

Of course, others have had a better time on earth. A better time! And, soberly, what sort of a time was theirs? What did they do? What remains of their work? Let any man of reason sit down and attempt to answer those

questions and he will be staggered by the futility of nine-tenths of their occupations and will sorrowfully exclaim—"Dust thou art and to dust thou returnest." We need not discount their happy moments and days; their lives, like ours, were mingled sunshine and showers. But has the life of man on earth, civilised and savage, been worth while? Put the whole thing in the scales, measure it by any standard which charity may suggest, and say—on which side lies the balance? Look on the world to-day, on the lot of the toilers and their children in the industrial centres of civilised England, on the bloody fields of war where young men, who have not even had the chance to live, are giving their lives because "those in authority" have bungled the whole relationships of nations and thrown them at one another's throats in a desperate encounter which will leave us all exhausted, even if we survive. True, there are deeds of splendid heroism to-day as in the days of slavery, for it cannot be denied that the poor slave was a hero indeed; true, we are giving our lives for others whether they deserve the sacrifice or not; true, mothers are surrendering their sons to death with a noble spirit—all these are deeds which shine out like stars in the world's selfish night. The names of these heroes ought to be imperishable and their supreme sacrifices should receive here and now fullest

recognition. Certainly, praiseworthy attempts are being made to save the children from the workhouse where the breadwinner has died for his country. But the best we are doing is a miserable pittance. And too soon all they have given up will be forgotten even by their fellow men and women. It has been so after all wars ; it will be so after this in tens of thousands of cases. These are not the questions of a cynic, but of a daily increasing number of sober-minded people in all classes. And we have to consider them when we ask for an increased birth-rate. Yes, says our critic, but you have forgotten the blessings of liberty. Liberty ! Let us put that also in the scale as favourable to life. Liberty to think, speak, write, act ! It is not long since we had no such liberty. Inquisition and gallows have been the lot of multitudes who have dared to claim such liberties. Kings and their tools have pretty effectively controlled the liberty of the people. Even in the twentieth century these gentlemen with the keys and rope stalk over large portions of the earth as insolently as in the dark ages. And, happily or unhappily, when they have taken too much liberty themselves they have followed their victims to the guillotine. What piteous irony it is that man should count it worth while to struggle and die to obtain liberty to live, that the possession of liberty should be one of the purposes which redeem

and glorify life ; that is itself a painful revelation of what life has been and is for many.

When we seriously look over the history of mankind, we can hardly avoid exclaiming—poor, deluded, suffering, struggling humanity ; why we came to this planet, if there be any eternal purpose in it at all, remains, apart from our previous consideration, a mystery still after all that the wisest have written from ancient days to yesterday. Any final purpose in it? That's the rub. We truly may make something of it ; verily, many individuals live for what we regard as the noblest ends, they try to save our lives from failure and oblivion, they purify and lift up our spirits.

Certainly love and truth, mercy and sacrifice are blessed in themselves and carry their own rewards, whatever the end may be. It would be wanton cruelty to belittle the intrinsic value of these great virtues. If they are not worth having, not worth dying for, nothing else matters. They are the salt of the earth which does not lose its savour. They redeem life from destruction and constitute its highest purpose. The best epitaph we can write on the tomb of man and woman is that they loved mercy and self-sacrifice and tried to follow truth. The tooth of time may eat it away, but they allied themselves with the highest, and that is a great consolation. And even if we have put this august purpose into life in our struggle to

make the best of it, we must continue to hold it up for our children to follow. That is the path of wisdom and happiness, in any event.

IV

To the twin controlling purposes of life, hunger and love, should be added a third—self-realisation. If human existence is something more than the blind and transitory impulse of chance, a volcanic outburst of energy which will subside and be followed by the silence of death, if it be more than an accidental flowering of nature in the summer time of the earth's development, to be succeeded by eternal winter, then we must see some deeper purpose in individual human lives than mere self-preservation. If each life is endowed with inherent qualities and capacities, its birth here may be designed to give it the opportunity of self-development and self-realisation.

Dr. Saleeby would complete his reckoning of the full value of life when it has reproduced itself. For this end it came into the world. The individual is mortal, the race immortal. This antithesis is often before us in the rival claims of the individual and the State in which there can be no final adjustment. There is, of course, much to be said for the claims of posterity upon the living present. If there are countless hosts of souls waiting to be born, and their chance of life depends upon our

living to reproductive age and giving them birth, our death in time to afford them the best opportunities is a fundamental requisite. Death, then, is only nature's way of bringing more life into the world. But if we fix our eyes for the moment upon the individual soul entering upon earth-life, with its hidden purposes, seeking the opportunity of growth and experience, perhaps that it may hereafter enter upon another life higher up the spiral ascent, then the supreme place must be given to the claims of its individuality, secondly to its racial function of being the medium of other births, and only to a strictly limited extent to the demands of the State, since the State is merely an accidental mode of arranging our relations, one to another, in our passage through the world. The demands of these latter relationships should be strictly subordinated to the self-preservation and advancement of the individual. Of course, and this is the larger truth, the individual will profit by mutual help rather than struggle for existence; which, indeed, is the higher law of human life. And racial and true social claims are consonant with the finest development of the individual; they offer him opportunities of earthly immortality. They have not been much thought of in past ages; the claims of posterity, indeed, are but a discovery of yesterday. Yet through them man can alone fully realise himself and develop the spirit of self-sacrifice by which

he truly lives. In considering the problem of birth-control and the insistent demands of industry merely for money-making labour, it must be made plain that such claims have no sanction in the statutes of life; they enslave men and often destroy the best purposes of being. Labour is a means of living, but if it becomes, as it has, a commodity to be bought and sold that capitalists may grow richer, then that is radically wrong.

Our social and national environments may make all the difference between doing what is called our duty to the race and not doing it. We have to adjust our ideals to these potent realities and in bringing other lives into being to decide whether it is the right time for their appearance, and whether our own lives and homes are worthy of them. To bring them here to be strangled in the cradle and to die in slumdom is a crime against the unborn and posterity—it sets back the progress of the soul and the race. To get down to the real claims upon us to produce and perpetuate lives we must silence the clamorous voices of Governments and industries and consider, in view of all circumstances, the unborn soul before the face of God. That is the best form of birth-control.

It is comforting to know that, although individuals pass away, the succeeding generations profit by our compound experiences carried over to them by what appears to be race-memory; that God and the universe gain by the sweat and

blood and tragedy of our incompleted lives. Happy are we if we can believe, as we do, that good is the final goal of ill, that an eternal purpose runs throughout nature and, most of all, through every human life, which somehow and somewhere will surely be realized.

“When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory : and before him shall be gathered all the nations : and he shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats : and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world : for I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat : I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink : I was a stranger, and ye took me in ; naked, and ye clothed me : I was sick, and ye visited me : I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee ? or athirst, and gave thee drink ? And when saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in ? or naked, and clothed thee ? And when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee ? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, *even* these least, ye did it unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels : for I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat : I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink : I was a stranger, and ye took me not in ; naked, and ye clothed me not ; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee ? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of these least, ye did it not unto me. And these shall go away into eternal punishment : but the righteous into eternal life.”

—*St. Matthew's Gospel.*



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