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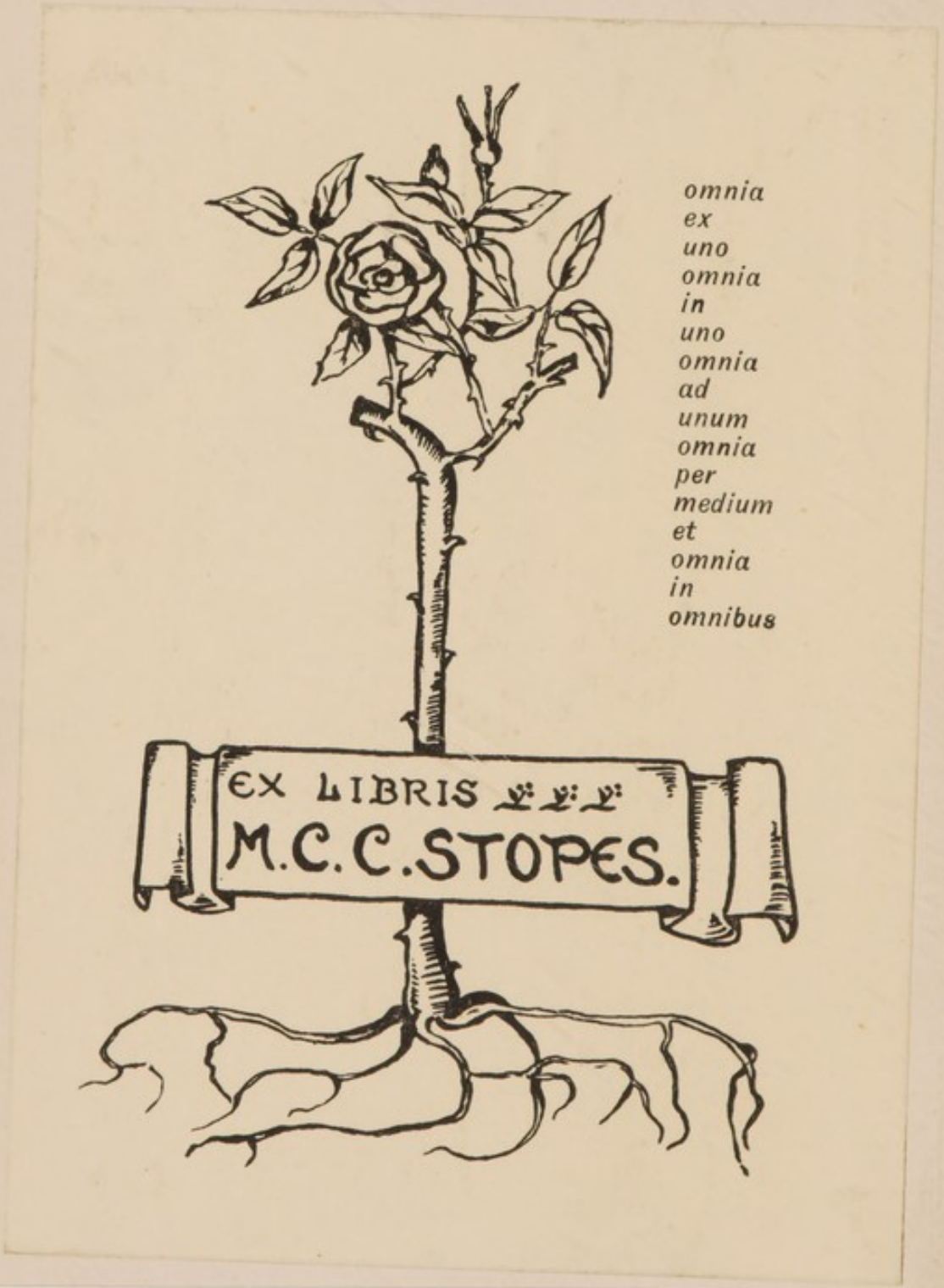

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POPULATION AND BIRTH-CONTROL

A SYMPOSIUM

EDITED BY
EDEN AND CEDAR PAUL

1917
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INTRODUCTION

By William J. Robinson M.D.

WHEN people are engaged in the noble pursuit of exterminating their fellow men; when a nation's ingenuity is concentrated upon inventions which would destroy the largest number of human beings in the shortest possible time; when the patriotic delirium has reached such a pitch that any criticism of war as a proper means of settling disputes, or any sceptical attitude toward militarism as a useful institution, is treated as a treasonable offence, while the pacifist is regarded as an intolerable nuisance who should be given short shrift; worst of all, when the national hysteria fed and fostered by the deliberate, systematically planned falsehoods of an unscrupulous but all-powerful press has become so well-nigh universal that libertarians who have devoted their lives to the cause of freedom and humanity suddenly undergo a complete metamorphosis, make common cause with tyrants and reactionaries, sneer at universal brotherhood, and look not only with indifference but with approval at the ruthless and brutal suppression of free speech, free press and free assembly, being willing for the sake of a mythical possible democracy to swallow an active ruthless autocracy; when these things have come to pass in the life of a nation, then has the social worker who has preserved his balance and

holds on to the eternal verities a scanty chance to be heard. When corybantine chauvinism is rampant peaceful humanism is thrown in the discard.

In fact, in times such as these, the social worker, the advocate of reforms, is looked upon with impatience, with annoyance; he is considered more than merely a nuisance; he is looked upon as a menace, as an abomination that should be done away with.

Nevertheless, all the scant courtesy, all the contumely notwithstanding, the man who believes that he is right, who feels that he has a mission to perform must continue to do his work, must persist in his duty as he sees it; he must deliver his message, even if, under certain circumstances, the message should seem to him a voice in the wilderness.

These remarks apply with particular force to the subject of birth-control. When a nation has lost or is about to lose a million of its sons, physically the best specimens of manhood, then it listens with but ill-concealed or open and angry impatience to the suggestion of limiting the number of offspring, of controlling the production of future war material. But we, who feel that reckless breeding with its resulting overpopulation and economic and moral misery is one of the causes of war, must not halt in our propaganda; on the contrary, we must, if possible, intensify it. Even a voice in the wilderness is sometimes heard, and unwilling listeners do, now and then, become converted.

And it is for this reason that it gives me pleasure and pride to introduce this excellent symposium to the intelligent English reading public. It cannot fail to do some good, perhaps much good, in the important cause of the

rational limitation of offspring. And this cause needs continuous tireless championing. For its enemies are becoming numerous, active and malicious. As long as the cause of birth-control was weak and worked quietly it was not paid much attention to by its opponents. But now as it is becoming stronger, bolder, articulate and is gaining adherents rapidly, the enemies of the rational control of offspring are beginning to use their legal power, their money and their venom to crush the movement, and to imprison or at least to besmirch and belittle its advocates. Unscrupulous hack writers and hireling lecturers, both lay and medical, are now in a position to eke out a living by denouncing and misrepresenting the birth control movement and its advocates, in the pages of magazines and on the platform. But the more active the enemies of birth-control become, the more active must we be, and we must not give up until our cause has been won.

As in all intellectual and moral battles, the growth and success of the liberal element strengthen the opposition and increase the activity of the reactionaries; this in its turn calls forth greater activity and more unyielding determination on the part of the liberals, and so the fight goes on, until all the liberals and reactionaries are ranged in two camps, a battle royal is delivered, with the victory always on the side of the liberals—for eventually truth and common sense do win the day. In this country the day of the decisive battle was quite near; but for our entry into the war we might be witnessing it now. However the setback is only a temporary one; the final struggle between the upholders of rational birth-control and the advocates of reckless breeding cannot be long delayed; and in orde-

to make sure of victory, we must have a plentiful and varied supply of ammunition; books are our only ammunition, and we must have as many and as varied books as possible. And this Symposium, POPULATION AND BIRTH CONTROL, will, I feel certain, prove a valuable weapon in the armamentarium of the birth-control advocate.

12 Mount Morris Park, W., New York.
September 17, 1917.

MALTHUS, A BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL STUDY

MALTHUS, A BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL STUDY

By Achille Loria

THE life of Thomas Robert Malthus is a most conspicuous example of the omnipotent influence exercised by the social environment in moulding the form and determining the direction of the productions of the mind, an influence which triumphs over every opposing tendency of the individual educative factor. In fact, the epoch of British history in which the youth of our author was passed was leavened by a profound social revolution, in correspondence with which there occurred an extensive transformation in the mental outlook of the wealthy and governing classes. In England, just as elsewhere, while the brutalised and ignorant proletarians remained altogether inaccessible to intellectual illumination, the ruling classes light-heartedly intoxicated themselves with the theories of Voltaire and of Rousseau, and in their luxurious retreats gave themselves up to the boldest intellectual extravagances, secure in the belief that not even as an attenuated echo would their indiscretions find a way to the ears of the outwearied and submissive masses. But as soon as the Revolution of 1789 transformed these philosophical doctrines into the terrible uprisings of an infuriated populace, there was diffused throughout the ranks of the governing classes a salutary

terror, which admonished them to sing another tune, and to look askance upon theories which carried with them the germs of such grave and disastrous catastrophes. The typical representative of the mental transformation thus effected in Old England was to be found in the person of Edmund Burke. After having in times of political calm coquetted with philosophical radicalism and with the doctrine of democracy, this writer was suddenly panic-stricken by the lurid spectacle of the French Revolution; he went over to the reactionaries, and from their ranks turned against the theories and the actions of the revolutionaries the keenest shafts of his marvellous eloquence. For, while the new reactionary tendency made its way with some difficulty among the members of the older generation, whose minds were now so firmly set in the democratic direction that they could not be detached from this circle of ideas, those of the younger generation, immune to the effects of this tradition, and accessible to new influences, submitted themselves without question to the working of the altered social environment, and with indescribable fervour embraced reactionary ideas. In vain did the older men, still enthusiasts for revolutionary democracy, endeavour to hold back the young people from the threshold of the imminent reaction: for, in the titanic duel between education and environment, the latter ultimately triumphed, and the democratically-minded fathers were horrified to see their sons escape them, in order to plunge into the dark and icy waters of the reactionary Styx.

Precisely of this character was the destiny of the youthful Malthus. Born on February 14th, 1766, at The Rookery near Dorking, he was at first educated by his father,

Daniel Malthus, a country gentleman, moderately wealthy, a well-read man, and the anonymous author of several passable plays. Daniel Malthus, Rousseau's personal friend and executor, and a fervent disciple of Rousseau and Condorcet, learned from the former writer's *Emile* that the best education is that which accords with and encourages the spontaneous initiative of the pupil. He therefore entrusted his promising son to the care of Richard Graves, rector of Claverton, near Bath, author of *The Spiritual Quixote,* where the boy learned "little but Latin and good behaviour." Young Malthus, indeed, soon acquired the elements of the former, but the same cannot be said of the latter; for he and his companions spent their days in games and fights, which left frequent and by no means ornamental traces upon his countenance, and which earned for him from his timorous preceptor the Neapolitan nickname of "Don Roberto." At the age of fourteen, Malthus left his too indulgent tutor, to be entrusted to the more intelligent care of Gilbert Wakefield, ex-clergyman and dissenter, scholar and controversialist, a fervent disciple of Rousseau, whose influence was likewise confined to advice as to the best books and the most useful studies. Here, also, the refractory pupil exhibited the same irrepressible cheerfulness, which was destined to disappear only at a later date when he was confronted with the gloomy problem of poverty. He was always, to quote his father's description, the family darling, an admirable companion, sympathetic and generous; he made every one happy, and his presence was cheering to all; at every opportunity he openly professed his faith in the restoration of human happiness by means

of new and better institutions. When eighteen years old he was entered, as was proper for a younger son, at Jesus College, Cambridge, where he eagerly studied universal history, poetry, modern languages, Italian literature, and mathematics; he became Fellow of his College in 1788, he took orders in 1789, and in 1797 became curate of Albury; during this period his convictions underwent gradual modification, and he derived from the changing environment new and conflicting orientations. The instability of his democratic faith was already manifest in his unpublished work, *The Crisis,* dealing with political occurrences in England and France during 1796, for in his book, to quote his father's words, the young author "throws stones in his own garden," the garden of liberty and democracy. In the following year, during a vacation spent with his father, he had occasion to exhibit the most definite dissent from the latter's views concerning the doctrines expounded by Godwin in *Political Justice* (1793) and in *The Enquirer* (1797). Godwin maintained, and the elder Malthus believed, that civil institutions are responsible for human misery, and they looked forward to the coming of a social system founded upon equality and anarchy, which was to bring universal wellbeing and even physical immortality. Thus, while the old Jacobin grew warm in defence of these theories, the son, already an apostle of reaction, devoted himself to their rebuttal and to their repudiation.

Now at the time when young Malthus was fully immersed in the flood of new and reactionary mental tendencies, there fell into his hands the works of Hume, Wallace, and Townsend, all of which made manifest the

irresistible tendency of human population to increase beyond the limits of subsistence, and thus to provoke poverty and to lead to the death of a more or less considerable number of living beings. This unceasing and fatal recurrence of an excess of population over food, and of the poverty thereon dependent, arising as inevitable results of biological and natural causes, appeared to the young thinker to be the most forcible and trenchant arguments he could employ on behalf of the ideas which he felt constrained to defend in opposition to paternal traditions. The inexorable necessity of poverty, persisting for biological and physical reasons throughout all the most varied manifestations of the economic and social order—was not this, he asked himself, perhaps the most decisive condemnation of the theory that economic distress was the outcome of prevailing social institutions, and that from the reform of these institutions might be expected the general diffusion of human welfare? Did not this afford a most definite proof of the impotence of reformers to carry out their programme for universal happiness, and of the fundamental inalterability of the economic order, interconnected as it is by a series of invisible threads with the unyielding fatality of nature? It seemed superfluous, then, to combat the Jacobin theory of social causation with principles and with dogmas, for a better course was open; the theory could be exploded by the indisputable authority of facts, by the incontrovertible data of statistical and demographic inquiry. Such precisely was the idea which moved him, such the inward impulse which urged him for the first time to address the public. It is in error that some writers affirm that our philosopher

wrote a partisan work merely, a book consciously aimed, for political ends, at the refutation of the Jacobin ideal. To assert this, is to do injustice to the objective serenity and scientific honesty of Malthus—qualities which never failed him for a moment in the whole course of his daily life. No, Malthus was fully convinced that the theories of the French democrats and of their disciple, Godwin, were essentially false; and was likewise profoundly assured of the truth and the inevitable existence of an excess of population over the means of subsistence. Now, in this state of mind—animated, on the one hand, by an invincible horror of revolutionary France, and dominated, on the other, by the intimate conviction that excessive population and poverty arise from biological necessity—an inspired thought came to him of a sudden: to build a theoretical bridge between the conviction and the aversion, to employ the demonstration of the biological phenomenon as a deadly weapon against the Jacobin philosophy, in a word, to make use of demographic fact to slay the revolutionary hydra.

This alone was the inspiring idea, this the psychological genesis, of *An Essay on the Principle of Population as it affects the Future Improvement of Society,* published anonymously (in accordance with the custom of his day) in the year 1798. In this essay, modest in size and price, the author attacked Godwin, reproaching him for his failure to take into account the principle of population, for his failure, that is to say, to recognise the eternal and invincible natural law in accordance with which human beings multiply in geometrical progression, whereas the means of subsistence increase in arithmetical progression. Let us

suppose, said Malthus to Godwin, that there is instituted the society of equals to which you look forward, a society in which there shall be secured to every member the condition of completest wellbeing; such a society could not last for a moment, for the immediate increase of population, pressing upon the means of subsistence, would give rise in its turn to poverty, destitution, and death. The happiness you foresee will disappear beneath the waters of oblivion, and the old struggle for bread, the age-long inequality of station and of property, will reintroduce among us distressing manifestations and solvent influences. There will be reconstituted a society of the familiar type, consisting of masters and servants, landowners and tenants, the wealthy and the disinherited. We go too far even in admitting that a society of equals can ever come into existence; for the principle of population, which would suffice to destroy the equalitarian society of Godwin, would in addition suffice to prevent its birth. For, indeed, wherever there is sufficient room and a sufficiency of food, there population increases ceaselessly and without limit, until it comes to press upon the impregnable barrier of subsistence; and at this point there inevitably arises a fierce *struggle for existence* (the phrase is used by Malthus), in which death is the punishment of the vanquished and exclusive ownership the reward of the victor. Thus inequality finds its way into the very origins of the order of civil society, as the inevitable outcome of the principle of population. Erroneously, therefore, concludes our author, do Godwin and the whole French school regard human institutions as the cause of inequality; for that which is in truth to blame for the existence

of inequality and for the lack of social equilibrium is human nature itself, the irresistible impulse to procreate by which human beings, or living beings, are dominated, and which itself alone, apart from any artificial impulse from without, constitutes the irremovable foundation of social inequality, and the insuperable obstacle to all the forces aiming at the abolition of such inequality.

It would be erroneous to claim any originality for this thesis, which was previously enunciated by quite a number of writers, and more especially by those to whom Malthus himself makes frank acknowledgment in his essay. As early as 1752, Hume affirmed that in modern Europe the population was far greater than it had been in ancient times, alleging as a reason precisely the incessant working of the principle of population; shortly afterwards the Anglican clergyman, Wallace, writing in 1753 and in 1761, referred to the excessive increase of population as the most formidable obstacle to the communism he desiderated; whilst another clergyman, Townsend, in his *Dissertation on the Poor Laws* (1786), admirably illustrated, with the apologue of the island of Juan Fernandez, the inevitability of excess of population. Townsend added that this excess leads to the destruction of the more weakly individuals; he admitted the existence of two kinds of checks to population, *natural* (moral restraint and emigration) and *unnatural* (exposure of children, hunger, vows of chastity, life in seraglios, and entail), and from these considerations he derived arguments against the poor law, which furnished an impulse to improvident procreation, and he demonstrated the impotence of communism to preserve human beings from poverty. Nor did

these writers stand alone. We may leave in their Olympian serenity Plato and Aristotle, whose minds were in fact undisturbed by the excess of population over subsistence, and who, in this connexion, thought rather of the injuries to the body politic which arise from urban agglomerations; nor need we give more than a word in passing to G. B. Vico, who regarded insufficiency of food as the chief goad to struggle among living beings; but it is known that Machiavelli and Botero drew attention to the possibility and the social danger of excess of population over the means of subsistence; that Galiani insisted upon the small number of germs of life which survive as contrasted with the enormous quantity of those which are lost and destroyed; that Benjamin Franklin, in the year 1751, referred to the pressure of population upon food; and that Ferguson insisted upon the same point in the year 1767; that, also in the year 1767, the Dutch pastor Brückner (forestalling, not so much Malthus, as Darwin) affirmed that living beings were subject to a severe struggle for life, and that this struggle, by eliminating the less well adapted and the comparatively weakly, fulfilled a function advantageous to the progress of the species. In the same year, Sir James Steuart likewise enunciated a thesis which in most respects anticipated that of Darwin, differing from the latter merely in the fact that, in Steuart's view, the excess of population and the consequent struggle for life determine the survival, not of the intrinsically stronger living beings, but of a certain number of living beings of any degree of intrinsic strength, who become strong for the simple reason that they are survivors, or, in other words, on account of the

abundance of food which is secured to the survivors through the disappearance of the vanquished competitors. Nor, from this review of precursors, must we omit the names of Genovasi (1769) and of Beccaria (1779-80), who affirmed that the growth of population encounters an insuperable obstacle in the restricted fertility of the soil; that of Ricci, who referred to the tendency of population to increase beyond subsistence, and upon this consideration based a criticism of charitable institutions (1787); and, finally, that of Ortes, who, eight years before Malthus (1790), strongly emphasised the existence of an excess of population over the means of subsistence.

We must therefore recognise that Malthus, in his forceful little work, says nothing which his readers could not have learned elsewhere. How, then, are we to explain the enormous success of the book? This will readily be understood if the fact be recalled that it reflects in a concise and clear-cut form the economic system of his day, and interprets that system in a manner perfectly harmonious with the interests of the governing classes. It is, in fact, certain that the excess of population over food was effectively manifest in its most disastrous form in England at the close of the eighteenth century; for the population, spurred on to improvident procreation by the very poverty in which it languished, encountered a production limited by protective barriers and by the trammels of entail. Now, whilst the poverty thus diffused throughout the population aroused in the sufferers fierce feelings of hatred, and whilst the revolutionary-minded derived from the fact of such poverty grounds for angry denunciation of the existing economic system, Malthus

suddenly intervened to give this poverty its place in a universal theory, to prove its inevitable association with the eternal regularity of nature, and, finally, to demonstrate the innocence of the possessing classes in respect of the sufferings of the proletarian masses. It is therefore no matter for wonder that the tories hastened to lavish eulogies upon the work of the whig writer—a work agreeable to the convictions to which they held so strongly, and supplying justification for the rents to which they held more strongly still.

But his enormous success, far from inducing our philosopher to rest beneath his easily acquired laurels, stimulated him to devote himself with renewed and greater eagerness to the study of his grand argument. The first indication of his perseverance in this order of investigations was furnished by his anonymous publication, *An Investigation of the Cause of the Present High Price of Provisions* (1800), in which he contended that the rise in the price of food, primarily dependent upon the increase of population, was further increased by the poor laws in accordance with which the amount of monetary relief was proportional to the price of the necessaries of life. What really happens, he said, is that this system, by increasing the monetary subsidy at every increase in the price of food, necessarily leads to an increase in the quantity of money offered in exchange for a constant quantity of food, and therewith leads to an unlimited rise in the price of the latter. Here also, then, the author's researches revolved around the theme of his celebrated essay. But in addition to amplifying the discussion of this or that aspect of his special subject, Malthus, with real wisdom, devoted

himself to the documentation of his fundamental thesis by direct evidence. With this end in view, in the spring of 1799, accompanied by three friends, Clark, the naturalist and antiquarian, Otter, and Cripps, he undertook a series of journeys in Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and Russia, and in 1802 he visited Switzerland and Savoy, everywhere in search of positive proofs of his thesis. Thus, if the voyages of Darwin inspired the theory of biological evolution, the travels of Malthus supplied the documents in proof of the theory of population. The result of our author's journeys and of his unceasing meditations upon his argument, was the second edition of his work on population, published this time under his own name, and differing from the first edition in the way in which a systematic treatise differs from a preliminary essay. In this volume, Malthus reaffirmed the principle that population tends to increase in geometrical progression, whereas the means of subsistence increase in arithmetical progression; hence the balance between population and food must be secured by means of a series of preventive checks (moral restraint, that is to say, the postponement of marriage as long as there do not exist means for nourishing the offspring—or vice), or positive checks (unhealthy occupations, excessive toil, extreme poverty, the underfeeding of children, the unwholesomeness of life in large towns, illnesses, epidemics, war, pestilence, and famine). From one historical epoch to another, or in the same epoch as we pass from one nation to another, we encounter variations in the form and the character of the preventive or positive checks whose effect it is to bring about the desired equilibrium between population and the means of

subsistence. Among savages, the checks are infanticide, the hardships imposed upon children, wars, epidemics, alcoholism, prostitution, emigration in mass; in classical Rome, they are degeneration and vice; in modern Russia, it is excessive child mortality which forcibly maintains the balance between population and the available means of subsistence; whilst in contemporary Tuscany, England, and Norway, the balance is more peacefully and less cruelly secured by means of the postponement of marriage. In more general terms, wrote Malthus, it may be affirmed that the whole history of the human race can be summed up as a gradual and ascendent evolution from the cruelty of positive checks to the higher civilisation that is characterised by the use of prudential checks.

Coming next to draw the practical inferences from the theories he enunciated, Malthus proceeded to deduce what would to-day be called the policy of population, that is to say, the totality of the provisions best adapted to secure a lasting equilibrium between population and means of subsistence. In this connexion he turned once more upon the two chief objects of his hatred—communistic systems and legalised charity. The systems of equality propounded by Condorcet, Wallace, Godwin, and Owen were, he said, wrong in essence, because they were incapable of defending themselves against the principle of population; nay, more, because in our congested society they would give free scope to the desolating and savage operation of that principle. In fact, by releasing the individual from the immediate consequences of improvident procreation, by securing to all those born an inalienable right to share in the common heritage, such systems would furnish a dan-

gerous incentive to imprudent procreation, and would therewith give free scope for a fatal increase of population and for its excess over subsistence. The same thing might be said of the scheme of Arthur Young, to allot to every father of three or more children the ownership of an acre of potato land and pasturage for one or two cows; and also of the system of legalised charity which, by granting to the impoverished man a right to assistance, destroys in his mind all obstacles to the gratification of the senses, and thus operates as a most dangerous accelerator of the increase of population. Even emigration could impose upon this increase no more than a temporary check, for the stimulus which emigration furnished to procreation ultimately resulted in increasing its excess. Nay more! Even improvements in agriculture, the putting under cultivation of private parks or of untilled lands, could only defer the appearance, in any case unavoidable, of an excess of population. Nor would the free importation of wheat be more effective in attenuating the distress thus arising, for this would merely serve to render the supply of provisions irregular, and would therefore make famines more frequent; whereas import duties, by restricting the sources of supply to the home market, would make the food supply within this area to that extent more regular and constant. Nor, finally, would it be of any use to bring about the introduction of less expensive articles of food, for these could not fail in their turn to give a further stimulus to the growth of population, and to render its excess yet more marked. To sum up, it is here of no use to improve institutions, to perfect the forms of government, to arrange the public services more rationally;

on the contrary, what is needed is to preach sexual restraint, especially to common labourers, and to repeal the disastrous poor laws, to refuse parochial assistance to the children of marriages contracted one year after the act of repeal, and to illegitimate children born two years after the passing of such an act.

The work of Malthus, which had now emerged from the narrow region of polemic into a loftier and serener sphere, gave rise to heated discussions, and became the object of enthusiastic praise and fierce criticism. The third edition appeared in 1806, the fourth in 1807, the fifth in 1817, and the sixth in 1826, this being the last published during the author's lifetime; each successive edition was further enriched by suggestive and interesting amplifications, revisions, and replies to critics. The book became increasingly the object of commentaries, elucidations, and pæans of praise. In the year 1822, the tailor, Francis Place, defended the theory of Malthus, though finding fault with him for his aristocratic preferences and for his condemnation of legalised charity. Godwin replied to Malthus' assault in a work upon population in which he was unable to conceal his respect for the reactionary thinker; Coleridge, Everett, Ensor, and Sadler made direct attacks from many sides, and with varying success, upon the rising colossus. But to what purpose? Around Malthus there formed a compact phalanx of economists, hailing the new prophet; in England, Ricardo, M'Culloch, Senior, James Mill, John Stuart Mill; in Germany, Justus Möser, Rau, and Roscher; in France, G. B. Say and Rossi; in Switzerland, Cherbuliez; in Italy, Ferrara—all urging the

inscription of the Malthusian dogma among the enduring scientific conquests of the new age.

A precise examination of Malthus' doctrine, and of the estimate of that doctrine by the scientific criticism of our own day would take us beyond the scope of this essay. We shall only say that the criticism directed against this thesis has not succeeded in destroying that kernel of truth to which it owes its immortal value. For, in fact, no one can deny that human population, when propagation is unrestricted, must sooner or later encounter the barrier imposed by the means of subsistence, inasmuch as, through the fatal force of things and through the natural limitation of the productivity of the soil, these means increase with a more restricted and more tardy rhythm. Humanity, therefore, is from the very beginning menaced, more or less remotely, by an excess of population over food and by consequent destitution, and is thus faced by the unavoidable necessity of warding off such distress by means of the prudent postponement of marriage and the consequent restriction of offspring.

Granting, however, the abstract or doctrinal value of Malthus' teaching, it is only right to add that this teaching is altogether incompetent to explain the excess of population which actually arises in societies ancient and modern, and still more incompetent to explain the nature and the character of the poverty which permeates and rules these societies. In fact, production and population are not subordinated to the working of those two abstract factors of a physical and biological character which are associated in the doctrine of Malthus, but rather to two factors of an economic kind, which restrict production and

stimulate propagation to an extent in excess of the restriction of the one and of the stimulation of the other that can be effected by the natural factors. For we have a series of strictly economic factors, whereby agrarian production is restrained within the limits to which it might attain in the conditions of productivity of the soil naturally prevailing at the time and in the existing development of technique. Malthus himself ultimately admitted this in many passages of his book. He recognised, for example, that the setting apart of huge areas of land for the purposes of luxury, short term leases, and unproductive landed property, prevented the land from furnishing all that it might yield. He added, with perfect justice, that the very existence of profit forbade the cultivation of the more sterile areas of land, those whose produce would be barely sufficient for the subsistence of the labourers. Nay, more. In a letter to Senior, dated March 23rd, 1829, he stated in plain terms that the quantity of the means of subsistence produced depended exclusively upon the will of the landowners, who were therefore able to confine that quantity far within the limits of what might actually be produced in the prevailing conditions of technique and of the fertility of the soil. But the fact is of far greater importance than appears on the face of these fragmentary assertions. We are not really concerned with anomalies, or with acts of omission, which are able artificially to limit the production of the means of subsistence; we are concerned with organic conditions in each phase of the economic order, with limits that inevitably arise out of the historically existing relationships of production and distribution of wealth, and which forbid the

earth to furnish its maximum product in correspondence with the existing fertility of the soil and with the prevailing conditions of technique.

Similar factors, extraneous to those considered by Malthus, influence human propagation. The increase of population itself encounters a series of organic checks which altogether escaped Malthus' notice. Thus (as was well shown by Messedaglia) the increase of population in geometrical progression is incompatible with the very postulate from which Malthus set out, namely, that increase in the means of subsistence proceeds in arithmetical progression; for the doubling of population, at any period under observation, can have reference only to the population actually alive at the time, and this is already restricted by the very fact that the means of subsistence increase only in arithmetical progression. Hence the increase in population, instead of proceeding in geometrical progression, will take place in an arithmetical progression wherein the difference between the terms is the double of the difference between the terms of the arithmetical progression denoting the increase in the means of subsistence. Thus, for example, if the means of subsistence increase as represented by the progression

1 2 3 4 5

while population increases as represented by the progression

1 2 4

of these four, three only can survive, owing to the limitation of the means of subsistence; hence their doubling in the next period will give a population of 6, of whom there

will survive but 4 to undergo a further doubling, and so on; so that the real increase of population will be represented by the progression

1 2 4 6 8 etc.

Putting aside, however, this purely arithmetical correction, the rate of increase of population depends upon the quantity of that population, upon its composition in the matter of age, sex, etc., so that the increase of population is stimulated in varying degree according as these elements vary. Thus, if a population hitherto stationary now begins to increase, it is perfectly clear that for a considerable number of years, the first year excepted, there will be observed a decline in the birth rate, for until the time arrives at which those now being born in excess have attained sexual maturity, the number of births per annum remains constant while the population increases. Hence, simply in consequence of this statistical influence, the increase by geometrical progression anticipated by Malthus is seen to be mathematically impossible for a more or less considerable period. Thus, again, every change in the death-rate of the various age-classes suffices *per se* to bring about a correlative change in the fecundity of the population, leading to an increase in the birth-rate if the decline in the death-rate affects especially the more fecund age-classes while sparing the less fecund, and to a decrease in the birth-rate in the opposite event. Now, in a population that is increasing and is pressing against the barriers of subsistence, there occurs a high death-rate among adults, that is to say, among those fitted for reproduction, and this alone suffices to diminish the birth-

rate, to check the increase of population, and thus to lessen the excess of population over the means of subsistence. Here we have a series of demographical or statistical influences competent to impose checks upon the rate of increase of population, and thus to keep that rate below what would be represented by the terms of a strictly geometrical progression.

Dismissing from consideration these checks of a purely statistical character imposed upon the growth of population in virtue of the composition or the quantity of that population, we find that there exists a series of purely economic influences by which the rate of increase of procreation and that of human population are rigidly predetermined, and we find that these influences are essentially mutable in accordance with changes in the economic system. Here also is a point to which Malthus ultimately referred in certain passages of his work. Thus, he alluded to the limitations upon procreation peculiar to the slave system; now it is evident that these limitations belong neither to the category of positive checks nor to the category of preventive checks enumerated by Malthus, but that they make their appearance as unwitting and natural emanations of a particular economic system. Elsewhere he admitted that an increase of wellbeing, by raising the standard of life, diminishes, instead of increasing, the number of marriages; now, this check, which makes its appearance and operates where there is an excess of food over population, is evidently outside the category of malthusian restraint, and its characteristics are simply dependent upon the nature of the economic system. But here we are concerned merely with fragmentary

observations, which are not adequate to the supreme importance of the subject. The truth is that the birth-rate, far from being a figure necessarily dependent upon the biological condition of the human species, is the product of the economic conditions in which the individual is placed, and is in inverse ratio to his degree of wellbeing. This is a fact of which Malthus himself might have been convinced if he had taken the trouble to watch the people amongst whom he was actually living, for he would then have become aware that, whereas the poorer classes of England had given themselves up to imprudent procreation, the families of the well-to-do were comparatively sterile and were on the way to undergo extinction. It follows from this that the total birth-rate in any given population must necessarily vary correlatively with variations in the economic condition of the more numerous class. If this condition be unfavourable, it inevitably results that the labouring masses will abandon themselves to inconsiderate procreation; whereas the opposite sequence of events occurs when the economic system provides for the more numerous class a worthier and a more human lot.

Now, when the limits inherent in the economic system impose very considerable checks upon the production of the means of subsistence, and when the stimuli equally inherent in the economic system lead to a notable increase in the procreation of human beings, there inevitably results an excess of population over food; but in the cases we have hitherto been considering this excess will not be the outcome of natural (physical and biological) causes, since it will depend exclusively upon causes of an economic character, and therefore *per se* temporal and tran-

sient. Malthus' own epoch was precisely one in which were displayed with unexampled potency the economic checks to agrarian production and the economic stimuli to the growth of human population; for agriculture, then hampered by tariffs, by the system of land tenure, and, by entail, furnished a scanty and extremely costly product, whilst the low wages of the labourers brutalised their standard of life and encouraged improvident marriage. It was not surprising therefore, in such conditions, that there should appear and increase a horde of supernumeraries, condemned to die for lack of food. The same conditions renewed themselves in other times and among other peoples; and the recent famines in Russia and in India, as well as the destitution of many regions of Italy, which has led the population to emigrate in unexampled numbers, have invariably resulted from the pressure of a poverty-stricken population (propagating without restraint simply on account of its poverty) upon the means of subsistence whose production and importation are restricted by an archaic and hide-bound technical and commercial system. Upon such conditions, peculiar to certain critical periods of history, Malthus established his theory and formulated his celebrated law, in accordance with which poverty is regarded as the inevitable destiny of the human race. But as soon as those economic causes which have given rise to the excess of population cease to operate, there immediately disappears all that complex of sinister phenomena upon which Malthus bases his deductions, and the facts then furnish a solemn contradiction to this lugubrious theory.

Soon, in fact, agriculture, relieved from the tentacles that

had restricted it, exhibited a vigorous expansion; whilst at the same time the wonderful advances in the means of transport and of communication threw open to the merchants of Europe the bountiful productions of lands beyond the sea. Hence arose an unprecedented increase in the world's wheat supply, which was now capable of providing food in abundance for the swarming multitudes. At the same time, the appropriation of the whole surface of the globe, by rendering high wages compatible with the luxuriant development of the capitalist economy, provided for the labourers better wages, rendering possible a worthier life; and the higher standard of life served *per se* to induce a considerable curtailment of procreation. Now, the production of food increasing enormously, on the one hand, and the production of human beings being checked, on the other, through the influence of the rise in wages, we might expect to find that before long the terrible malthusian flood of excess of population would disperse itself to give place ultimately to the inverse phenomenon of an excess of food over population. And this is what actually happened. We are now, in fact, in a position to say with Heine in his *Deutschland,* "there is bread enough here below for all the sons of men!" Lord Farrer recognises this most explicitly in his presidential address to the Statistical Society for the year 1894-5. He says: "As far as the greater part of the civilised world is concerned, not only does the population not increase more rapidly than the food supply, but precisely the opposite is the case, and the universal trouble is that the supply of food, and more particularly the supply of wheat, is in excess of the demand." This is the cause of the agrarian

crisis which has for so long been undergoing aggravation, of the fall in land-rents, and the fall in the price of provisions, the accumulation of the stock of unsold wheat which has to be utilised as forage, or as the raw material for the production of lubricating oil. And the very continuance of this excess of production over population, which shows no sign of abating, but which even appears to become much more marked, demonstrates the falsity of Malthus' thesis, according to which increasing wellbeing, by stimulating procreation, itself thrusts back the human race into the old distress; for we find ourselves to-day faced by a population which, in spite of, or rather precisely owing to, the increase in wages, continues the practice of continent procreation, thus maintaining and perpetuating the excess of the production of the means of subsistence over the production of human beings.

It is hardly necessary to add that this conclusion, which is so evident an inference from recent economic history, deprives the doctrine of Malthus of all effectual value, of all relationship to the real conditions of our time. "How is it possible to argue with Malthus?" exclaimed Burdett nearly a century ago; "we should require a thousand years to find an answer to all this." But recent events are enough by themselves to put the theory of Malthus on a level with the lucubrations of the philosophers of Laputa concerning the probable effects of the cooling of the sun. Moreover, these results of contemporary experience radically contradict the practical conclusions of Malthus, or blunt the weapon he provides to combat every attempt at social reform. It ought not, in fact, to be forgotten that the principle of population was put forward by Malthus, not

merely upon theoretical and speculative grounds, but, in addition, with the practical aim of providing an invincible weapon against systems of social equality; for these, if we accept his view, by directly increasing individual well-being, will furnish such an impulse to procreation as speedily to induce and to increase excess of population over food and consequent poverty. Now, the calm analysis of things teaches us, in this respect, precisely the reverse; it teaches us that an economic system which raises the condition and the incomes of the majority of the population will necessarily result in the restriction of procreation, and thus in the re-establishment of the equilibrium (where this has been disturbed) between population and the means of subsistence. Hence the principle of population, rightly understood, far from being the infernal machine which can be used to destroy each and every plan for equalitarian reform, furnishes additional argument on behalf of such plans, on behalf of the need for replacing the existing economic system by a better and more stable one, for such replacement alone can provide for the demographic problem an equitable and enduring solution.

But we have not yet finished with the deficiencies of the malthusian doctrine; to the comedy of errors which it presents to our view there is still lacking the last scene. When economic development shall have driven from the social firmament every trace of excess of population over the means of subsistence, we may well anticipate, according to the most correct interpretation of Malthus' thesis, that for this reason there will also be removed from the world every trace of adversity and poverty, that is to say, that the more numerous classes, being now in happy

equilibrium with the supply of food, will henceforward enjoy a safe and satisfying wellbeing. Well, nothing is further from the facts, as we see in our own epoch, in which the supply of food is in excess of the needs of the population, and yet the scourge of poverty is terribly manifest, and inflicts the most horrible distresses upon the inhabitants of the two hemispheres. In England, the classical land of superabundant and low-priced food, unemployment has attained unexampled proportions, and in October, 1908, about 10% of the members of the trade unions were out of work (*The Labour Gazette,* March, 1909). In a more or less attenuated form, similar conditions prevail among all the nations of the civilised world. Now this demonstrates very clearly that abundant production of the means of subsistence, whether in equivalence with or in excess of the needs of the population, does not suffice *per se* to exclude poverty and distress; it shows that the lot of a given population is determined, not by the quantity of the means of subsistence actually produced, but by that portion of this quantity which is available at the demand of labour. In other words, it is not the ratio between population and the means of subsistence, but the ratio between population and productive capital, which determines the degree of wellbeing that any given population enjoys. The means of subsistence may exist in an excess as marked as you please to the estimated requirements of the population; but if the proprietary class determines to withdraw from its storehouses, in response to the demands of the workers, a quantity of food less than that which would be sufficient for the productive employment of the entirety of the population desirous of work, a fraction of this

latter is necessarily condemned to unemployment and to poverty. If the owning class decides to withdraw from its storehouses an additional quantity of food, in order to distribute this as alms among the rejected labourers, these will be saved from death, but there will always remain an unemployed and poverty-stricken remnant, and therewith will be perpetuated the existence of that social residuum which constitutes the opprobrium and the danger of contemporary society. In any case, indeed, the greatest possible excess of the means of subsistence over population does not exclude the possible existence of an excess of population over the means of providing this population with employment, and therefore does not exclude poverty in its most aggravated forms.

We find, in truth, a passage in Malthus' book which seems to imply the recognition of some confused notion of this succession of phenomena. For, speaking of Siberia, he points out that it is not enough that a country should produce food in abundance; it is further necessary that there should be some one disposed to employ this food in the demand for labour, for otherwise even an abundance of food will not prevent poverty. And in such circumstances what is needed is no longer an increase in production, but a better distribution of the product, or of the land. Unfortunately the significance of the phenomenon is far more considerable than that attributed to it by these brief references; for we have to do, not simply with casual anomalies, but with manifestations intimately connected with the capitalist system, which that system inevitably induces in the regular course of its development. In fact, the very conditions inherent in the capitalist economy

prevent the proprietary class from withdrawing from its storehouse the quantity of food necessary for the productive employment of all the hands that are offered: either because one part of the population must be systematically unemployed in order to prevent the wages of those workers who are employed from attaining a level which threatens the persistence of profit; or else because the fatal depression in the rate of profit dissuades a portion of the capitalists from devoting their savings to productive employments. There is thus implicit in the very nature of existing economic relationships the reduction of productive capital to a figure inferior to that which would be required to maintain the totality of the population, and therewith becomes inevitable the creation of an unoccupied and mendicant class. The existence of this class, it is now perfectly obvious, has nothing whatever to do with malthusian restrictions upon agrarian production or with malthusian stimuli to human propagation; it is in no way related to the positive excess of population over the means of subsistence, and as a rule it is even an accompaniment of a positive excess of food over population: it is due to the economic checks which limit the advances of productive capital, and which make it impossible for the growth of that capital to keep pace with the increase in the labouring population, however slow the increase may be and however much it may be exceeded by an increase in the means of subsistence.

Our author's theory presents in addition a very grave error of omission, for, as regards the phenomenon of population, that theory elucidates exclusively the gloomy and sinister influences, without in any way taking into account

the beneficent influences whereby the growth of population promotes human progress and civilisation. It is true that Malthus does not fail to point out here and there that, if an excess of population be injurious, a numerous population is nevertheless *per se* beneficial and is a prime condition of progress, and elsewhere he declares that had there not occurred an increase in population, and consequent pressure upon the food supply, the great popular migrations would not have taken place, conquest and colonisation would have remained unknown, and, in a word, the whole of human history would have been a blank page. This last assertion can, indeed, hardly be accepted, for the prime cause of colonial expansion and of conquest is not the increase of population, but the decline of income, which follows upon the increase of population *per se* altogether independent of excess of population over the means of subsistence. But this is not the fact of importance; that which it is important to show, and that which Malthus (apart from fugitive references) fails to show, is that the incessant increase of population, inasmuch as it enforces the cultivation of less and less fertile land, provides the great stimulus to economic progress, and is the prime cause of the continued and inevitable ascent to new and superior economic forms. For, in fact, as soon as the increasing population can no longer be supplied with food from the more fertile lands alone, the economic and technical system which has hitherto prevailed, and which is *per se* incapable of making use of less productive areas of land, proves unendurable, giving rise to poverty and general adversity; hence it is essential to abolish that economic system and to replace it by a better one; which in its turn

must inevitably pass away as soon as the further increase of population shall have rendered it necessary to advance once again to the cultivation of new and even less productive areas of land. Thus, increase of population is not merely, as Malthus indicates, the artificer of degeneration and of poverty; but it is at the same time the potent demiurge of social transformations, the providential ferment inducing human advances; it does not merely furnish forth a horoscope of ruin and disaster, but it is pregnant with grandeur, with glory, with unending improvement. Now all this light-bearing aspect of the demographic phenomenon completely escaped the notice of our thinker: when he contemplated the growth of population he saw clearly enough its maleficent activity, accidental, transient, and correlative rather to the increase in population *per se* than to its excess over the means of subsistence; but he did not see the beneficent activity, permanent and immutable, furnishing an impulse to the development of economic systems always more advanced and more nearly approaching perfection. The lacuna, which M'Culloch already deplored in his *Literature of Political Economy,* was all the more surprising, inasmuch as, before Malthus, Aristotle, Ferguson, and, in Italy, Carli, had discovered in the increasing density of the population the great factor of human progress—but the defect was probably dependent upon the malthusian postulate that an increase of population is always necessarily preceded by an increase in agrarian production. This postulate, however, which harmonises ill with the malthusian doctrine as a whole (because, in a word, if an increase in population be always determined and preceded by an increase in the food supply,

how can there be an excess of population?), was triumphantly refuted by Ricardo, who showed that the progress of agrarian production always and necessarily manifests itself under the stimulus of an increase in population and of the pressure of population upon the means of subsistence. Now this simple consideration assigns to the increase of population a lofty function in the progress of civilisation; for it teaches us that it is precisely the increase of population, and the pressure of population upon the food supply, which is the great artificer of technical and economic revolutions, and which stimulates the social system to the adoption of forms continually more efficacious and more advanced.

It is therefore evident that just as the theory of division or association of labour appears to modern science far more complex and manifold than it appeared when formulated in the pages of Adam Smith, so also the theory of population presents itself to our minds in a form extremely varied, diversified, and manifold, when compared with the gloomy and sinister conception which oppressed the mind of Malthus.

If we rise superior to the petty and disagreeable aspect by which Malthus was obsessed, and which for so long a period formed one of the principal elements of the "science of despair," the demographic phenomenon reveals a whole kaleidoscope of images at once lofty and encouraging, and, what is more important, it tends to divert the theory of population from its primitive and reactionary purposes towards aims of reform and innovation. Having originated as a theory of regression, as the extinguisher of all attempts at humanitarian improvement, as the most

efficient weapon against philosophic radicalism, the theory of population, adequately transformed and amplified, now takes its place among the most radical of the social theories. For it teaches that the unceasing flux of population is the irresistible ferment leading to the destruction of successive social forms; that if, in one stage of its career, it generates a social system, it does so only to induce, in a subsequent stage, the inevitable decomposition of that system; that, owing to its operation, there cannot exist any eternal institutions, because by the force of its omnipotent lever all human institutions and aggregations must be brought to ruin and dissolution; that it is, in a word, the inexorable destroyer of all that exists, that it is essentially critical and revolutionary.

If, however, the theory of Malthus exhibits many and striking omissions, and requires extensive rectifications, nevertheless there is but little justification for the criticisms and the hostility of those dissentients who dismiss the theory with extreme levity, or who would replace it by some other undemonstrated and fantastic theoretical construction. First come the biologists, who claim that there exists a natural law in accordance with which the growth of population is checked without any need for the exercise of sexual restraint. Thus, Doubleday opines that fertility is in inverse ratio to the supply of nutrition, and in this connexion quotes Thesaurus, writing of Charles the Fat, "Charles was sterile owing to his excessive obesity," and quotes also Pliny, "*steriliora cuncta pinguia et in maribus et in foeminis.*" If this were so, to avoid an excess of population it would merely be necessary to increase the rations of food supplied to each inhabitant. The thesis has

been refuted a hundred times, but even were this not so, it is evident at first sight that the argument is involved in a vicious circle. For the scanty food supply which, according to this view, would be the cause of excess of population, is in its turn no more than the effect of the excess of population; that is to say, it presupposes the existence of the phenomenon which it pretends to explain. Spencer, again, contends that the increasing expenditure of nervous energy imposed by the increasing intensity of the struggle for existence, will suffice *per se* to reduce the manifestation of the generative powers, and will herewith spontaneously lead to an equilibrium between population and the means of subsistence. But this thesis is undemonstrated and irrational; for the expenditure of generative energy requisite to produce the maximum possible offspring is so trifling as to be perfectly compatible with the greater consumption of nervous energy demanded by the struggle for existence. Other naturalists have reproached Malthus for failing to perceive the beneficent working of the increase of population, that is to say, for failing to discover the ameliorative selection among beings engaged in the struggle for existence which Darwin was subsequently to elucidate so admirably in his immortal works.

It is to be noted that Darwin (as he himself informs us) drew the first idea of his theory of natural selection from the perusal, in the year 1838, of Malthus' work on population. But if we compare the theory of population in the pages of Malthus and in those of Darwin, we are struck with the extraordinary contrast, *quantum mutatus ab illo!* Where Malthus deduces a theory of adversity and disaster,

Darwin attains to a theory of improvement and progress; "a most significant contrast," exclaims Messedaglia, "in which may be perceived the reflection of a correlative contrast between two radically diverse and opposed social ages." Messedaglia goes on to join himself to the ready critics who find fault with Malthus for drawing from his thesis a series of pessimistic inductions, and for ignoring the roseate conclusions to whose foundation the theory of population lends itself. Now I myself hold, as I have just said, that the theory of population is consistent with views of progress and victory which Malthus has altogether ignored: yet I do not consider that Malthus is open to criticism for having traced only the maleficent influences of the human struggle for existence. While, in fact, it is perfectly true that the struggle for existence which arises from the excess of population over the means of subsistence is, in the case of the inferior orders of living beings, the great and providential factor of progressive selection, no such function can properly be assigned to the human struggle for existence; for this neither leads to the extinction of the vanquished, whom it condemns, on the contrary, to a hunger-stricken existence, nor does it lead to the survival of the best, though it does lead to the survival of the more astute or more degenerate. While, therefore, the naturalist Darwin is perfectly right in casting from the excess of population, and from the struggle for existence to which that excess gives rise, a conspicuously favourable and benign horoscope, the sociologist Malthus is equally right in discerning in the excess of population a sinister and destructive factor.

Finally, there are other biologists, doctors, self-styled

experts in sexology, who wish to supplement the moral restraint of Malthus by other checks of a more equivocal character. Malthus, as we have seen, advises as an exclusive specific against excess of population abstention from marriage until the possession is attained of sufficient means for the support of the offspring; a postponement which would certainly suffice *per se* to effect a diminution in the number of children born, but which should not, according to the idea of our author, be associated with any practice directly intended to restrict procreation. Other writers, however, claim to solve the problem more expeditiously by the use of means for the prevention of conception: these means, advocated already on the morrow of the publication of Malthus' work (as, for example, by G. Garnier), have given rise in the sequel to a distinct method of their own which is known by the name of *Neo-Malthusianism,* a method which culminates to-day in the enthusiastic recommendation of artificial abortion by the German physician Goldstein. Now let us say at once that as between these two tendencies, the malthusian and the neo-malthusian, there cannot be a moment's hesitation in giving the preference to the former, which is reasonable, and free from the risk of causing physical and moral damage: whereas the latter method is wrong-headed, since it aims at lopping the tree in order that it may bear no fruit; at vitiating, that is to say, and corrupting the parents, in order to avoid the dreaded coming of offspring. It is no less true, however, that, except in the more northerly lands, where the coldness of the senses perhaps renders it easier to solve every sexual problem, the postponement of marriage can be obtained only at the price of the institution and the

maintenance of prostitution; that is to say, malthusian restraint will conjure away the social degeneration arising from poverty only in virtue of the maintenance of an institution which Malthus himself vituperates as the source of degradation and brutalisation. Nor is even this solution possible in every case! For when the improvement in the economic conditions directly resulting from the exercise of sexual restraint shall have had the desired effect of banishing poverty from the world, shall we find that prostitution will continue? With one voice universal experience answers this question in the negative:

Pauvreté, pauvreté, c'est toi la courtisane.

So true is this, that in the happy regions of the new world, where poverty is the exclusive appanage of European immigration, it is from the European immigrants alone that prostitution draws its recruits. Now, if prostitution were to disappear, it is evident that the postponement of marriage would no longer be possible, and could no longer be reasonably advised. Then would become more alarmingly pressing the problem of how to hold in check the fecundity of young couples who celebrate their nuptials in the flower of vigour and enthusiasm. This is a weighty question, which we warmly recommend to the wisdom of the biologists of the future, for it is one which is certainly not solved by the vague speculations of Proudhon, Carpenter, and Stockham, concerning the spiritualisation of love.

At this point, to the army of Malthus' critics there now join themselves the statisticians, who affirm that, altogether

independently of the practice of sexual restraint, population tends to attain a spontaneous equilibrium with the means of subsistence, thanks to the operation of certain automatic checks which the growth of population itself develops. We have, indeed, previously referred to the existence and efficacy of certain spontaneous demographic checks, from the operation of which it results that the rate of increase of population remains inferior to that which would be expressed by the terms of a geometrical progression. Statisticians err, however, when they arbitrarily assume that these checks will suffice to maintain the population in perfect equilibrium with the quantity of the means of subsistence. Thus, Quetelet has enunciated (without proving it) a law to the effect that the obstacles to the growth of population tend to increase as the square of the velocity with which the population itself tends to increase; while Sadler and Guillard more concisely insist that the fertility of a population is in inverse ratio to its density, and that for this reason population tends towards a spontaneous equilibrium as the deficiency in the means of subsistence increases. More recently, again, Cauderlier does not hesitate to affirm that population always adjusts itself spontaneously to the growth of the means of subsistence, procreation slackening as soon as the increase of agrarian production becomes arrested; that for this reason an excess of population over food is contradictory and impossible; and that therefore an excessively high death rate, where this occurs, cannot be attributed to any excess of population over food, but simply to ignorance, or to violation of the laws of hygiene, or to alcoholism. But while there may be a certain amount of truth in these assertions,

which are by no means universally supported by statistics, such truth as there is is already implicit in the economic theory of population, for this teaches us that an increasing density of population is itself frequently accompanied by an economic transformation raising the condition of the labourer, and thereby leading to a diminution in improvident procreation. On the other hand, however, when these statisticians, passing beyond arbitrary assertions, condescend to tell us in what precisely consist the spontaneous checks which should restrain population within limits corresponding to the means of subsistence, they inevitably fall back into the vicious malthusian circle out of which they hoped to find their way, that is to say, into the restricted orbit of his preventive or positive checks. Thus, when Cauderlier affirms that an excess of population cannot come into existence, because whenever there occurs a rise in the price of food there ensues a decline in the marriage rate or in the birth rate, what is this but to affirm (for the rest, more or less arbitrarily, for the assertion is not always supported by the facts) the adoption of malthusian restraint in those conditions in which it appears to be especially needed? And when Rumelin indicates, as an effective factor in preventing an excess of population, a high child-mortality, or the excessive death rate of large towns, he forgets that the higher child-mortality and the higher death-rate among town dwellers are not the outcome of incomprehensible biological laws, but depend upon the badness of the vital conditions to which the great majority of children and town dwellers are exposed—he forgets, in other words, that these higher death rates depend upon the pre-existence of poverty, and for this reason, in many cases

at least, depend upon the pre-existence of an excess of population. What have we here, after all, but a manifestation of those positive checks which Malthus himself so minutely described?

Among this motley crowd of Malthus' opponents there cannot be missing the optimists, those who are unwearied in their attempts to dispel the clouds which the great pessimist summoned into the clear sky of economics. With this end in view they endeavour to replace the formula of Malthus by some other formula of a less severe or more elastic character. G. B. Say, for example, affirms that population is restricted by the *means of existence,* and Sismondi (though in so many other fields he is not an optimist) opines that population is restricted by the amount of the national income. Both these statements are erroneous, for the growth of population encounters an insuperable obstacle in the quantity of the food-supply; nor can an insufficiency in this respect be compensated by the existence of a larger quantity, however great, of luxury products, or by an excess of social income. Bastiat, Proudhon, Carey, and Henry George, affirm in their turn that increase of population, by laying a foundation for the amplification and increasing perfectionment of the association of labour, leads *per se* to a progressive increase in the production of food, and therewith spontaneously secures a balance between population and the means of subsistence. But this assertion is likewise erroneous, for increase of population invariably imposes the necessity of proceeding to the cultivation of less and less fertile acreas of land, and these, notwithstanding the greatest advances in the association of labour, necessarily furnish less and less produce. Hence,

at a certain stage in demographic development, an excess of population over food must inevitably appear.

Finally, to the assembly of the opponents of Malthus there hasten in a crowd the socialists, filled with indignation, as may readily be understood, against a theory which proclaims the impotence of any social reform to banish poverty from the world. How much abuse have they showered, these prophets of the new evangel, upon the revered head of Malthus! Pierre Leroux reproaches Malthus again and again for the harsh assertion (which was withdrawn from the third edition of the *Essay*): "A man who is born into a world already possessed, if he cannot get subsistence from his parents on whom he has a just demand and if the society do not want his labour, has no claim of *right* to the smallest portion of food, and, in fact, has no business to be where he is. At nature's mighty feast there is no vacant cover for him. She tells him to be gone, and will quickly execute her own orders." Proudhon affirms that only one man has been superfluous in the world, to wit, Malthus himself; Marx calls him a lackey of the aristocracy, a man of narrow intelligence, a plagiarist from Hume, Wallace, and Townsend, that is to say, from the very authors whom he loyally enumerates at the outset of his essay as founders of the faith he holds. Let us pass, however, from such considerations, to record the theory of population counterposed by Marx to that of Malthus. Those deceive themselves, says Marx, who affirm that there is an abstract law of population, valid among all peoples and in all ages. The truth is that every economic phase has its own specific law of population, valid while that phase continues, and ceasing to be valid when that phase

comes to an end. Now, leaving out of consideration the specific laws of economic phases that have passed away, laws which remain incomprehensible from lack of documents and data (which would in any case be of scant interest to us since history itself has passed its own criticism upon them by condemning them to death), it is our business to ascertain the specific law of population prevailing in the capitalist epoch, and this law may be expressed in the following terms. Since social capital is employed to an increasing degree in the form of machinery and raw material, it follows that the increase of capital devoted to or available for the payment of wages is proportionally checked, and may even undergo an absolute diminution; hence, if population increases in fixed proportion, or even if (in the second case) it is stationary, there necessarily results an excess of population; but this is not an excess over the means of subsistence, which may be much greater than the needs of the population, but an excess over the capital devoted to the demand for labour. For this reason, the excess of population which afflicts modern society does not possess a physical and biological foundation, but a capitalist foundation; it is not due to natural causes limiting agrarian production, or to biological causes stimulating human procreation, but is simply the outcome of the technical composition of capital, whereby is limited the proportion of capital devoted to the demand for labour. And the formation of this excess of population, far from being disagreeable to the capitalist class, constitutes the most precious support to that class, for it reduces the wages of the workers who are employed, and leaves them without any means of resisting capitalist dominion.

The considerations previously enlarged upon render it needless to discuss at any length what portion of this doctrine is true, and what portion is false or overstated. It is true that an excess of population may make its appearance notwithstanding the existence of perfect equilibrium between population and the means of subsistence, simply owing to the diminution or withdrawal of productive capital; only to this it is necessary to add that if the quantity of capital immediately withdrawn from the demand for labour becomes crystallised in the form of productive technical capital, this determines (as Marx himself admits) within a longer or shorter period, an increase in production, and therefore in productive saving, as the outcome of which there is sooner or later reconstituted the demand for labour which has temporarily been checked. It follows that the most extensive increase in productive technical capital is incompetent *per se* to effect a permanent diminution in the demand for labour, or to create a permanent excess of population over employment. For such a permanent excess to arise, it is necessary that a part of the capital hitherto employed, or virtually capable of employment, in the payment of wages, should undergo conversion, not into productive technical capital, but into unproductive capital. Apart from this, the most serious error of Marx is to believe that this process, which is essentially capitalist in character, is the sole cause of excess of population, or to deny the possible existence of a biological excess of population; whereas the truth really is that such an excess always arises in certain backward conditions of civilisation, and that it can appear at any time where the swarming population presses upon the more

slowly increasing quantity of the means of subsistence. While, therefore, Malthus has undoubtedly mutilated the study of the phenomenon of population by seeing no more in that phenomenon than the brutal products of the excess of people over bread; no less worthy of criticism is the mutilation which Marx inflicts upon the same phenomenon by seeing therein only its capitalist aspect, and ignoring its physical and biological aspect.

Not all socialists, however, join the ranks of the opponents of Malthus; for Marlo alludes to the supreme importance of the problem of population, and hopes to solve it by the prohibition of marriage to those who are not yet of age and to those who cannot prove the ownership of a certain amount of capital; Kautsky, while denying that we have to-day an excess of population over food, admits that such an excess may manifest itself in the socialist society of the future, to which will accrue the serious task of diminishing or preventing it, and he has withdrawn his assertion only in fidelity to Marx's doctrine; whilst Bebel, having critically studied, in the light of his varied erudition, the problem of excess of population, can suggest no better remedy than the consumption of a certain lard soup which is reputed to have an anti-generative influence upon the agricultural population of Upper Bavaria!

From this brief sketch of the criticisms passed upon Malthus, it will be sufficiently clear that, while these have succeeded in removing some excrescences from his titanic thesis, they have not succeeded in demolishing or attenuating the essential truth which forms the kernel of his doctrine, and which no philosophical disquisition or statistical investigation will ever be able to annul. For whatever may

be thought or said to the contrary, the theory of Malthus, besides being the revelation of a fact positively manifested in certain economic phases, possesses a profound and enduring educational value, as a warning of the social dangers which inevitably result from imprudent procreation, and as an antidote to the physiological tendencies which stimulate man to exceed the normal limits of his propagation. And the value of this doctrine is equally unchallengeable in social phases such as our own, in which the excess of population over employment and the resulting poverty are the outcome of essentially capitalist and economic causes, and are actually independent of any failure of equilibrium between population and the means of subsistence.

Such is the pith, such have been the varied fortunes, and such is the permanent value, of this celebrated work, which radically shifted the axis of sociological thought throughout the civilised world. From the summary we have given it appears very clearly that Malthus' book is a work dealing with social philosophy or sociology, enriched here and there by the most sagacious reflections upon statistical method, but that it does not in reality belong to economic science proper. This is not because the theme of population does not form part of political economy, of which, on the contrary, it constitutes an integral and essential element; but the manner in which the argument is treated by Malthus makes it impossible for us to consider his book as pertaining strictly to the sphere of economic science. The *Essay* is substantially devoted to the illustration, with historical examples and with the description of the most va-

ried countries and customs, of the biological necessity which leads population to increase in excess of the food supply, and it is concerned with elucidating the means by which a remedy may be provided; but the author never attempts to discuss the intimate bonds whereby the process of population is associated with the most complex relationships of the existing economic system, and he never examines the extent to which the former determines the latter or is thereby determined. What influence does an increasing density of population exercise upon production, upon advances in the association of labour, upon the ratio between labour and technical capital, upon the extension of agricultural and industrial undertakings? What is the influence of the same phenomenon upon the rate of wages, upon profit, and upon land-rent, upon the fluctuations in demand and supply of products and of labour? And conversely, what influence is exercised upon the rate of increase of population by the prevailing system of the distribution of wealth, that is to say, by the way in which the product is distributed as between wages, profit, and land-rent? These and other problems, constituting the nucleus of the economic theory of population, are completely ignored by Malthus, and for this reason we cannot speak of his book as the work of an economist in the strict sense of the term, but rather as that of a brilliant investigator of natural and social philosophy.

Unfortunately, domestic happenings and the influence of constituted authority constrained this highly endowed sociologist and philosopher to become a writer of economics. Almost immediately after the publication of the second edition of the *Essay*, Malthus was nominated by Pitt

(who had made his acquaintance three years earlier on a visit to Cambridge) to the distinguished position of professor of political economy and history at Haileybury College, just founded by the East India Company; and it was the promise of this appointment, securing for him henceforward a safe and honourable competence, which enabled him at length to fulfil the desire of his heart by espousing, on March 13th, 1804, Harriet Eckersall, by whom he had two daughters and one son. In face of these facts we see that there is absolutely no foundation for all the ill-natured gossip directed against our author, such as the assertion that he remained celibate in obsequious obedience to the Cambridge prohibition of marriage to its fellows; or the converse assertion that, in defiance of his own principle of moral restraint, he had eleven children. The truth is that Malthus married when thirty-eight years of age (which excludes *per se* an excessive progenitive capacity), and only when he had attained to an employment providing him with a secure and considerable income. It thus appears that his sexual conduct was perfectly consistent with the principles he had always professed. Such a phenomenon is sufficiently rare even in the case of the most exalted thinkers, for it to be worthy of particular mention in this brief sketch.

In his new dwelling-place, amid willows and ancient verdure enveloping it with shade and quietude, Malthus now proceeded to devote to science all the time he could spare from the ruling of his undisciplined pupils and from the vexations of an ill-managed and generally criticised institution. Only for brief periods did he leave this retired residence to hold converse with Robert Owen at New

Lanark in 1807; to travel with Horner in Wales in 1814; to visit the Counties of Kerry and West Meath in 1817 and Paris in 1820; to make a continental tour in 1825 (after his health had been affected by his daughter's death); and to pay frequent visits to London and to his friend David Ricardo at Gatcomb Park.

Now, if the natural bent of his mind made our author a sociologist, his professorial position made him an economist, for the office he had assumed rendered it necessary for him to abandon the pleasant paths of sociological thought and to concentrate his attention on the more arid and rocky ways of economics; and his subsequent writings were almost exclusively concerned with this subject. In the *Edinburgh Review* for February, 1811, appeared his anonymous essay, *The Depreciation of Paper Money.* In 1814 he published *Observations on the Effects of the Corn Laws,* and in the following year *The Grounds of an Opinion upon the Policy of Restricting the Importation of Foreign Corn,* wherein he defended, with very weak arguments, all the errors of agrarian protection. In 1815 appeared *An Enquiry into the Nature and Progress of Rent,* and in 1820 *Principles of Political Economy.* In the last-named work, the goading thought which urges Malthus, the burden of his book, is the possibility, or, more strictly speaking, the inevitable necessity, of an excess of production over consumption, resulting in the withdrawal of capital from enterprise, and in the unemployment and poverty of the working classes; conditions for which there is no remedy possible except the creation of a class of non-producers, *fruges consumere nati,* to whom is allotted the agreeable task of consuming the products with which the

market is glutted, but without having in return to produce or offer any products of their own. Thus, our author, after having rendered a precious service to the patrician and idle class, absolves that class of all responsibility in the matter of the misery of the plebs, rendering a further signal service by panegyrising their luxurious idleness and by representing their insolent prodigality as a perpetual source of universal wellbeing.

But it is needless to insist upon the aristocratic stamp of this new doctrine of Malthus, or upon the indirect glorification of the wealthy debauchee which is its corollary. It is, moreover, hardly necessary to repeat that the whole doctrine is a fantasm and that the dread of an excess of production by which Malthus was haunted was nothing more than a chimera, a morbid and ephemeral product of delirium. Earlier than this, indeed, G. B. Say vainly endeavoured to make it clear to Malthus that in view of the unlimited character of human needs and desires, it is impossible for labour to be permanently devoted to the production of commodities for which there is no demand, and to show that new commodities can always be produced with the certainty of finding buyers. Admitting this, it is evident that a balance between the demand and the supply of products should always be obtainable without need for the presence in the hive of a number of drones destined for the pleasurable and degrading function of unproductive consumption.

But the doctrine, however erroneous, has for us a supreme value as a precious confession of the defect by which malthusianism is vitiated. For, by admitting that poverty may arise from the simple economic fact of an

excess of products on offer over the demand for them in the market, Malthus at length recognises the possibility that poverty may manifest itself in conditions of perfect balance between population and the means of subsistence, and even when these means are present in excess. This admission on the part of Malthus at once supplies the refutation to all his angry animadversions against legalised charity, and furnishes for such charity a firm basis in civil legislation. As long as poverty appears to be the necessary and exclusive outcome of an excess of population over food, it is obvious that almsgiving is powerless to relieve, since the means of subsistence can be provided for the beneficiaries of charity only by depriving others of the necessaries of life. When, on the other hand, it is recognised that the most distressing poverty can perfectly well coexist with a complete equilibrium between population and the means of subsistence, it is also necessary to admit that social charity can alleviate or eliminate poverty by making use of the available supply of food to distribute it among the hungry. What more need be said? The very argument, so much misused by Malthus, that legalised charity is to be condemned because it furnishes a stimulus to improvident procreation, becomes altogether valueless and unmeaning in face of poverty which is not the outcome of excessive propagation, but which manifests itself when there is perfect equilibrium between population and food, merely owing to a falling off in the demands of the consumers. Thus, the reflections of Malthus upon the excess of production were condemned equally by his own anti-populationist exaggerations, and by his own strictures on the poor laws, and made in his scientific and practical system a breach

destined to be greatly widened by time and by the subsequent advances in economic thought. But a few short years, indeed, after the publication of Malthus' book there appeared numerous criticisms of our economists' attacks upon charity, proceeding from authoritative and moderate writers, the work of Romagnosi and Cattaneo, of Cavour and John Stuart Mill, whilst subsequently criticism became more and more intense, and finally, as we shall soon see, influenced English legislation, and proved triumphant.

In 1823, Malthus published yet another work on pure economics, *The Measure of Value;* and in 1824 his article *New Political Economy* appeared in the *Quarterly Review.* In the latter year he also contributed an article on *Population* to the supplement to the Encyclopædia Britannica. In 1827 came *Definitions in Political Economy.* Thereafter, Malthus returned to the field of his early studies, publishing in the year 1830 the work entitled *Summary View of the Theory of Population.*

This was our author's swan-song, for, four years later, when on a visit to his father-in-law at St. Catherine near Bath, he succumbed to a heart attack on December 29th, 1834, while still in the acme of his mental and physical energies. He died full of honour, having become an F. R. S. in 1819, a member of the Political Economy Club in 1821, a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature in 1825, and of the Statistical Society in 1827, a member of the Institute of France and a member of the French Academy of Moral and Political Sciences, and a member of the Academy of Berlin. What is yet more striking is that at the time of his death Malthus had attained to the summit of his scientific triumph, when the whole world was

persuaded of the truth of his doctrines, when all socialistic enthusiasm seemed to have been submerged beneath the icy current of the principle of population; and he died on the morrow of the day on which the English parliament, in obedience to his admonitions, had voted the new poor law, forbidding the payment of outdoor relief to able-bodied paupers, imposing on these latter murderous tasks, and, in a word, associating with legalised charity all kinds of bitterness and tribulation which rendered the assistance thus given more intolerable than death. Happy was Malthus in the hour of his departure, for had he lived longer he would have witnessed the disastrous overthrow of his dogmas and the total disorganisation of his complex programme of politics and of legislation.

Within a few years, in fact, of Malthus' death the distressing picture which he drew with such rare mastery was completely reversed under the very eyes of the astonished public, for where there ought to have appeared a population swarming in excess of the food supply, there actually appeared a production in excess of the beings which the produce was destined to nourish. In face of this radical inversion, our prophet's theory, at one time so widely accepted, was now by general consent relegated to the museum of intellectual antiquities, whilst the control of existing phenomena, those of actual experience, was assumed by a very different doctrine, whose foundations were economic instead of physical and biological. Meanwhile socialism, which seemed to have been forever annihilated by the overwhelming sledge-hammer of the two malthusian progressions, arose once more in triumph from its passing trance, and while recognising that more account must be

taken of the phenomenon of population, and that over-population must be avoided, made no pretence of lowering before the onslaught of the doctrine of population its own standards of rebellion and continued attack. To the malthusian apology for agrarian protectionism England replied, twelve years after the philosopher's death, by repealing the Corn Laws, and by introducing free trade in wheat. Finally, the stringency and harshness of legalised charity, which constituted the greatest and most tangible triumph of Malthus in the realm of facts, gradually gave way before the irresistible demands of life, which peremptorily imposed the return to gentler and more humane practices. The further advanced, in fact, the evolution of the new economic system, the greater the increase in agrarian production, and the greater the continence of human procreation, the more fantastic appeared those denunciations of legalised charity which depicted it as a wanton incentive to excessive procreation; whilst the scourge of unemployment, persisting and increasing in face of a perfect equilibrium between population and food, rendered it necessary to throw open to the famished multitude the overfull granaries at whose doors they were furiously knocking.

We see, then, how under the pressure of the changed economic system, the enforcement of the poor law lost its former rigour. The very functionaries who were charged with carrying out the law endeavoured to evade its strict regulations, first of all as regards children, next as regards the sick, the mentally deficient, and the elderly, and finally as regards the unemployed; whilst the state, instead of limiting itself to the grudging distribution of relief under

conditions imposing humiliation and anguish, made assiduous efforts to improve the lot of social derelicts. In every district, side by side with the old charitable institutions, there has come into existence a public health organisation to care for the myriads of the sick, a local education authority, a local lunacy authority, a local unemployment authority, and a local pensions authority; and the result of the existence of these manifold organisations is an enormous increase in the cost of the poor. What, in fact, are the seven millions sterling spent annually upon paupers in 1834, greatly to the distress of the disciples of Malthus, when compared with the fifty millions devoted to-day to similar purposes by organisations outside the poor law, and with the seventy millions which constitute the total annual expenditure at the present time upon the poor of the United Kingdom? But as if all this were not enough, the multitude of the authorities co-operating n the administration of works of beneficence (and often getting in one another's way), the frequency of overlapping and of waste, and the administrative anarchy which arises out of this multiplicity of authorities, have convinced the British government that it is impossible to persist in so irrational and suicidal a system, and that it is necessary to undertake the radical reorganisation of the whole gigantic business. The elucidation of the problem and of the methods of its solution was referred to a special commission, whose report was published at the beginning of 1909. The commission split into a majority and a minority, differing as regards certain matters of administrative detail; but both sections were in agreement as to the necessity for abolishing the rigours of the poor law of 1834, and as to the need for re-

establishing (as had already in practice been re-established) the right to outdoor relief for able-bodied paupers; they agreed as to the need for abolishing the workhouses, these true houses of terror, and for doing away with the series of legislative cruelties that inflict martyrdom upon the victims of poverty; they agreed finally that the energies of the state must be devoted, not to the oppression of the indigent, but rather to their rehabilitation, to raising their standard of life, to restoring their human and civic dignity. Further, the commission was unanimous in its recognition that the state must interest itself more especially in the fate of those paupers who were fit for work, those who had been thrown out of work by the fluctuations of industry, and must endeavour to find them lasting employment and a living wage. As if this were not enough, an Old Age Pensions Act of 1908 assigned to all who had been British subjects for more than twenty years, who had attained the age of seventy years, and whose annual income did not exceed £31. 10s., a pension, varying according to circumstances from one shilling to five shillings per week. Thus the highest assembly of the United Kingdom proclaimed the failure of the poor law of 1834, and took action accordingly; and the action thus taken served at the same time to condemn the malthusian theory of which the 1834 poor law was the application and the consequence.

A no less decisive condemnation made itself heard in France, where various towns rivalled one another in offering premiums to the parents of large families; in Austria, where a bill brought forward in 1909 proposed special taxation upon celibates, and taxation at a lower rate upon childless married persons; in Germany, where a scheme of

state insurance was promulgated, assigning an annual income to parents during the first youth of their children; in Australia, where it was suggested that motherhood should be constituted a social function, and as such be remunerated by the community at large; in the United States, where President Roosevelt did not hesitate to hurl anathemas against citizens of white descent who renounce procreation, thanks to whom, we are told, America will soon be peopled mainly by negroes; in practically all civilised countries, threatened with depopulation and afraid lest the empire of the world should pass into the hands of barbarians.

What then is Malthus? What is his lasting value? Malthus is the fortunate being to whom a wonderful flash of insight suddenly disclosed a vital phenomenon of human society, throwing light into its abysses; who enshrined in imperishable pages a chance truth, revealed for the first time to him alone—a truth which he utilised to turn economics, history, and morality upside down, which became for him the supreme touchstone of politics and of civil institutions. It matters nothing that this truth had been previously affirmed by others; for no one else felt it so keenly or expressed it so strongly; no one else made it a corner-stone of the science of the nations, the principal foundation of sociological investigation. It matters nothing that Malthus considered his theme from too one-sided and too narrow an outlook; that he transformed an episode of the history of population into a universal law of population; that he did not refer to the influence of economic relationships upon population, or to the converse influence exercised by the rising human flood (altogether apart

from any excess over the quantity of the food supply) in stimulating the economic and social evolution of the peoples of all the world; that, finally, his therapeutics of the demographic disease were before long completely superseded. Admitting all these things, it is the supreme merit of Malthus to have grasped the colossal problem, stating it for the first time in its true terms, and exposing it to the world as the most overwhelming and formidable of all social problems. Upon the problem of population as cursorily enunciated by Malthus' predecessors the world could very easily turn its back, and did effectively do so; but as stated by Malthus himself, the problem of population could no longer by any possibility be ignored; humanity was forced henceforward to concern itself with the question, to examine it and seek a solution. The general horizon of the human mind was thus widened, the general sphere of human thoughts and struggles was thus enlarged by the addition of a region hitherto unsuspected and ignored. And this result, the greatest to which a thinker can aspire, was the exclusive work of Malthus, and will remain the indestructible evidence of his genius.

Unfortunately that which Ruggero Bonghi asserts of Italy is equally true of England, namely that the most certain method for the destruction of a man of genius is to make him a professor. It may, in fact, be said that Malthus' professorship, while furnishing him with bodily nutriment, denied to him at the same time spiritual nutriment, and led him to abandon the broad illumined way which he had entered spontaneously, and with flying colours, to follow others' footsteps along the paths of a dark and stifling labyrinth. In truth a man of Malthus' ability

could not possibly imagine that the discussion of the gigantic problem which he had so brilliantly initiated could be completely exhausted by his first volume; it was, on the contrary, his duty to understand that the truth to which he had drawn attention was susceptible of many other fruitful applications, statistical, economic, political, philosophical and moral. Now, instead of vigorously and tenaciously pursuing his own path, instead of patiently and steadfastly devoting himself to the study of the manifold aspects of the demographic process, what did he do? Narrowed by his professorial tasks, which constrained him to turn his attention to trifling didactic questions, assailed by scruples of conscience which impelled him, as a duty attaching to his new office, to pronounce a judgment upon the most varied topics of political economy, he deserted the grave, lofty, and universal argument upon which a few years before he had thrown himself headlong, and in pursuit of which he had raised the standard of triumphant thought, to lose himself thenceforward in a maze of questions of pure economics, for whose discussion he was unprepared and ill-fitted, and in which his thought meandered without leaving any lasting traces. In this respect how much in advance of Malthus was his great inheritor, the man who generalised his leading thought by extending it to all living beings, Charles Darwin, who, unhampered by professorial tasks, could pursue a straight course throughout life, his energies being applied from first to last to the creation and to the progressive development of one and the same fundamental idea! How superior also to Malthus, in the sphere of sociological research, was Karl Marx, who, free like Darwin from didactic shackles, devoted the

whole of his career to the development of the theoretical system which first revealed itself to his mind in the dawn of intellectual life! These butterfly professors dealing with the most varied themes without leaving their imprint upon any (and one of these is undoubtedly Malthus the professor, despite all the homage which is due to him), how small are they in comparison with the unwearied thinkers who stake their destiny upon a single cast, whose whole life is consecrated to the development of a single idea!

If

> di Carrara i monti
> Marmo non dan che paghi la ferita
> Del poeta,[1]

it is no less true that the most generous rewards which accrue to the man of learning are poor indeed when compared with what he usually gives in exchange, in forms invisible and ignored, though unmeasured and heartfelt; genius, native originality, creative productivity, are hopelessly entangled in the complicated and callous mechanism in which he is involved. As A. de Candolle has admirably shown in his *Histoire des Sciences et des Savants,* thoughts of Genius rarely issue from the university. Upon the threshold of the nuptial dwelling Aspasia lays aside her triumphal beauty and bewitching charm to assume the respectable lineaments of the housewife and of the affectionate instructress, and however much we may be disposed to eulogise her beneficent function, can we deny that she loses in her new sphere the luminous diadem of magnificence and glory?

[1] "If Carrara's mountains yield no marble which can recompense the poet for his sufferings" (G. Carducci, Ode to Ugo Foscolo).

I have hitherto spoken of Malthus the student of science, for, in fact, the whole of his life pursued the even tenor of its way among thoughts and studies, leaving no sensible trace outside the region of his sublime meditations. But this essay would be incomplete were it to omit all reference to Malthus the man. Tall and well-built, with a frank and handsome countenance, and deep and thoughtful eyes in which there seemed to be a reflection of the profound peace of the valley country of the Thames, he realised to perfection the classical type of the British thinker, in whom the admirable traits of physical strength, power of brain, and an adamantine honesty of character, are so harmoniously mingled.

This lofty thinker was at the same time (although a hare-lip impaired his articulation) an agreeable and amusing talker. This man so widely abused as an aristocrat, as callous, as a hater of the poor, this black and dreadful genius, ready to deprive the human race of all its hopes, as Godwin expressed it, was animated with infinite good-nature, and endowed with inexhaustible affection for the poor and the outcast. The whole of his life was unspotted by faults or vices, and was characterised throughout by acts of kindness, tenderness, and love. In his praise it is enough to say that Ricardo, the greatest and best man of his time, was his sincere and admiring friend, and that Empson, Harriet Martineau, Sydney Smith, and Horner spoke of him with fervent affection. In the inscription for Malthus' tomb in Bath Abbey, Otter, Bishop of Chichester, described him as "one of the best and truest philosophers of any age or country, raised by native dignity of mind above the misrepresentations of the ignorant and the

neglect of the great, he lived a serene and happy life devoted to the pursuit and communication of truth, supported by a calm but firm conviction of the usefulness of his labours, and content with the approbation of the wise and good.'' Mackintosh, too, a colleague of Malthus at Haileybury, one always worth quoting as an authority, summed up his opinion in the following terms: ''I have known Adam Smith slightly, Ricardo well, Malthus intimately. Is it not something to say for a science that its three great masters were about the three best man I ever knew?''

BIRTH-CONTROL AND THE WAGE EARNERS

BIRTH-CONTROL AND THE WAGE EARNERS

By CHARLES V. DRYSDALE

OF all the problems which confront our civilisation none is more important than that of the improvement of the conditions of the great mass of the wage earners in the factories and on the land. For many years it has been the chief concern, not only of the wage earners themselves and of the trade unions and the labour party, but liberals and tories have been vying with one another in propositions or actual legislation for the ostensible purpose of bettering the lives of the masses. In addition to various schemes of education, we have had the direct economic legislation of Mr. Lloyd George's budget and insurance acts, of old age pensions, of wages boards, etc.; and we were anticipating further steps towards housing reform, maternity endowment, etc. Never in the history of the world has such a volume of strenuous effort been made by the wage earners and by others on their behalf; and, whatever may be thought as to the sincerity of politicians, there can be no doubt as to that of large numbers of the middle classes who have thrown themselves whole-heartedly and self-sacrificingly into the work. If united determination to help and to reform will secure utopia, we should surely be in a very fair way towards its attainment.

And yet are we certain that we are even making progress? The wage earners themselves do not appear satisfied on this point. Only the other day I was journeying northwards in the company of some women delegates to the labour conference at Manchester, and found them holding the opinion which I have heard expressed by socialist speakers before the war, that no matter what success they may apparently have in extorting reforms, the capitalists and powers that be are able by cunning devices to rob them of the fruits of their hard-earned victories.

And it must be confessed that at first sight there seems some justification for this view. From the commencement of this century to shortly before the war, the general level of money wages in this country had risen slightly (by about 1 or 2%), but this advantage was entirely reversed by an increase in the cost of living amounting to 15%, so that there was a decrease in real wages of 13%. These facts were generally admitted, and were emphasised by Mr. Asquith in his Guildhall speech in 1912.

Since the outbreak of war, the same tendency has been seen on a more striking scale. Owing to the shortage of labour and the demand for munition work, wages have risen in many cases enormously, and we have heard of the "unparalleled prosperity" of the working classes. But the cost of living has recently nearly doubled, so that for all but the most highly paid skilled workers life has become harder than ever. The various trade unions have made demands for increase of wages to meet the increased cost of living, and they had considerable success in their agitation until the government suddenly abandoned its

attitude of sympathy and began to adopt military methods of repression. And despite the strong representations of the unions, backed by the press, that the government ought then to fix a maximum price for food, we found that nothing was done until quite recently, except as regards sugar, and that now there is much more talk of fixing minimum prices to encourage farmers, than of arresting, much less reversing, the rise. To the socialistic and suspicious wage earner, there seems every justification for the idea that the government and the "profiteers" are in league to raise prices and to rob labour of its hard-earned successes.

The war, we may hope, will not endure very much longer, and it is not intended to deal here with its problems. But it is most useful as an object lesson in certain economic influences which have existed in every time, and which we shall have to face, perhaps in a more acute form, when peace returns. It is quite obvious that after the war we shall have the same struggle for economic betterment as before, and that if the same views prevail among the wage earners as to the sinister influences against them, we shall see the same class antagonism, suspicion, and strife which have exercised such a painful and paralysing influence in the past. That this may be avoided, and that we may all be able to join hands in the reconstruction of civilisation after this terrible conflict, must be the most earnest wish of every true lover of humanity.

Now there is one thing which has been made clear by the war. Whatever may or may not be the case in peace, there is no doubt that there has been a real shortage of food for a long time past in Germany, and that the sub-

marine campaign and lack of shipping have made even the British food supply a matter of anxiety. We are told also that the world's harvest has been seriously reduced. In other words, whether it be true or not that in peace time "there is plenty for all if it were only properly distributed," it is emphatically not true now in Germany, it is not probably the case in England, and it is doubtful whether it is true for the world at large. How does this affect the matter? Let me illustrate the point by a little experience. A few years ago there was an international congress of women in Sweden which was chiefly attended by ladies of the most pronounced humanitarian socialistic views, whose speeches breathed forth the most exalted ideals of the solidarity of humanity and detestation of the competitive system. After the strenuous work of the congress came the usual excursions, and one Sunday we found ourselves on a delightful steamer trip on the Swedish lakes en route for a visit to a historic castle. Weather, surroundings, and society, all conspired for our delectation and good humour. Now it will be known to those familiar with Sweden, but was not known to the majority of the congressists, that the custom is to have a light early breakfast, followed by a lunch about 11 a. m., after which the next meal is not taken till late afternoon. The boat being crowded, the majority decided to postpone refreshment till their arrival at midday, but were dismayed to find it then unobtainable. Nevertheless the visit to the castle was undertaken, but interest flagged, tempers became less sunny, and humanitarian sentiments less prominent. At length the awaited meal-time drew near and we wended our way towards the garden where everything was *en fête* for our

reception. On the way thither, some one mentioned that the boat party had been much larger than had been expected, and that as it was Sunday it was quite likely that not enough provision had been made.

The mere suggestion was enough. A rush was made for the garden, but the meal was not yet ready. At length a girl student appeared bearing dishes of meat. They were literally pounced upon by crowds of excited women, the dishes were upset over their white dresses, and food was scattered all over the ground in the struggle. It would indeed be a bold believer in the brotherhood of humanity and in the possibility of universal altruism who could have retained his ideals in that struggle. The moment hunger was felt and a shortage was feared, our amiable humanitarians developed into fierce competitors.

Is not the moral of this incident that the whole question as to whether a humanitarian ideal of society is to be realised or as to whether the wage earners are to receive a better real remuneration for their labour depends upon whether there is or is not "plenty for all"? If the supply of the necessaries of life is insufficient, and each one determines to do all in his or her power to buy a full ration, either prices must rise, or if they are legally fixed so that every one can get what he needs, the supply will be depleted before the next harvest, and famine will result. If wages are raised "to meet the increased cost of living," as the trade unions have claimed, it means that each is in a position to offer more, and competition will force up prices again unless the wage earners agree voluntarily to ration themselves. And, as has even been pointed out by Sidney Webb and others, the legal limitation of prices

reduces the supply which we can induce other nations to send us. Whatever may be the situation in peace time, there can be no doubt that we are confronted with a serious deficiency in war time, and that any proposition for fixing prices and raising wages is fraught with the gravest danger. The result of raising wages in certain industries can only be to raise prices against those who have less power to make their demands felt, in particular against the wives and children of those who have gone to the front.

Now what is the state of affairs in normal peace times? Since the controversy between Godwin and Malthus in 1798, there have been two schools, one of which believes in the "beneficent nature" theory of the universe, and that "there would be plenty for all if it were only properly distributed," and the other which entirely dissents from this view, and contends that nature is not beneficent, that there is not and cannot be enough for all unless a strong curb is put on the number of births. According to the former view, poverty only exists because of the injustice of man; according to the latter it is due to the niggardliness of nature, and to the struggle for existence thus brought about, which manifests itself in these injustices. Naturally the latter view is very unpopular among those who like to imagine that the universe was divinely or otherwise constituted for the benefit of mankind, and also among that great majority who always want to lay the blame for anything wrong upon some person or class.

But Darwin's immortal work (avowedly inspired by Malthus) has shown us beyond the shadow of a doubt that nature is not beneficent, that the whole of animate exist-

ence up to and including man is an eternal struggle for food, and that this struggle has been the chief factor of evolution, i. e. of moulding the form and character of each species, including man. There never has been "plenty for all if it were only properly distributed," except perhaps for short periods in isolated countries, and it is the struggle brought about by want or by the fear of want which has produced the real or supposed greed of the capitalist as it produced the struggle of our humanitarian ladies.

Those who have read the writings of Henry George or of Peter Kropotkin and similar works, will probably indignantly deny the above statement and affirm either that there is plenty for all, or that there could easily be more than ample for every one if it were not for unjust land tenure and distribution. Until a few years ago those who maintained the malthusian doctrine had no actual proofs of insufficiency other than those afforded by scientific reasoning. But now we know from the writings of G. Hardy, the French sociologist, that for the more civilised half of the world there is a decided deficiency. Here is the comparison between the required physiological ration per adult man per day according to the consensus of physiologists, and that available with the most equitable distribution in the year 1907 (a year of good agricultural production):

	Proteids	Fats	Carbohydrates	Total Calories
Standard ration	125	80	520	3400
Available	84	61	456	2790

If these figures are correct, and they have never been successfully assailed, there is no doubt that instead of a sufficiency there was a decided deficit in the available food supply.

As I write, the report of the Royal Society on the food supply of the United Kingdom has just come to hand, which gives the daily ration available per man before the war as 113 grams of proteid, 130 grams of fat, and 571 grams of carbohydrate, totalling 4,009 calories. Even on this showing the amount of proteid is below the hitherto recognised standard, though the Royal Society attempts to follow the Germans in stating that 100 grams proteid is sufficient. But as the report later shows that the military ration (apart from extras bought by the men) is 140 grams proteid, 180 fat, and 500 carbohydrate, and as it has neglected the amounts used for feeding domestic animals, and has ignored other sources of inevitable loss, it seems unquestionable that even in our own country there was no plenty in pre-war times. There is no doubt from the investigations of Rowntree, Mrs. Pember Reeves, and Cadbury, that a very considerable proportion of our people were chronically underfed, and it should never be forgotten that however rich a person may be he cannot consume much more (and frequently consumes less) than the standard ration.

But we are then told that if the land were available and properly cultivated there could be abundance for every one. Unfortunately this also is a delusion. That every attempt should be made to improve agriculture may be granted, but to suppose that it will produce the results claimed by Kropotkin is absolutely absurd. The whole of

his wonderfully convincing case in his *Fields, Factories, and Workshops* and his *Conquest of Bread* collapses hopelessly on account of his neglect of one essential factor—the quantity of fertilising material available. Sir William Crookes pointed out in 1898 that the world's supply of nitrogenous fertilisers was becoming rapidly exhausted, and predicted the rise in food prices which was manifested before the war. The more one studies agriculture (and especially practises it), the clearer it becomes that there is no royal road to the rapid increase of food. If the land were thrown open to all who are willing to cultivate it (as it may be through the exigencies of the war), it is quite certain that there would be no rapid increase in food supply. So far from this being the case it may be predicted with practical certainty that the next world harvest will be the worst ever known. Not because of the shortage of labour, *but because explosives are composed of nitrogen and every shell fired in the war reduces the possibility of producing food.* Each ton of explosive on an average contains about 300 lbs. of fixed nitrogen, the amount required for approximately 30 quarters of wheat. A quarter of wheat represents the annual requirement of an adult person, so that a million tons of explosives literally takes the bread out of the mouths of 30,000,000 people. How many million tons of explosives are being used in this war? Is it any wonder that the last wheat harvest was only 75% of the normal, and can we even expect that the next harvest will be as good as the last one?

Horrible as this war is in its tale of slaughter, starvation, misery, and hatred, it has done one invaluable service in forcing the importance of the food question upon

our attention; and sharp as our sufferings from the submarine menace may be, our descendants may have cause to bless it, if it leads to a fair trial of the possibilities of agriculture, and to a settlement of the eternal question as to whether human injustice or natural deficiency be the prime cause of poverty and social evils. If the incentives and facilities now being given to food production should result in a large increase of output, I for one will readily give up my championship of the malthusian doctrine in favour of land nationalisation; but if, as I firmly believe, all these efforts prove vain, and Kropotkin's iridescent bubble bursts at the first contact with hard fact, I most fervently hope that this experience will convince the wage earners that they have been led astray, and that their real hope lies in the prosaic but practical course of cutting their coat to their cloth, i. e. of restricting their families to their prospects, as the middle classes are doing.

One more illustration may be given of the absurdity of the "plenty for all" assumption. A favourite "disproof" of the malthusian doctrine, one which we owe to Henry George, is the assertion that the tendency to increase applies much more to food than to human beings, that if man tends to double every twenty-five years the plants and animals he feeds on tend to increase ever so much faster. Fish above all other animals tend to increase a millionfold more rapidly than man. How then can there be a shortage of food?

The fallacy here again lies in the neglect of nutritive material. The animals which form the food of man cannot increase *because there is not food for them.* The case

of fish is specially interesting because they live in the sea, which is not private property, which does not vary in quality, and which needs no cultivation. Are fish getting more plentiful? Certainly not to any great extent. Why not? Because they cannot. The sea is the great reservoir of all the soluble portions of the soil. The rain washes down millions of tons of salts and nitrogenous material, and all the sewage of our great towns is passed into the sea. The ocean ought to be as full of plant and animal food as it is of salt. But it is not. The analysis of sea water shows hardly the slightest trace of either nitrogenous material or phosphorus. These substances are absorbed the instant they arrive, and the number of fish is rigidly limited by the possibilities of the food supply.

This is the most striking fact in the whole of nature. The sea covers three fourths of the globe to an average depth of over two miles, whereas the available soil covers only a quarter or less of the surface to an average depth of only a few inches. Uncultivated areas are not entirely wasted. About 37 lbs. of nitrogen per acre drain therefrom into the sea, and help towards the increase of marine life. If the soil were thoroughly tilled, it would certainly improve, but the total gain would not be so great as at first sight appears, for the drainage into the sea would be less.

Is it not clear that those who have written so optimistically upon the possibilities of food production and of the importance of land reform, have entirely overlooked this all-important question? Let those who have been carried away by the arguments of George and Kropotkin read these books again and see what consideration the authors have given to the fertiliser question. Certain

skilled persons on small areas of land can get remarkable results, which cannot be obtained over a large area for want of manure. Despite scientific agriculture and the electrical production of nitrates, Germany is starving.

One direct question should be put to those who believe so strongly in the possibilities of agriculture and of land reform. Why do not the trade unions or other labour associations invest their funds in buying land in large quantities, which they can very easily and cheaply do, and get this land worked for the benefit of their members? There is nothing whatever in the present conditions of land tenure to prevent this, and the actual food or profits realisable ought to give them the greatest security.

The malthusian doctrine can now be put in a very simple form. An examination of the birth- and death-rates actually existing in various countries shows that the former may be 50 per 1000 or more (Russia and parts of Egypt) while the deaths from old age need be only 10 per 1000 or less (New Zealand, Australia, and, formerly, Ontario). In a community of 1000 people with unchecked birth-rate and sufficient food, there would therefore be 50 or more births in the year and not more than 10 deaths, leaving an increase of 40 per thousand or 4% in the year. This does not seem great, but a sum of money put out at 4% compound interest doubles in 17½ years and becomes fifty times as great in a single century. Had there been plenty for all in this country during the last century the eight millions with which we started in 1801 would have become four hundred millions in the year 1901, and no one in his senses can imagine that we could have increased our agricultural production to keep pace with it.

Every sensible person must admit that a considerable restriction of births below their natural figure is imperative if dire want is to be avoided, and the only question which can exist between intelligent persons is as to how far this process must be carried, and as to whether present social evils can be better removed by change of laws and social institutions or by extending the practice of family limitation to the poor.

Naturally there is no reason why both processes should not continue, as no doubt they will. But whatever else takes place, one thing is certain, that a rational philosophy of existence is imperatively needed, and that this will never come about while the "bountiful nature" fetish is worshipped. We must realise that instead of fighting against each other we ought to combine in fighting nature, and surely the malthusian doctrine, which shows us the real enemy, is infinitely more encouraging and hopeful, than a doctrine which sews distrust and antagonism among ourselves, and destroys the efficiency that is necessary if we are ever to make life tolerable for all.

Let us now consider what the adoption of birth-control means for the wage earners. About twenty years ago it was common to see a chart with the title, "The Boy, What Will He Become," depicting the various stages of his ascent to wealth and honour through work, sobriety, and thrift, or of his descent to perdition through laziness and drink. Let us make a similar contrast in the case of the young wage earners, assuming in the one case that from ignorance or carelessness they do not practise birth-con-

trol, and in the other case that they do. We will take the condition existing just before the war.

Consider the case of a young man and a young woman of the wage earning classes, ignorant of birth-control. Like so many others they fall in love and marry without considering the morrow. Suppose the young man is earning the ordinary labourer's wage of 25/ a week and the girl 15/. Upon this they could marry and start a respectable and moderately comfortable little home. But within a few months of marriage the young wife becomes pregnant, and before the end of the year she has to or at least ought to give up her work, and the first baby arrives. The family income is reduced to the husband's 25/, and expenses are increased on every hand for the mother and child, but the young couple shoulder their task cheerfully and welcome the little stranger with open arms. The work of the household is increased, and the child may be fretful in the confined space of our large towns, so that broken nights are the rule. The young wife has less time to keep her home and herself bright and to be a companion to her husband. But thousands of such wives—all honour to them—succeed.

Withing a few months, however, the phenomenon recurs. The wife becomes pregnant again, even while nursing the first child; it has to be weaned before its proper time, but the mother has the triple task of looking after her home, tending the first child, and carrying the second, before she has regained strength after her first confinement. The second child arrives, and therewith the pinch begins. The mother, weak from her second delivery, has two infants around her day and night. She has no margin for

extra nourishment or comfort, and it is one long weary struggle to keep things decent. In the evening the husband comes home to a tired and dispirited wife and crying children. Is it wonderful that the brightness of the public house begins to attract him?

With the third child, which commonly arrives about a year later, the limit is reached. It is all very well for moralists of the old brutal puritanical school to point to families of a dozen brought up on a pound a week. Whatever may have been possible in the country with easily obtainable food and sympathetic help, is utterly impossible now in the towns, as has been amply proved by Rowntree and Mrs. Pember Reeves; and no decent-minded person to-day would deny that the couple with 25/ to 30/ a week and three children are at the limit of possibilities as regards maintaining themselves, even if the husband is in perfectly steady employment and an abstainer, and if nothing is allowed for amusement or luxury of any kind. By the age of twenty-three to twenty-five, thousands of young couples are in this position, at the very threshold of their married life, and they have twenty years before them during which children may arrive at one or two year intervals, to say nothing of twins. For the strongest and healthiest of women, free from any economic difficulties, such an existence would be a strain; but when semi-starvation and lack of kindly help are superadded, life becomes a misery. Although the strain falls chiefly upon the woman it must react upon the man, he suffers from underfeeding and broken rest, he is unable to keep up strength and a good appearance, and he may

not only lose the chance of promotion but may drift into the ranks of casual labour.

And this is by no means the darkest side of the picture. We have supposed husband and wife to be fairly strong and healthy and of the highest moral fibre. But the obvious evils of early marriage under ordinary conditions cause a considerable proportion of young men to delay marriage, and here we have, if not the only cause of prostitution, at least its unconquerable ally. The result is a terrible prevalence of venereal disease, which enormously intensifies the misery of women. It is no uncommon thing when one is going among the poor, to find young women under thirty, who for seven or eight years have undergone the misery of having diseased children, most of which have died under their eyes or have struggled on ricketty and deformed, half-blinded from gonorrhœal infection, or mentally defective from syphilis. And in addition there have probably been numerous miscarriages or still births.

Then there is the housing question. The couple with their one or two infant children can manage with some approach to decency in two rooms. But when the family runs into five or six and some of them begin to grow up what is to be done? More room is wanted, but the margin for rent is less, and we thus find large families herded together like beasts, and living in promiscuity. It is from families like these that the prostitution market is recruited, and the race-blasting stream of venereal disease is kept up.

No one who has had first-hand experience of the conditions of the poor can regard this picture as exaggerated.

The records of social workers almost invariably show a progressive decline in the conditions of poor families as successive children arrive.

Of course the stereotyped answer is that the state should provide for the children. But, quite apart from the malthusian contention that the state cannot provide for an unlimited number, there is the plain straightforward question to be met. Do the parents or does the state want more than a certain number of children? Even if there were no economic question at all in the matter, unlimited childbearing is a cruel strain on the health and strength of a woman; it ages her prematurely, and ruins all possibility of her being anything but a domestic drudge. The father and mother can find all the scope they need for their parental love with two or three children, and comparatively few people can do full justice to more. As to the state, we have seen that the possibilities of providing food for large numbers are much less than is generally supposed, and that high birth-rates simply involve higher death-rates, meaning that there is no gain of numbers, but that those who survive are less fit physically and mentally for upholding their nation either in peace or in war.

Lastly we have the question of wages and employment. When the teeming hordes of children grow up and go out into the world, underfed and poorly equipped, can we wonder that unemployment and low wages are rife? How common it was a few years ago for hundreds of men to apply whenever a poorly paid post was advertised. The man who has a wife and a large family crying for food at home cannot afford to stand out for high

wages. He must take the first job that offers, and undercut his fellows to get it. His own children begin to flood the labour market and to make it more difficult for him, and we have the cry of, "too old at thirty-five or forty," because he and his fellows have flooded the market with "cheap labour." In former days, the children might begin to work and help the family at an early age, but now the legislature very properly prevents their being made use of so soon. They are therefore unable to help their parents until long after the family has increased beyond the power of the parents to support it, and they then have only a few years of productiveness before the time comes for them in their turn to marry and to embark upon the responsibilities of a family.

Just compare with this the opportunities given to the wage earners by a general knowledge that if they marry they can live their natural married lives and yet have children only as and when they please. The young man earning 25/ and the girl earning 15/ can marry without fear soon after they reach the age of twenty, and can make a moderately comfortable start in life, without having first contracted irregular habits or disease. If they postpone the advent of the first child there is no need for the wife to give up her employment. They can have a margin for saving and for building up a nest for the little one later, and they can preserve their youth and romance. The man can be well fed and respectably clothed, and he can have leisure and funds for reading or attending classes to improve his efficiency, so that he advances in his trade and gets higher wages. After three or four years they are ready for their first child. The wife can leave her employ-

ment without economic strain, she can pass her pregnancy and confinement under decent conditions and can give the child and herself proper care after its arrival. She can suckle the infant as long as is desirable, and then have a year in which to recuperate before commencing to have a second. In the meantime she has been able to keep herself and her home bright and cheerful and her husband well fed and contented. They have a small amount of capital behind them which means that they can tide over any temporary unemployment, and that the husband can wait for the better jobs which will come his way on account of his greater skill and improved position. Instead of having five or six children, half of which are sickly or dead, by the time they are twenty-seven or twenty-eight years of age, they can have two or three healthy children by the time they are thirty, with their own youth and strength and joy in each other still unimpaired.

As the children grow up, the parents can take an interest in their education and help them, and when the time comes for their beginning to work, they can apprentice them to some good trade instead of turning them into the first "blind alley" occupation that presents itself. They can give them a chance of some technical education and see them well established in positions with decent prospects, while avoiding competition. If all the wage earners follow this course the over-supply of labour will be checked, and wages will rise, both because of the lessened supply and because of the greater efficiency of the workers of the future.

Of course the latter point will be vehemently disputed by some socialists, who assert that family limitation, like

temperance and avoidance of luxury, is good for the individual, but if generally followed will lead to lower wages. They quote Lassalle's "iron law of wages" which states that wages will always fall to the lowest that the workers will consent to take, so that if they forego luxuries they will accept lower wages. But they forget that Lassalle's iron law of wages presupposes over-population or an over-supply of labour, so that there is always competition between the workers or "more men than jobs." In this case the labour market is a sort of Dutch auction in which there is a tendency (held in check by trade unionism alone) to reduce the price to the lowest possible. But if the reverse is the case and there are "more jobs than men" the process is reversed, and the employers become the competitors who are forced to bid against each other for labour.

Of course labour in the past has nearly always been unduly plentiful, so that it may appear at first sight that the claim that wages would rise through birth-control is illusory. But there have been a certain number of instances which go to justify it. One was the terrible Black Death of 1349, in which a great proportion of the workers died off. The almost immediate result, as Thorold Rogers tells us in his *Six Centuries of Work and Wages,* was a great demand for labour and a great rise in wages. The workers at that time were not united and had no political power, and the employing classes passed the Statute of Labourers in order to keep wages down. But it was useless, the employers themselves broke their own laws in order to offer higher wages to get the men.

In our own time we have seen two examples of the ef-

fect of shortage of labour. One is that of boys of the artizan and middle classes among whom families have become much smaller of late years. This combined with the greater demand for boy labour in connection with machine production, etc., has led to practically a doubling of wages from about 5/ a week ten years ago to about 10/ a week just before the war, without the slightest combination or political action on their behalf. The other no less striking example is that of domestic servants, who have become much less plentiful owing to the opening of so many other avenues of employment to women. Twenty years ago any number of good general servants could be obtained for £12 a year. Latterly they have become so scarce that wages rose before the war to £20 or more, and wealthy women have been waiting at registry offices begging for servants, and offering all sorts of concessions to secure them. This result has taken place without combination or agitation, and shows the futility of the idea that combination among employers would take place and keep wages down. Again, a striking example was given at the outbreak of the war. Whereas, during the fifteen years preceding the war, strikes and political agitation by the trade unions had failed to secure any appreciable rise in wages, the withdrawal of men for the army and the demand for labour for munition work led employers to compete strongly against each other for men (even when members of employers' federations requiring them not to do so), and the result was an astonishing rise in wages in a few months, which would probably have gone on to this day, had not the trade unions attempting

to force up wages yet further by collective bargaining practically compelled government interference.

And lastly, although the twenty years before the war showed a decline of real wages in England, Scotland, Germany, and the United States, and probably in all other countries where the birth-rates were high, they actually rose in France and Ireland with the two lowest birth-rates in the world, and in Holland, where family limitation has been taught to the wage earners through the agency of a state-approved society.

The example of Holland is conclusive proof that the claims of the Neo-Malthusians that birth-control leads to general prosperity and wellbeing are justified. From 1876 (the date of the Bradlaugh and Besant trial for publishing the Knowlton pamphlet describing the means for limiting families) there has been the same steady fall in the birth-rate which has taken place in most civilised countries; but Holland is the only country where Neo-Malthusians have been permitted to give such information freely to the poorer classes. The result from every point of view has been excellent. The death-rate and infantile mortality of the country have steadily fallen to the lowest in Europe, the stature of the people has greatly increased, real wages appear to have risen considerably, and there is hardly such a thing from end to end of the country as a slum. Amsterdam and the Hague, the two principal centres of propaganda, though large towns, show the most remarkably low general and infantile mortality ever known in Europe. There has, I believe, been very little of the social legislation in Holland which we have seen here, and the great and incon-

testable improvement shown in the condition of the people seems to have come about quickly and automatically without strife or class hatred. That an equally good result could be obtained in this country in the course of a few years is morally certain if the work of instructing the poorer classes in the methods of family limitation undertaken during the last few years by the Malthusian League were to be supplemented and extended. The end of the war is, we may hope and believe, at hand, and a time of severe economic depression may await us. If our men come back from the war to a slack labour market already overstocked by women, the result will be unemployment, labour unrest, and sex bitterness, to say nothing of prostitution and disease; but if they can marry at once, and work hand in hand with the women getting back into employment gradually and waiting to have families until times are more prosperous, we shall have the one and only way of making life tolerable for all. The neo-malthusian remedy for poverty and low wages is sound in theory and proved by experience. Those who truly wish for the welfare of themselves and their fellow-workers will hasten to adopt it.

It need hardly be pointed out that family limitation does not in the least weaken the power of the masses to effect any reforms. On the contrary, the fact of having reserves to tide over unemployment and to help any movement they are interested in must greatly assist their political and social power.

RACE SUICIDE IN THE UNITED STATES

RACE SUICIDE IN THE UNITED STATES

By LUDWIG QUESSEL

RACE suicide is the sensational battle-cry coined by Theodore Roosevelt for his campaign against one of the many remarkable phenomena of the social life of the new world. As is the case with all great movements affecting the life of the people, race suicide made its appearance gently and almost imperceptibly upon the stage of history. A long time elapsed before it was recognised that we were face to face with a momentous and novel revolutionary phenomenon, the seed of a world-embracing transformation. Even to-day, outside the United States, little attention has been paid to the matter. And yet the phenomenon is one of such far-reaching significance that many things about which a great deal of noise is made are but trivial in comparison. Would it not be a fact of enormous import if the dominant race of immigrants to North America, before which the Indian aborigines faded away into nothingness, were in its turn to vanish before the flood of immigrants from eastern and southern Europe? Those even who consider themselves superior to all race prejudice, cannot regard the threatened disappearance of the Anglo-American stock as without bearing on the history of the new world. Who can say to-day whether the immigration of Poles, Czechs, Rus-

sians, Slovaks, Slovenes, Finns, Greeks, Italians, and Hungarians, may not threaten Anglo-American civilisation, just as in former times the immigration of Germanic tribes into Italy shook Roman civilisation to its foundations? Even if we admit that the degree of civilisation of a nation is a matter of far greater importance than its racial affinities, and that nations belonging to the same stage of civilisation, though separated by profound racial differences, stand nearer to one another than do nations which, while presenting identical ethnic characters, differ widely in civilisation—none the less, we must not underestimate the historical significance of Anglo-American race suicide, for the new race, compounded of Slav, Magyar, and Romance racial elements, which is tending to replace the Anglo-American, exhibits notable differences from the latter in respect to civilisation.

The question of race suicide in the United States is closely interconnected with other racial problems. There is no country in the world in which these problems are so urgent as in the land of the star-spangled banner. All observers agree that in America social contrasts are far less in evidence than racial contrasts. In the transatlantic democracy we encounter racial contrasts at every turn. Those who have read descriptions of the Italian quarter of New York, where the side streets recall Naples and the maffia reminds us of Sicily; those familiar with the descriptions of the New York ghetto, where the Jewry of eastern Europe is reassembled in all its grinding poverty; those who have been influenced by the accounts of every visitor to the exotic Chinatown of San Francisco—will admit that there is no room for doubt regarding the im-

portance of racial problems in American life. The question of race suicide must be discussed in connection with the racial problem. A superficial view of racial contrasts in the new world may readily induce the impression that the doctrine of historical materialism (the doctrine that all recorded history is the history of class struggles) does not apply to America, inasmuch as there racial contrasts appear far more than class contrasts to determine the course of historical evolution. But a closer examination shows that the struggle of the white race against the Mongolian and the African is unquestionably, to this extent, a class struggle, namely, that the white protagonists in the struggle constitute a single social class, the white proletariat, whose movement against the yellow and the black workers is, indeed, notably differentiated from the social struggles of the European working classes by the fact that in the former case the ethical ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity of all mankind play no part. When American capital drew across the Pacific the cheap labour of the yellow races, the white proletariat immediately armed for defence. Denis Kearney preached open violence, and the white workers killed some of their yellow competitors. That which the workmen of California had begun in this way was continued by the labour organisations of other states by means of legislative action. A systematic agitation was pursued to expel all the yellow workers and to forbid their further immigration. In the year 1885, the class struggle of the white proletariat against the Mongolian workers came to an end with the passing of the Chinese Exclusion Act, whereby the immigration of Chinese workers was prohibited. It is true

that the law is not strictly enforced except in the case of women, for American capital cannot get on without yellow workmen for certain unhealthy and dirty occupations which the white workers refuse to undertake. The strict exclusion of women of the yellow races limits the reproduction of these races on American soil, and this is a very important consideration from the racial standpoint. Thus for the avoidance of the "yellow peril," transatlantic democracy has availed itself of a method which was not unknown to classical communities. These latter, for the most part, excluded their slaves from reproduction by means of forcible segregation of the sexes. Infertility cuts the vital thread of a race no less surely than suicide closes the life history of the individual. But we must not forget that the infertility of the yellow races on American soil is involuntary, being imposed by the dominant whites. Superficial observers have dilated freely on the indescribable viciousness of the yellow population of the States. Even to-day, in popular agitation against the Chinese, an accusation of unnatural vice plays no small part, the accusers conveniently ignoring that this vice is the direct and inevitable outcome of the exclusion of Chinese women. When the possibility of natural sexual relationships is left open to the Chinese, the practice of homosexuality is notably curtailed, and the same is true of opium smoking. Neither of these indulgences can justly be regarded as racial characteristics of Mongolians, and therefore as stigmata of inferiority.

Putting on one side the Mongolian workers in the United States, living, as has been shown, in unnatural conditions forced on them by others, we find on the lowest rungs of

the social ladder, segregated from all other classes of the community, negroes and mulattoes, "coloured folk," contempt for whom is displayed by the genuine American at every possible opportunity. Since the despised "nigger" engages in only the lowest kinds of occupation, European travellers likewise incline to regard him as an inferior being. "In the four decades of freedom that he has now enjoyed," writes von Polenz, "the negro has proved that, notwithstanding the possession of a number of excellent and engaging qualities, he is and must remain a subordinate type."[1] We need not rush to the opposite extreme, and proclaim the complete intellectual and moral equality of negroes and mulattoes with the Anglo-American race. For example, we may point out the remarkable fact that nowhere, when negroes are in competition with a white working class, do we find the former entering any skilled occupations. But writers well acquainted with the lower strata of American life are far from attributing it to the "subordinate type" of the coloured population that skilled avocations in the States are pursued almost exclusively by whites. In truth it is the white workers who rigidly bar negroes and mulattoes from all attempts to rise in the social scale, by refusing to work at the same machine or in the same factory with coloured operatives. White men in America make no distinction between full-blooded negroes and coloured persons of any degree. Whoever has a single drop of black blood in his veins is a "nigger." Negro characteristics are unfailingly detected in hair, ears, finger-nails, etc.; and the "yellow nigger" is treated with no less contempt than the "black

[1] Von Polenz, *Das Land der Zukunft,* Berlin, 1903, p. 148.

nigger.'' Consequently the man of colour, however accomplished, is compelled to pursue some unskilled occupation, and nothing but the lowest grades of manual labour are open to him. In a shop he may become errand-man, but not salesman; in a merchant's office, he may be porter or floor scrubber, but not clerk or accountant; on the railway, he may be baggage porter, but not conductor; in the building trade, he may be hodcarrier or other kind of unskilled labourer, but not stonemason, bricklayer, or carpenter and joiner. Similar restrictions operate against women of colour, to whom positions as saleswomen or typists in white employ are inaccessible. The view put forward by many who have described American life, that negroes are fit only for employment as waiters, carmen, unskilled labourers, or domestic servants, is untenable. If negroes are so rarely found in skilled avocations, or in occupations which might give them a higher social position, this is not due to any intellectual or moral inferiority, but simply to the strong hand of the white proletariat. The unceasing class struggle, sometimes overt, sometimes concealed, carried on by white trade unionists against coloured workers, makes it absolutely impossible for negroes to rise in the social scale. In the southern states, where the coloured elements are especially numerous, this struggle assumes its most brutal form. Not only has the white population of the south deprived negroes of all political rights, but members of the coloured race have been forced to accept a position of social inferiority which is tantamount to the dominion of a caste system hardly less rigid than that of Hindustan. Negroes are forbidden to enter the same railway carriage with whites, or the

same compartments in public tram-cars. No negro is ever addressed by a white with the courtesy title of Mr., Mrs., or Miss. No person of colour is admitted to a theatre, a concert hall, or even a church, frequented by whites. At every turn it is made unmistakably clear to the negro that he belongs to an inferior and subject race, that he is a member of a pariah caste, that the dominant whites demand obedience and abject subordination.

Twenty years ago, Friedrich Ratzel expressed the fear that the African race in America, being more prolific than the white, would increase more rapidly, thereby endangering the supremacy of Anglo-Americans. At that time there seemed good ground for such an apprehension. During the half century from 1830 to 1880, the white population of the Union, through the operation of immigration in addition to natural fertility, had increased from 10.5 to 43.4 millions, whilst the negroes, through the sole operation of natural fertility, had during the same period increased fourfold. It is not surprising that Ratzel was alarmed lest the slackening of white immigration might lead to the formation of a "new Africa" upon American soil. But these forebodings have not been justified by the subsequent movement of population in the United States. The stream of immigration from Europe, far from slackening, has considerably augmented. On the other hand, the fierce campaign of the white proletariat against the negroes has not been without effect in checking increase in the coloured population. It was not, indeed, possible to condemn the blacks to racial extinction by prohibiting the immigration of coloured women, and the number of the latter is sufficiently great to render marriage possible

to every coloured man; moreover the "humane" hope that the coloured race might be swept away by tuberculosis has not been realised; but the fact that the white proletariat has forcibly prevented the negroes from rising in the social scale, and the consequent restriction of the latter to conditions of life characterised by low wages and insanitary surroundings, have had a notable influence in checking the increase of the coloured population. The latest census returns from the forty-five states shows the enormously greater mortality of Afro-Americans:

Deaths per Thousand Inhabitants

Year	1900	1901	1902	1903	1904	1905	1906	1907	1908
Whites....	18.8	17.5	17.1	17.1	17.9	17.5	17.2	18.1	16.5
Blacks.....	32.5	29.3	28.8	27.8	29.2	28.3	28.1	29.0	26.2

Thus we see that the death-rate per thousand is from 10 to 11 higher among the coloured than among the white population. It need hardly be said that this difference is not due to any greater vitality possessed by the whites, but arises simply because the blacks are condemned to the hardest and worst paid kinds of labour. The inferior standard of life increases the mortality, and especially the infantile mortality, of the coloured population. Skilled white workers live for the most part in salubrious little houses, each sheltering not more than one family; but members of the black proletariat are crowded into horrible slums, full of infectious disease and vice. Owing to excessive mortality among the coloured population in

conjunction with increasing immigration from Europe, there has actually been a decline in the ratio between coloured and white. This is shown in the following table:

Year	White Population	Ratio to the Total Population	Colored Population	Ratio to the Total Population
1880.....	43,402,970	86.5	6,580,793	13.1
1890.....	55,166,184	87.4	7,488,788	11.8
1900.....	66,990,788	87.7	8,840,789	11.5

The relative decline in the coloured population has thus temporarily removed the danger which Ratzel foresaw. But a new menace to the Anglo-American race has arisen, whereby the supremacy of that race is no less imperilled. The stream of white immigration which flows unceasingly into the American continent has in the course of the last few years changed in character.

First of all, the Celtic element has diminished. The great influx from Ireland, which attained its maximum in the nineties, has notably declined. In the decennium 1881-1890, Irish immigrants numbered 655,482; 1891-1900, they numbered 405,496; 1901-1909, they numbered 309,-210. Although the Celtic (Irish) element has largely contributed to the formation of the Anglo-American race, the decline in Irish immigration was not unwelcome, for undoubtedly the Irish constituted that portion of the earlier stream of immigration which offered the greatest obstacles to assimilation by the dominant race. To the second and third generation, most Irish immigrants to the new world preserve a truly fanatical racial patriotism.

After his naturalisation papers have been taken out, the Irish Celt continues to feel himself a member of a distinct race, one altogether hostile to Anglo-Americanism. This Celtic racial patriotism would seem to have originated in social conditions. As is well known, the grinding poverty resulting from the predatory land tenure of the Emerald Isle drove the Irish peasants and labourers in enormous numbers to the shores of the new world. But here they soon experienced bitter disillusionment, for the curse of poverty and ignorance which attached to them in their original home was not lifted by their removal to American soil. Through under-nutrition in Ireland they had been drained of vital energy, and had neither desire nor aptitude for such strenuous physical toil as would have been demanded from them in American agriculture, in the founding of a farm. So the unhappy Irish remained in the towns, crowding the slums, playing their part in all the scenes of the life-drama of an inferior race: work-shyness, drunkenness in both sexes, and consequently an unending series of family brawls and nocturnal fights, in which broken crockery, iron cooking utensils, the inevitable whiskey, and black eyes, were the outstanding features. It is not surprising that in such an environment the children of the immigrants often proved unable to assimilate the best features of American civilisation, so that the native Americans soon came to regard with contempt this race of white paupers, an attitude which in its turn fanned the flames of Celtic racial patriotism.

The decline in Celtic immigration would have been of trifling importance to the Anglo-American elements of

the United States had not the stream of Teutonic immigration from Germany, Holland, Sweden, Norway, Switzerland, and Denmark, also exhibited simultaneously a sudden diminution. The number of immigrants from the various countries named is shown in the following table:

Country	1881–1890	1891–1900	1901–1909
Germany	1,452,970	543,922	310,215
Holland	53,701	31,816	40,728
Sweden	568,362	95,264	172,967
Norway		230,679	225,789
Switzerland	81,988	33,149	31,389
Denmark	88,132	52,670	58,301
Totals	2,245,153	987,500	839,389

We see that immigration from the countries whose population is predominantly Germanic was during each of the last two decades less than half what it had been in the decennium 1881-1890. On the other hand, the stream of immigration from the countries of eastern and southern Europe increased as follows:

Country	1881–1890	1891–1900	1901–1909
Austria-Hungary	353,719	597,047	1,886,529
Russia	265,088	593,703	1,410,514
Greece	.....	15,996	141,631
Italy	307,309	655,694	1,830,340
Rumania	.....	14,559	50,863
Turkey	.....	10,960	157,241
Totals	926,116	1,887,959	5,477,118

When compared with the 54 million immigrants to the United States from eastern and southern Europe during the period 1901-1909, the 0.8 million who have entered the United States from Germanic countries are as a brook when compared with a mighty river. Unprejudiced examination of the figures of immigration during the last nine years produces the impression that the Anglo-American race is predestined to submergence in the Slav flood. It is true that immigration from Italy also increases year by year, but the Italian contingent is very different in nature from the Slavonic. Comparatively few of the Italians are permanent immigrants, the others being mere migratory workers who ultimately return to Europe. Should the developments of recent years continue, a new Slavonic realm will ultimately arise on American soil, larger and mightier than any of the Slav countries of Europe.

The critical reader will here interpolate that this forecast cannot be fulfilled unless the Anglo-American race condemns itself to infertility. A vigorous stock does not require for its maintenance any reinforcement by the immigration of allied racial elements; it continues to grow through its own natural fertility. But it is precisely in this respect that the Anglo-American population is peculiar, inasmuch as the dominant race in the Union, which forcibly prevents the reproduction of Mongolian immigrants, and partly limits the increase of the negroes by social oppression, is itself losing the will to propagate to the extent that is indispensable to ensure its own continuance. All available data combine to prove that the Anglo-American population has not merely attained its maxi-

mum, but has already begun to decline. This is not, indeed, immediately apparent from an examination of the movement of population. When we learn that during nine years the population of the Union has increased from 75.6 to 88.2 millions, we are at first inclined to believe that the Anglo-American race must possess a powerful reproductive energy. An increase of 12.6 millions in nine years would certainly afford proof of remarkable fertility were the increase solely dependent upon an excess of births over deaths. But the larger moiety of the increase is due to immigration. The total immigration from Europe during the period under consideration amounted to 7.7 millions, so that only 4.9 millions remain to represent the excess of births over deaths. From this, again, we must deduct 1.5 millions, a figure which approximately represents the excess of births over deaths among the coloured population. There are left 3.4 millions for the increase of the white population, numbering about 70 millions, so that in the case of these the average annual excess of births over deaths has been about 370,000. Germany, with a population of over 60 millions, shows an average annual excess of births over deaths of 850,000, from which it is clear that the reproductive energy of the white population of the United States is less than half that of Germany. The statistics of those states of the Union in which there is a trustworthy system of registration of births show very clearly that the birth-rate among the white population of America is far lower than that of Germany.

The following table exhibits the number of births and deaths per 1,000 inhabitants, and the excess of births

over deaths, in six states of the Union, in Germany, and in France, during various years from 1903-1908:

Country	Year	Births Per 1,000 Inhabitants	Deaths Per 1,000 Inhabitants	Excess of Births Over Deaths Per 1,000 Inhabitants
Germany.....	1908	32.0	18.0	14.0
Maine.....	1906	22.1	15.9	6.2
Vermont.....	1907	21.5	16.2	5.3
Massachusetts...	1905	24.9	16.8	8.2
Rhode Island....	1903	25.6	18.8	6.8
Connecticut.....	1907	25.3	17.1	8.2
Michigan.....	1905	18.2	13.5	4.7
France.....	1908	20.2	19.0	1.2

The table shows that in the six American states the excess of births over deaths is far lower than in Germany, and that it even approximates to the low level of France. But these figures relate to the entire composite population of America, of which the Anglo-Americans, derived from Anglo-Saxon, Celtic, and Germanic elements, constitute no more than a fraction. Now the researches made in various districts by American observers have shown that among the immigrant population the birth-rate is incomparably higher than among native-born Americans. Bushee, for instance, publishes statistics of birth-rate, death-rate, and excess (or deficiency) of births over deaths, among the various races that make up the composite population of Boston, Massachusetts (see page 113).

Whereas among the native-born families of Boston there is an actual decline of population, among the immigrant families there is an enormous excess of births over deaths,

Former Nationality of Parents	Birth-rate Per 1,000	Death-rate Per 1,000	Excess (+) or Deficiency (−) Births as Compared with Deaths Per 1,000
American	16.4	17.2	− 0.8
Scottish	40.3	15.7	+24.6
English	41.0	14.7	+26.3
Irish	45.6	25.2	+20.4
German	48.0	15.0	+33.0
Russo-Jewish	94.6	15.9	+78.7
Italian	104.6	25.3	+89.3

ranging from 24 to 79 per 1,000; this great excess is explicable solely on the assumption that among the immigrants at the time of landing there is a very small proportion of children and elderly persons. In certain other districts, the comparison is even more unfavourable to the native-born Americans. In New Hampshire, for example, the excess of births among immigrants is 58.5 per 1,000, whereas among the native-born the deaths per 1,000 actually exceed the births by as many as 10.4. Taking the New England states as a whole, we find that among the native-born white population of this area deaths exceed births by 1.5 per 1,000 inhabitants.[2]

What is the cause of this race suicide of the Anglo-American population? In books written as long ago as the early nineties, it is recorded that in the higher social strata of the states childless families are comparatively common. Since then, however, the desire to restrict the family to the smallest possible number appears to have affected the Anglo-American working classes as well. Kolb,

[2] Münsterberg, *Die Amerikaner*, Berlin, 1904, vol. II, p. 291.

who spent six months in Chicago and San Francisco, living as a workman among workmen, tells us, in a book published in 1905, that neo-malthusian ideas are widely diffused among the working classes. "The practice of abortion is, of course, a criminal offence. But this prohibition, like so many others, exists only on paper, and any one can tell you of doctors who make a living by the induction of artificial abortion. For working class women their fee is said to be ten dollars, a very moderate sum when compared with the cost of a confinement and of rearing a child." Moreover, the frequent practice of criminal abortion does not date from yesterday in the Great Republic. At any rate, in his *Geschichte der deutschen Frauen,* Johannes Scherr quotes from *The Medical Journal* of the year 1859 a passage to the effect that the women of New York "think less of abortion than they do of having a tooth out." It is probable that Kolb overestimates the influence of the practice of abortion in producing the fall in the birth-rate, and it can hardly be doubted that preventive methods are mainly responsible for this phenomenon. In any case, it is perfectly clear that the low birth-rate among the Anglo-American population is not the result of natural sterility, but is due to a deliberate restriction of births.

Among the social causes of this rapidly increasing refusal of parenthood, we have to mention, in addition to the high social position of women in America, the insecurity of livelihood. As far as the working classes are concerned, this insecurity is due to economic crises, more severe in North America than anywhere else in the world. The middle classes are affected, in addition, by the pe-

culiar insecurity due to the political system of the States. The very sections of the middle classes which in Europe enjoy an exceptionally secure position as public employés are exposed in the United States to a loss of situation with every oscillation of political mood. Such, too, is the working of the "spoils" system, that even when one political party remains in power for several terms in succession, the tenure of an official post is nevertheless extremely uncertain, for it is a party maxim in America to give as many adherents as possible a share of the "spoils," even though it be for a very brief period. Finally, there is no other country in the world in which for the middle classes the cost of living is so high as in the States. Taking all these circumstances into consideration, the precariousness of livelihood is so great that the foundation of a family becomes a sheer gamble whose issue no one can foresee. Thus there has arisen in America a system which, in contrast with the two-children-system so widely prevalent in France, may rather be known as the no-children-system. In the middle classes very many persons enter upon marriage with the fixed determination to avoid having any children at all. With this end in view, they rent a bedroom in a comfortable boarding house, where they can live very agreeably, childless indeed, but free from care, and where they can maintain their social standard at small cost. The wide extension of this practice is shown by the fact that in Boston between the years 1891-1895 the number of persons inhabiting such boarding houses increased from 27,512 to 54,442.

It would be an error to regard this no-children-system, which is being more and more widely adopted by middle

class Americans, as merely an accentuation of the two-children-system. Where the latter prevails, as in France, in Berlin, and among the Jewish population of Germany, we always find on the average from two to three children per marriage. Thus the two-children-system involves merely an arrest of the increase in population such as must sooner or later affect every civilised nation. But the one-child-system and no-children-system of America lay the axe at the very root of the race; they destroy the existence of a people as inevitably as a slow poison puts an end to the vital functions of the individual. It is no longer merely a case of the regulation of fertility in response to the demands of a higher civilisation; it is the absolute suppression of fertility. Hence this phenomenon is justly characterised as race suicide.

No positive means for the prevention of race suicide have as yet been advocated. An appeal to the racial patriotism of the women of Anglo-America, a demand that they should bear more children in the interest of the race, makes itself heard unceasingly from every corner of the land. But the result has been nil. Nor is such an appeal likely to have in the future any more effect than it has had in the past, for the evil of race suicide is far too closely associated with Anglo-American civilisation to be arrested by books or speeches. More important than appeals to race patriotism are the social and political measures which have been recommended for the prevention of race suicide. Among these, the proposal most worthy of consideration is one that is very popular among the working classes, namely, to restrict or prohibit immigration from southern and eastern Europe. It is undeniable that

since the early nineties the influx from Europe has ceased to be a source of rejuvenescence for the energies of Anglo-America. The great stream of immigration continues, as formerly, to supply an abundance of new racial wealth; but the constituents of the stream have changed, and the fresh racial elements fail to provide materials for the maintenance of the Anglo-American population. The latter must either accept extinction, or else must absorb foreign elements whereby its individuality will be destroyed. If the low birth-rate of the Anglo-American race were to continue nothing could save that race from extinction but a revival of the Anglo-Saxon and Germanic streams of immigration. Now it is not improbable that if the importation of cheap labour from southern and eastern Europe were checked, immigration from the Anglo-Saxon and Germanic lands would revive, though to what extent this might occur it is impossible to forecast. But a general prohibition of white immigration, such as many demand in the belief that it is the fierce competition of the immigrants which compels the native-born Americans to remain childless, would involve the entire white population of the Union in grave peril. It cannot be doubted that the hopes of an increase in the birth-rate of the Anglo-American elements would not be realised. On the other hand it is no less certain that the great demand for labour which would result from the prohibition of immigration would give a powerful impulse to the growth of the coloured race. A mere reduction to normal of the present coloured death-rate would result in an excess of births over deaths of 35 per 1,000, and the coloured population of the Union would then be in a position to double

itself every twenty years. Taking the coloured population in 1910 as ten millions; it would in 1930 be twenty millions; in 1950, forty millions; in 1970, eighty millions; and in 1990, one hundred and sixty millions. A general prohibition of white immigration would thus, within the space of about eighty years, suffice to transform the Union into a negro realm. Now although individual members of the Afro-American race have been able, when educated by whites, to attain the highest levels of European civilisation, negroes as a whole have not hitherto proved competent to maintain a lofty civilisation. The condition of affairs in the black republic of Haiti gives some justification for the fear that negro dominance would be disastrous. The prohibition of white immigration might expose the Great Republic to a peril even more serious than that of race suicide. On the other hand, the danger of the disappearance of the hitherto dominant Anglo-American race might be largely diminished by an effective encouragement of the immigration of those Anglo-Saxon and Germanic elements which are most closely allied to the Anglo-Americans.

EUGENICS BIRTH-CONTROL AND SOCIALISM

EUGENICS, BIRTH-CONTROL, AND SOCIALISM

By EDEN PAUL

Do Men Gather Grapes of Thorns or Figs of Thistles?

SOCIALISTS advocate a scheme of social reconstruction wherein, by communal ownership, under democratic control, of the means of production, distribution, and exchange, there will be provided a secure and adequate livelihood for all who are willing and able to make, in return, a fair contribution to the common good. From every competent adult, this return will be demanded in the form of manual labour, poietic and executive mental work, supervision, or service. To women, the choice will be open of employment in any of these four fields on the same or on similar terms with men; in addition, the socialist community will accept the fulfilment (under certain conditions) of woman's specialised sexual function in the bearing of children as a complete discharge of her social duties; and thus will be secured the economic independence of woman, recognised ever more widely as one of the first prerequisites of further social and moral advance. It is unnecessary to consider here the numerous difficulties, recognised by every socialist, in the way of socialist reorganisation, or to consider the general ques-

tion of its practicability. One of the most serious of these difficulties, and one upon which especial stress is always laid by the opponents of socialism, is that of ensuring from the individual an adequate return in the matter of social service without subjecting him to a tyranny as grinding as that of capitalism—perhaps even a worse tyranny, for the coercion, we are told, will be overt instead of latent. Suffice it to say that it is a reasoned socialist belief, in view of the remarkable plasticity of the qualities summed up in the expression "human nature," that, as the transition to socialism is effected, as the disappearance of economic individualism removes the present conflict between theoretical and practical morality, and as the inculcation of a social instinct in our schools no longer tends, in proportion to the educator's ability, to unfit the pupil for a reasonable measure of success in life, the number of competent adults who will endeavour to evade the performance of their due share of social labour will become an ever-diminishing quantity. But persons who desire, like those who live upon dividends under capitalism, to exist as parasites on the community, together with the thieves and homicides, the directly predatory and violent types, will, be they many or be they few, constitute an anti-social residuum, the criminals of the socialist state. What is to be done with them? How are we to deal also with those who, because they are ill, insane, or feeble-minded, are unable to make an adequate contribution to the common good? On humanist principles they will be entitled (as they are to-day) to a share of the communal product. But, as to-day, they will receive that share on conditions, and in

the writer's view the conditions will be largely determined by eugenist considerations.

The growth of the eugenist idea was a necessary outcome of the diffusion of Darwin's doctrine that the origin of species was effected through the survival of the fittest in the struggle for existence. Francis Galton, one of Darwin's most brilliant disciples, was the first to employ the word eugenics, as a substitute for the term viriculture introduced by himself at an earlier date. In his epoch-making *Inquiries into Human Faculty* Galton wrote: "We greatly want a brief word to express the science of improving stock, which is by no means confined to questions of judicious mating, but which, especially in the case of man, takes cognisance of all influences that tend, in however remote a degree, to give to the more suitable races or strains of blood a better chance of prevailing speedily over the less suitable than they otherwise would have had. The word *eugenics* would sufficiently express the idea."[1] The word signifies "good breeding," used in the biological, not the educational, sense of the term.

With the first crude application of the idea of natural selection to the study of human society, it was believed by many that the doctrine furnished a fresh justification for economic individualism; that the rich and the well-born (in the old class-privilege sense, not in the new eugenist sense), in virtue of their wealth and their privileged position, had proved their fitness to survive; and that their predominant survival would ensure the continued improvement of the race. It is needless to attempt

[1] Galton, *Inquiries into Human Faculty and Its Development,* Everyman's Library, p. 17, note.

the detailed disproof of this fantastic conception, the fallacy of which is now generally admitted by the thoughtful. In primitive conditions, and before large-scale social aggregation had begun, the fierceness of the struggle for existence doubtless secured in our semi-human progenitors the maintenance of a certain level of fitness. But with the acquirement of articulate speech, with the formation of tribal aggregates, and still more with the development of writing and the improvement of the means of communication, leading to the formation of national social aggregates, great as have been the advantages of these developments of mutual aid and of the substitution of co-operation for competition, there have, none the less, been grave attendant disadvantages in the concomitant decline in the operation of natural selection and the consequent risk of racial deterioration. Among the most conspicuous of the ways in which this tendency has manifested itself are: the elimination of superior stocks by war and the preparation for war; the excessive multiplication of the feeble-minded and other inferior stocks; and the working of marriage in modern capitalist society.

In an essay on *War and Manhood*, David Starr Jordan, president of Stanford University, has discussed the anti-selective influence of war. This influence was recognised more than two thousand years ago by Sophocles, who wrote: "War does not of choice destroy bad men, but good men ever." Of preparation for war, Benjamin Franklin said: "There is one effect of a standing army which must in time be felt so as to bring about the abolition of the system. A standing army not only diminishes the population of a country, but even the size and breed

of the human species. For an army is the flower of the nation. All the most vigorous, stout, and well-made men in a kingdom are to be found in the army, and these men, in general, cannot marry." Having quoted earlier authorities, Jordan continues: "What is true of standing armies is still more true of the armies that fight and fall. Those men who perish are lost to the future of civilisation, they and their blood forever. For, as Franklin said again, 'Wars are not paid for in war time: the bill comes later.' . . . 'Always and ever,' writes Novicov, 'war brings about the reversal of selection.' Those traits of character —physical strength, courage, dash, patriotism—which are desired in the soldier, are lost to the race which decrees the destruction of the soldierly. The delusion that war in one generation sharpens the edge of warriorhood in the next generation has no biological foundation. It is the man who is left who always determines the future." Jordan applies this doctrine to explain the fall of the Roman empire, which, as Seeley put it, "perished for want of men." It explains no less adequately the fall of the empire of Spain, and the subsequent stagnation of that once great country for two centuries and more. Writing in 1630, La Puente, an Augustinian friar, put the matter thus: "Against the credit for redeemed souls, I set the cost of armadas and the sacrifice of soldiers and friars sent to the Philippines. And this I count the chief loss: for mines give silver and forests give timber, but only Spain gives Spaniards, and she may give so many that she may be left desolate and constrained to bring up strangers' children instead of her own." The same principle explains readily enough that puzzle for the panegy-

rists of militarism, the great marvel of Japan's warlike prowess and her victory over Russia after three centuries of profound peace. There would have been no victory had the reversed selection of war been in full play during the long rule of the Tokugawas. Destruction through the operation of reversed selection, concludes Jordan, "is the inevitable end of all dominion of man over man by force of arms."[2] This aspect of war is so important that a German writer, Hans Fehlinger, may be quoted in exemplification of the same thesis. "The theory that war leads to the progressive elimination of the less fit is one whose falsity may readily be demonstrated. In war more of the fit are slain than of the unfit. For, first of all, the weaklings, and those with mental or bodily defect, do not take part in the war at all; and in the next place, it is precisely the bravest and most vigorous of the soldiers who are more exposed to the risk of slaughter; thus those slain in battle excel in numerous respects the average of their compatriots. The inevitable consequence of every war is that after it a larger proportion than before of the unfit take part in the procreation of the race—individuals such as, but for the war, would for the most part have remained childless through the operation of sexual selection. There is nothing more harmful than war to the welfare of the race; and if the coming of socialism puts an end to war, in this way alone a service will be rendered to humanity the value of which it would be impossible to overestimate."[3]

[2] Jordan, *Eugenics Review*, July, 1910, pp. 95 et seq.

[3] Fehlinger, *Natural Selection and Non-Selective Elimination*, "Socialist Review," September, 1911, p. 66.

We pass from consideration of the excessive elimination of higher types to contemplate the other prime cause of racial degeneration, the undue multiplication of lower types. In an essay on *Eugenics and Degeneracy,* C. T. Ewart ignores the former cause, and stresses the latter, at times perhaps unduly. "If we recall for a moment," he tells us, "the history of the rise, progress, and fall of the various nations which have been pre-eminent in the past, we find that the same course has been experienced by each. There has been a period of hardship and energy, accompanied by development, followed by a period of luxurious quiescence during the supremacy, and this has been succeeded by a decline and fall. A study of events during these periods shows us that it is by the interference of civilisation with the process of natural selection that the decline and fall is brought about. So soon as the necessity for striving and struggling is past, there is no longer the extermination of the weaker members, and their proportion steadily increases, the standard of the whole country is lowered, and there is a diminution in the mental, moral, and bodily powers, and an increase in the numbers of those who are unable properly to fulfil the duties of citizenship, until finally there is a preponderance of the latter, and the doom of that country is sealed." Two explanations, Ewart goes on to say, have commonly been offered to account for the rise, progress, and fall of the various eminent nations of history. One of these depends upon the belief that a nation, like an individual, has a "natural" cycle of youth, maturity, and decay, the other explanation involves a belief in the Lamarckian doctrine of the inheritance of acquired characters. Both

explanations are rejected by Ewart on grounds which appear convincing, but need not now be discussed. He continues: "What theory of this alleged racial degeneration is there to offer in their place, and especially what theory which explains racial degeneration amongst, not the conquered, but the conquerors—amongst the successful, the imperial, the cultured, the well-cared-for in all respects, mental and bodily? Why is it that not enslaved but imperial peoples degenerate? Why is it that nothing fails like success? The reason is that no race or species, vegetable, animal, or human, can maintain its organic level, let alone raise it, unless its best be selected for parentage. When a race is making its early way, by force, selection is stringent. The weak, diseased, and stupid are ruthlessly expunged from generation to generation. As civilisation advances, another ethical standard is reached; the diseased and feeble-minded are no longer left to pay the penalty sternly exacted by nature for unfitness; they are allowed to survive, which is well, and to multiply, which is ill. Babylon lasted four thousand years and yet, at last, it fell. If selection had been operating throughout that time, would Babylon have fallen? Without selection, races must deteriorate, the lower individuals multiplying more rapidly than the higher in accordance with Spencer's law, that the higher the type of the individual, the less rapidly does he increase." Giving a specific instance of the excessive multiplication of the unfit, Ewart writes: "Dr. Ettie Sayer, in the course of her work for the London County Council, studied the family history of 100 normal families and 100 families where mental defectives were found. The normal family averaged 5

in number, while families showing abnormality averaged 7.6."[4]

A third great cause of racial degeneration is the working of our marriage system in modern capitalist society (the fault lies, be it noted, with capitalism more than with marriage). The anti-selective influence of marriage under capitalism is one of the principal themes of *The Sexual Crisis,* the translation of a German work by Grete Meisel-Hess.[5] This writer's views may be summarised as follows. The general result of the existing "sexual order," that is to say, of our marriage customs as they work under the capitalist system, is, she declares, that the ablest and most energetic women, unwilling, on the one hand, to accept the economic dependence on man involved in marriage, and competent, on the other, to earn their own livelihood, are, by our industrial and social system, condemned to celibacy. From this point of view, marriage selects the less fit women to be the mothers of the new generation. The same system selects as fathers of the coming race, not the ablest, the strongest, the handsomest men, or those who excel in moral cultivation—but those who are "fittest" because they have been successful competitors (or because their forebears have been successful competitors) in the arena of economic individualism. She goes on to speak of the prevalence of various forms of physical and moral degeneracy, and declares that in her opinion these wide-spread manifestations are the inevitable outcome of the cessation of sexual selec-

[4] Ewart, *Eugenics & Degeneracy,* "Journal of Mental Science," October, 1910, pp. 670 et seq.

[5] Published by The Critic and Guide Company, New York, 1917.

tion, of the fact that it is to-day impossible for a woman to choose freely from among those who seek her favour the mate who appears to her the most desirable. The selective process whereby the less fit males will be excluded from parenthood can, she considers, be re-established in no other way than by rendering women economically independent. She urges this elementary demand of the woman's movement from the joint outlook of socialism and of eugenics.

The main argument may now be resumed. It has been shown that the eugenist recognises two chief causes of racial degeneration, excessive elimination of the better stocks and excessive procreation on the part of the worse. For each of these banes the eugenist proposes an appropriate antidote. He will do all he can to favour breeding from the better stocks, this being the province of what is termed positive or constructive eugenics; and he will earnestly endeavour to discourage parenthood on the part of those belonging to inferior stocks, thus applying the principle of negative or restrictive eugenics.

It will be readily understood that negative eugenics tends to be ahead of positive engenics, not only because, as Havelock Ellis points out, "it is easier to detect bad stocks than to be quite sure of good stocks";[6] but also, on more general grounds, because restriction is easier than construction, because it is always easier to define and enforce a prohibition than to formulate and carry into action a positive and constructive policy. Yet, as far as written formulation goes, the idea of constructive eugenics

[6] Ellis, *Studies in the Psychology of Sex,* vol. VI, "Sex in Relation to Society," Davis, Philadelphia, 1910, p. 630.

is the older of the two, dating from Plato, who, in the fifth book of *The Republic,* suggests that the "fittest" of his ideal community, the "Guardians," are to be mated in accordance with the decision of the magistrates, just as a skilled breeder of animals is "anxious to breed as much as possible from the best," and that "as fast as the children are born, they will be received by the officers appointed for the purpose, both men and women, and placed in the general nursery."[7] These ideas of "the human stud-farm" and "the state nursery" are persistently fathered upon modern socialists and eugenists, but no responsible modern thinker proposes anything of the kind. "None but fanatics," writes Havelock Ellis, "dream of abolishing love in order to effect pairing by rule. It is merely a question of limiting the possible number of mates from whom each may select a partner, and that, we must remember, has always been done, even by savages, for, as it has been said, 'Eugenics is the oldest of the sciences.'"[8] H. G. Wells describes practical eugenist possibilities in similar terms. "Compulsory mating is one thing, and the maintenance of general limiting conditions is another, and one well within the scope of state activity."[9]

As far, then, as constructive eugenics is concerned, we have to do with an ideal, whose effective application cannot be considered until our knowledge of heredity and the other elements of the problem has greatly increased. Even

[7] *The Republic of Plato.* Translated by Davis & Vaughan, Macmillan, London, 1874, pp. 166-8.

[8] Ellis, op. cit., p. 583.

[9] Wells, *A Modern Utopia,* p. 182.

now humanity might do much to counteract the agencies, war and the like, which lead to the excessive elimination of the more fit; but the time has not yet come, perhaps never will come, when we can deliberately attempt to breed a race of supermen. On the other hand, in the sphere of restrictive eugenics, much work lies ready to hand. In further illustration, not only of the need for restrictive eugenist practice, but also of the fact that such practice has actually begun, I may refer to a paper on *Heredity and Insanity,* by T. E. K. Stansfield. He writes of the great increase of insanity during recent decades. Whether this increase be real or apparent, there is no doubt about the numerical increase in the number of certified lunatics. Now it is a remarkable fact that this increase affects almost exclusively the number of pauper lunatics, the ratio of certified private lunatics to the population remaining practically unchanged. Stansfield believes that the disproportion between the two ratios "is due to the growing appreciation, by that section of the community which sends us our private patients, of the important part played by heredity in the causation of insanity, and the ignoring of that fact by the class which supplies the large bulk of our pauper insane."[10] If this writer's views are sound, we have an instance here of the deliberate application of scientific knowledge in accordance with the principle of restrictive eugenics, and in a way that will tend to the improvement of the human stock.

It is now generally understood that there are two main factors in human progress. The first is the fruit of man's

[10] Stansfield, "Journal of Mental Science," January, 1911, pp. 55, et seq.

steadily increasing powers of controlling his natural environment, the advance in this respect being itself due to the progressive accumulation of knowledge from generation to generation. The socialist aim in relation to this process is an endeavour to secure that as far as possible every human being shall get his fair share of previously accumulated knowledge and his chance of adding to the social stock. Socialism is itself a fruit of accumulating knowledge, more especially in the departments of ethics and economics.

The other main factor in human progress is selection. It has been shown that in our existing civilisation natural (unconscious) selection has largely ceased to work towards the improvement of the human breed; it follows that the imminent risk of racial degeneration can be averted in one way only, by applying our advancing knowledge in this department also, and using it to control nature. We must aim at improving the human stock; we must encourage procreation by the better types, and discourage procreation by the worse types. Eugenics, as Galton long ago phrased it, is man's "attempt to replace natural selection by processes that are more merciful and not less effective."

The mutual dependence of these two factors, the environmental and the selective, will become apparent on brief consideration. It is assuredly of little use, from the racial outlook, that knowledge should increase, and that therewith for a time comfort should be more widely diffused, if concurrently the human breed degenerate. On the other hand, from the humanist point of view we shall gain little by improving the human stock, if the advan-

tages of increasing knowledge and increasing mastery over nature are to remain, as now, the privileges of a proprietary class. In this essay, the need for a vast transformation in the social environment is taken for granted, and the writer's aim is to show that to improve the conditions of life will not suffice, but that we must also improve the conditions of being born—that, important as eugenics is under capitalism, it will become even more essential under socialism. The socialist tendency is to overrate the importance of environment, great as this undoubtedly is. Nor has the error been confined to the socialist camp, for, as Karl Pearson writes, the nation has for years been backing the wrong horse, "putting its money on 'Environment' when 'Heredity' wins in a canter."[11] The impatience of the socialist and even of the social reformer with eugenist proposals has this justification, that many evils thoughtlessly attributed to inferiority of stock are unquestionably the outcome of a faulty environment. Until all are given a fair chance in life, there must be numerous cases in which, with our present knowledge, we cannot distinguish between the effects of environment and the results of heredity. Even to-day, however, we can wisely and humanely apply restrictive eugenist practice in the case of the feeble-minded and perhaps in that of the habitual (instinctive) criminal. But how much more feasible and necessary will such practice become when through the perfectionment of social environment under socialism the effects of bad inheritance have become the sole factor in producing inefficient and anti-social members of the community. A socialist com-

[11] Quoted by Ellis, op. cit., p. 618.

monwealth indiscreet enough to allot to all defectives a share of the communal product without imposing any restrictions on their right to perpetuate their kind would deserve all the evil that would ensue.

Before discussing the actual measures likely to be adopted under socialism to discourage or prevent procreation by the unfit, let us reconsider present-day possibilities. I will quote a second time from Ewart, a non-socialist medical man. He writes: "What makes the science of eugenics possible is the law of heredity that 'like *tends to produce* like,' not that 'like *produces* like.' It is common experience that superior persons may produce inferior children, and that inferior persons, though much less often, may produce superior children. Eugenics deals with averages, and on the average the law of heredity acts with practical certainty, and all race questions are questions of average. With regard to heritable diseases what is meant is, not the transference of the disease itself, but a transmission of a predisposition to it, and that is effected through the germ cells. Negative eugenics teaches us what to prevent; positive, what to encourage. The 'fittest to survive' are those who possess sound health, energy, and a well-balanced brain. These would be the most likely to be useful to themselves and the community. The greater part of feeble-mindedness, insanity, and criminality could be eliminated by segregation in one generation." [12]

How do these considerations apply to the problems of socialism? Two primary socialist demands are the "minimum wage" and the "right to work." Let us examine

[12] Ewart, op. cit.

the demands from the eugenist outlook. The proper basis of a minimum wage law is, as we are reminded in the excellent Fabian tract on this subject, "the fixing and enforcement of a wage sufficient to enable the workers to be maintained in healthy existence. Therefore the wages should be calculated on what the worker requires for physical health and efficiency, and not on what 'the trade will bear.' . . . The effect of stopping competition in wages at the expense of the vitality of the workers is, to quote *Industrial Democracy,* to concentrate it upon efficiency. A minimum wage would continue and intensify that salutary concentration. Doubtless a number of the weakest and least efficient workers would then be excluded from employment where formerly they had been able to keep themselves partially alive by their sweated and inefficient labour."[13] Thus the harshness of the capitalist system, in which the test of efficiency is that a man should be able to produce by his labour more wealth than he receives in the form of wages, and in which the inefficients, being unable to produce surplus value for the capitalist, are squeezed out of employment, would actually, for a time, be intensified by the adoption of the minimum living wage as an isolated measure. (I must not be interpreted to mean that under capitalism inefficiency is, any more than drunkenness, the sole, or even the principal, cause of unemployment; but it is undoubtedly, like drunkenness, one of the determining factors in the selection of those who will be unemployed). A supplementary and no less important socialist demand is the right to work or maintenance. At present, those unable to obtain work

[13] Fabian Tract. No. 128. *The Case for a Legal Minimum Wage.*

at wages are supported, more or less inadequately, either by private charity, or by the old-established system of public assistance known as the poor law—and in times when unemployment is rife, by the form of public charity known as relief work. One justification of the demand for the right to work or maintenance is the undoubted fact that a considerable proportion of the able-bodied unemployed, even if inefficient, are so solely in consequence of errors of the social environment, such as inadequate education, or insufficient food and other unhygienic conditions during childhood; some of them, doubtless, are truly inefficient in the eugenist sense, members of a radically unsound stock which ought not to be allowed to procreate: but until we have perfected the social environment it will remain impossible to determine, in most cases, whether social inadequacy is due to nature or to nurture.

The eugenist conclusion is irresistible. Imagine the social environment perfected as socialists believe it can be perfected, so that, apart from inborn deficiencies, every one has a fair chance in life, then, if the state provides an adequate subsistence for all alike, inefficients as well as efficients, making no attempt to limit the right to procreate of members of the former category, racial degeneration from the excessive multiplication of the unfit will be a more pressing danger than it is even to-day. Whether under socialism there will be wages at all must be left for the future to decide; the coming social order may devise some other means for the distribution of the communal product. But putting the matter in the terminology of the existing economic system, my contention is that the socialist state will have to make ability

to earn the minimum wage a precondition of the right to become a parent. All human beings born into the socialist state will be entitled, on humanist principles, to a fair share of the communal wealth. It may well be, as Bernard Shaw contends, that the only criterion of fairness in this matter will be equality of shares. But from all competent adults the state will demand a return in the form of manual labour, poietic and executive manual work, supervision, or service; and those who are incompetent, or unwilling, to make an adequate return will receive their share on conditions. In accordance with restrictive eugenist principles, a national minimum of social efficiency will be the indispensable prerequisite to the right to parenthood. This notion has been expounded with characteristic brilliancy by H. G. Wells in *A Modern Utopia*. "The state," he writes, "is justified in saying, before you may add children to the community for the community to educate and in part to support, you must be above a certain minimum of personal efficiency, and this you must show by holding a position of solvency and independence in the world; you must be above a certain age, and a certain minimum of physical development, and free of any transmissible disease. You must not be a criminal, unless you have expiated your offence. Failing these simple qualifications, if you and some person conspire and add to the population of the state, we will, for the sake of humanity, take over the innocent victim of your passions, but we shall insist that you are under a debt to the state of a peculiarly urgent sort, and one you will certainly pay, even if it is necessary to use restraint to get the payment out of you; it is a debt that has in

the last resort your liberty as a security; and, moreover, if this thing happens a second time, or if it is disease or imbecility you have multiplied, we will take an absolutely effectual guarantee that neither you nor your partner offend again in this matter. 'Harsh,' you say, and 'Poor Humanity!' You have the gentler alternative to study in your terrestrial slums and asylums. It may be urged that to permit conspicuously inferior people to have one or two children in this way would be to fail to attain the desired end, but, indeed, this is not so. A suitably qualified permission, as every statesman knows, may produce the desired social effects without producing the irksome pressure of a direct prohibition. Amidst bright and comfortable circumstances, and with an easy practicable alternative, people will exercise foresight and restraint to escape even the possibilities of hardship and discomfort; and free life in Utopia is to be well worth this trouble even for inferior people.'' [14]

Thus the policy of the national minimum is common ground to socialism and to eugenics. The socialist maintains the right of every member of the community to the minimum essentials for a decent life. The eugenist makes the same demand because, until that demand is satisfied, restrictive eugenist practise gropes vainly in the dark. But, the minimum once granted, the right to live once secured, the eugenist insists that ability to earn the minimum wage, can alone give the additional and more momentous right to become a parent. Unless the socialist is a eugenist as well, the socialist state will speedily perish from racial degradation.

[14] Wells, op. cit., pp. 182-3.

In an admirable paper on *Eugenics and Socialism,* S. Herbert writes: "We have to distinguish two factors in the process of race-culture: the hereditary factor, which is concerned with the change of the germinal composition of the stock and . . . the modification factor, which influences the individual development of the social unit."[15] For the very reason that each works in a separate field it is essential that the eugenist, dealing with the hereditary factor, and the socialist, dealing with the modification factor, should each supplement the other's work. Neither can gain and keep his goal without the other's help. To forestall socialist criticism, it may at once be admitted that the transition to socialism will of itself remove certain influences which, in the present organisation of society, make for the deterioration of the human stock. They have all been enumerated in this essay, but it will be well to summarise them once more. In his work on *Socialism and Positive Science,* in the chapter on "The Survival of the Fittest," Enrico Ferri discusses the influences which make for what he calls "natural selection the wrong way," and writes: "In the contemporary civilised world natural selection is vitiated by military selection, by matrimonial selection, and principally by economic selection. . . . To these must be added that moral selection the wrong way which causes capitalism to-day in the struggle waged with the proletariat to favour the survival of men of servile character, whilst it persecutes and tries to keep in the shade men of strong character and all those who do not seem disposed to bear the yoke of the present economic

[15] Herbert, "Eugenics Review," July, 1910, pp. 116, et seq.

order."[16] Herbert phrases the same thought as follows: "The present day capitalistic valuation, which measures success in terms of money, crushes out the studious and the moral man, who does not know how 'to get on.' Socialism, by removing the material handicap of the masses, and by giving equal opportunity to all, will create such social conditions as will lead to the automatic and natural survival of the types most desired."[17] Thus the fact that the influences making for reversed selection will be abolished under socialism is a sufficient reason why all eugenists should also be socialists. But it has been shown that there are other and even weightier influences leading to the excessive procreation of the unfit, and that their potency will actually be greater under socialism then under economic individualism, unless the effect of these influences be counteracted by the deliberate adoption of eugenist practice as part of the working of the socialist state. The argument is further reinforced by the humanist consideration that those who will suffer or cause suffering ought not to be born. It remains, then, to ask precisely how, under socialism, eugenist principles are to be practically applied.

Considering first the domain of positive or constructive eugenics, it is only indirectly, by the abolition of the disastrous anachronism of war, with its excessive elimination of the more fit, and by similar indirect methods, that in the light of our present knowledge we can work towards this end. Kurella tells us that Lombroso, though an enthu-

[16] Ferri, *Socialism & Positive Science,* English translation by Edith Harvey, I. L. P., London, 1909, pp. 40-42.

[17] Herbert, op. cit.

siast for the application to the human species of voluntary in the place of natural or unconscious selection, "never suggested the deliberate breeding of supermen";[18] and where the great Italian anthropologist feared to tread it is not for lesser mortals to rush in.

In the domain of negative or restrictive eugenics, on the other hand, those competent to advise are already beginning to speak with fair confidence. The three direct means by which those regarded as unfit in the eugenist sense may be prevented from procreating their kind are, death, operative sterilisation, and segregation of the sexes. Death has had its advocates, even among modern men of science. "Dead men tell no tales," says the old proverb; and it is no less true that "dead men have no offspring." In especial, the painless extinction of blighted lives in infancy has been recently recommended, not solely on eugenist grounds, but in addition to obviate the suffering which grossly malformed children would endure if they were allowed to grow up.[19] But it seems improbable that modern humanist sentiment, which is setting so strongly against death as a penalty for crime, will tolerate the lethal chamber even as a means of protecting society against the procreation of the worst anti-social types.

Operative sterilisation is already practical politics, though in England solely as a matter of recommendation. Modern surgery provides a simple operation, practically devoid of risk, by which, without mutilation, sterilisation can be secured with no loss of any of the distinctive pow-

[18] Kurella, *Cesare Lombroso, A Modern Man of Science,* Rebman, London, 1911, p. 123.

[19] Engel, *Elements of Child Protection,* Allen, London, 1912, passim.

ers and attributes of sex other than that of the capacity for parenthood. In his essay on *Heredity and Insanity*, Stansfield, speaking of institutions for the permanent segregation of the feeble-minded and of the need for the prevention of hereditary mental disorder, writes: "Such an institution must become at once a prison and not a hospital—a prison without hope. To my mind there is but one remedy, and that is sterilisation."[20] Faulks goes further, and definitely advocates the sterilisation of the insane. He describes the working of the "Act to Prevent the Procreation of Confirmed Criminals, Idiots, Imbeciles, and Rapists," approved by the legislature of Indiana on March 9, 1907. He urges legislation in Great Britain to secure the compulsory operative sterilisation of persons about to be discharged from asylums who are at the moment "under certificate for the second or further time."[21] I agree that operative sterilisation is unquestionably desirable in selected cases with the consent of the patient. To compulsory operative sterilisation I consider there are grave objections. But then I do not share Stansfield's views regarding the inhumanity of segregating the feeble-minded.

I am confident that the best and humanest way of dealing with many inefficient and anti-social types is by permanent segregation. The clearest case of all is that of the feeble-minded. In the homes at Waverley in Massachusetts, at Sandlebridge in Cheshire, and elsewhere, sufficient experience has been gained of this class of mental defec-

[20] Stansfield, op. cit.

[21] Faulks, *The Sterilisation of the Insane*, "Journal of Mental Science," January, 1911, pp. 63, et seq.

tives to show that if the feeble-minded are caught young, before they have been corrupted by evil communications, and if they are early adapted to institutional life, they are far happier than they would be in the stress and struggle of the world, for which they are constitutionally unfitted. Speaking of the inmates at Sandlebridge, Miss Dendy says, "They have no wish to leave, and the only inclinations and ideas which seem to exercise them are those which are put into their heads by the responsible officials of the home."[22] As far as the problem of the feeble-minded is concerned, permanent segregation is a complete and satisfactory solution. The relapsing insane offer greater difficulties. Society would hesitate to maintain segregation during lucid intervals, and may therefore ultimately be compelled to adopt the alternative of sterilisation. Besides the relapsing insane, there will be a certain proportion of cases with mental, moral, or physical transmissible blemishes—persons who would be unhappy if segregated, but dangerous as progenitors. To these, perhaps, the choice will be offered between segregation and sterilisation.

Finally, as regards directly anti-social types, it must be remembered that under socialism there will *ex hypothesi* be no criminals produced by faulty environment; there will be none but instinctive or "born" criminals—precisely the kind that tend to leave criminal or otherwise defective offspring. The community will have to segregate these for its own comfort and wellbeing; and, unless the sexes are to be separated, it will have to sterilise them as well. But it will not inflict punishment, for the

[22] Discussion in "Journal of Mental Science," January, 1911, p. 105.

socialist state will have completely freed itself from the ideas of retributive and deterrent "justice," together with other obsolete superstitions. I do not see, therefore, what can be adopted better than Well's suggestion of self-governing islands, carefully patrolled, where each anti-social type will go its own way, "thanking heaven, no doubt, to be quit of a world of prigs." The fact that the proposed settlements are to be self-governing distinguishes them radically from the old penal settlements for transported felons. No socialist would dream of reviving such conditions as are pictured in *His Natural Life* by Marcus Clarke, and *The Rogue's March* by E. W. Hornung. As Wells puts it: "You must seclude, but why should you torment? All modern prisons are places of torture by restraint, and the habitual criminal plays the part of a damaged mouse at the mercy of the cat of our law. He has his little painful run, and back he comes to a state more horrible even than destitution. There are no Alsatias left in the world. For my own part I can think of no crime, unless it is reckless begetting or the wilful transmitting of contagious disease, for which the bleak terrors, the solitudes and ignominies of the modern prison do not seem outrageously cruel. If you want to go as far as that, then kill. Why, once you are rid of them, should you pester criminals to respect an uncongenial standard of conduct?" [23]

I accept, unhesitatingly, this solution of the problem of how to deal with the instinctively anti-social types. We must protect ourselves from their activities, not merely as

[23] Wells, op. cit., pp. 137-173, comprising the chapter "Failure in a Modern Utopia."

noxious members of their own generation, but as possible begetters of anti-social stocks which would injure generations to come. If it reject the lethal chamber, what other alternative can the socialist state devise? But what applies to the habitual criminal, applies no less to the other defective and anti-social types of which mention has been made in this paper. Neither the environmental nor the selective factor, working in isolation, is competent to effect a lasting amelioration of the human lot. Socialism and eugenics must go hand in hand.

ECONOMICS OF THE BIRTH STRIKE

ECONOMICS OF THE BIRTH STRIKE

By Ludwig Quessel

A SPECTRE haunts Eùrope—the spectre of the birth strike. All the powers of old Europe—Pope and Czar, von Bethmann-Hollweg and Poincaré, French imperialists and German progressists—have entered a holy alliance to exorcise this spectre.'' In these words might a Neo-Malthusian, desiring to announce a propaganda in favour of the birth strike, herald his views, and he could hardly be accused of exaggeration. The spectre of socialism whereof the communist manifesto speaks has been thrust into the background by the spectre of the birth strike.

Indeed we use too mild a phrase when we talk of the spectre of the birth strike. If by this phrase we mean a curtailment of births among the non-possessing and poorer classes, a curtailment so extensive as to force us to anticipate a progressive diminution in the number of wage earners during ensuing decades, we must admit that the deliberate refusal to procreate is no longer a mere theory but has become a palpable reality of social life. The petty farmers and peasant proprietors of France, unlike their Italian and German congeners, stubbornly refuse to supply a proletarian progeny; the fact is so well known and so undisputed that statistical proof is superfluous. Moreover, among the French urban proletariat the birth-rate is

now so low that numbers are not fully maintained from generation to generation. Inconsiderable as is capitalist expansion in France, entrepreneurs in that country are increasingly dependent upon the importation of foreign labour, and this applies above all to those industries which are uncongenial to French workers. The large majority of employés in the building trade are foreigners. We learn from the French labour press that in the recently opened coal basins of Normandy and in the ironfield of Longwy, foreign workers preponderate. Most of them are Italians, chiefly from the south of the peninsula, while others come from Luxemburg, Poland, and Germany; barely 10 per cent are Frenchmen. In the iron works of Normandy, a new enterprise, hands have been brought from yet further afield, from Greece and North Africa. The wages paid to imported labour are considerably below the French standard, but the working capacity of the foreign hands being much smaller than that of Frenchmen, it is open to question whether the employment of imported labour will prove economical to the capitalists. Even socialist observers admit that the influx of foreigners into the building and mining industries is not primarily due to the cheapness of foreign labour, but depends rather upon the impossibility of finding Frenchmen willing to undertake disagreeable and arduous physical toil. The decline in proletarian reproduction is continuous, and were the republic to prohibit the import of foreign labour, France would gradually become a country without a proletariat.

Not in France alone is this decline in the birth-rate to be observed. In the United States, in so far as the in-

habitants are of western European origin, the same phenomenon is manifest. Like France, America would tend to become a land without a proletariat, were it not for the steady influx of foreign, and in especial of Slav, labour power. During the last few decades a fall in the birth-rate has become manifest even in Germany. Though large families are here still the rule, it is evident that in the great towns restriction of births is practised. Experience shows that the movement will before long extend to the smaller centres of population, and it is not unnatural that considerable alarm at the prospect should be felt in capitalist circles.

This development will be hailed with joy by Neo-Malthusians, for the most up-to-date members of this body approve the birth strike. The inadequate reproduction of proletarian life in France, Australia, and the United States is an outcome of certain social conditions, and the Neo-Malthusians believe that in this causal sequence they can discover proof that the deliberate limitation of births is competent to solve the social problem. We owe to Otto Ehinger the best formulation of the sociological theory of the birth strike. In *Zeitgeist* of October 6, 1913, he reasons as follows: "Under pressure of necessity, the member of the non-possessing classes sells his life piecewise, by the week or month. His wages depend, not on the real value of his work, but on the difficulty the employer experiences in finding hands. The greater the number of applicants and the more they underbid one another, the more wretched is their lot. The birth strike could remedy this state of affairs in a few decades. A restriction of births would inevitably lead to the supply of workers

falling below the demand. Owing to a proletarian refusal to bear children, the labour markets of the old world, now suffering from a glut of workers, would in course of time come to resemble the labour markets of young colonies, where a dearth of proletarians is characteristic. Unemployment would disappear through inadequacy in the supply of labour; wages would rise until they came to represent the real value of the work done; there would be a progressive decline in rent and profit. Thus the scarcity of proletarians would solve the social problem, and would solve it once for all."

No Marxist will deny the profound significance of the sociological theory of the birth strike. Marxists hold that capitalism derives its vital energy from the surplus value created by proletarian labour. In a land without a proletariat, capitalism must succumb. It would, however, be quite opposed to the marxist doctrine to regard the existence of the proletariat as an immutable social phenomenon. In *Capital* (vol. I., chap. 24), Marx refers to the so-called "primitive accumulation," in virtue of which those who have been liberated from feudal bonds do not become proletarians "until they have been robbed of all their means of production and of all the guarantees of existence which were provided for them by the ancient feudal institutions." The divorce of the producers from the means of production was effected by the deliberate will of the ruling class, and, as Marx writes: "In the annals of humanity, the story of this expropriation is recorded in letters of blood and fire." Marx also recognises clearly that when the divorce of the producers from the means of production has once been effected, it remains a perma-

nent feature of economic life, for the proletarian multitude spontaneously furnishes the posterity which capital needs for its maintenance and expansion.

Now the advocates of the birth strike contend that it is no longer necessary for the proletariat to procreate without restriction. Formerly, under pressure of the sexual impulse, whose force is irresistible, the proletarian was led to reproduce his own misery in his offspring. As long as methods of birth-control were unknown, the reproduction of proletarian existence seemed a law of nature. But it is otherwise to-day, when a knowledge of birth-control is becoming widely diffused. The worker has a far less anxious life if he has one or two children only, instead of a quiverful. Nor need his wife completely renounce the joys of motherhood. The advocates of the birth strike assure us that the working woman who contents herself with one or two children experiences these joys far more fully than the mother of a large family. The absolute renunciation of offspring is needless, for the one-child system or the two-children system will in due time put an end to the proletarian status, though the process will necessarily be slower than if no children were born at all in the ranks of the proletariat.

The cheap witticism that the up-to-date Neo-Malthusian finds the solution of the social problem in the proletarian nuptial couch, is no longer an adequate answer to the arguments of those who advocate the birth strike. Should the entire proletariat of Europe refuse to provide progeny for the use of capital, the effect would unquestionably be revolutionary, and the magnitude of the ultimate results would be nowise lessened because these results would be

attained by imperceptible gradations. Marx has demonstrated that in a land without a proletariat the social conditions characteristic of capitalism cannot possibly be maintained. He records that an Englishman named Peel went to New Holland, intending to establish a factory there, and taking with him provisions, tools, and machinery, to the value of £50,000. He had the foresight to ship in addition three thousand persons of the working class, men, women, and children. But hardly had his labourers set foot in the new territory when they realised that in this thinly populated land they need no longer remain wage earners. Poor Mr. Peel was left in the lurch, lacking even a servant to make his bed for him. With astonishing rapidity the human material broke away from capitalist methods of production. The workers no longer thought of selling their labour power to Peel or any other capitalist. They all preferred to work for themselves, becoming farmers, traders, or independent artisans. Even the technical superiority of the imported instruments of production was of no advantage to Peel, for there were no hands willing to set these instruments in motion.

In contemporary Europe we may observe phenomena which strongly remind us of Peel's unhappy experiences, although nowhere can we witness, as in New Holland, a complete absence of proletarian labour power. Ehinger draws attention to the fact that in Spain, Italy, and Hungary, the great landed proprietors have for some years past been suffering from grave embarrassment. An unwelcome guest, the emigration agent, invades the loyal villages. The peasants hasten to pack up their goods, leaving in their hovels nothing but the bugs and the cattle in

which they have no proprietary rights. Vainly does the hardfisted landowner now offer concessions. The peasants speed away to the mighty steamer which awaits them in the nearest port. The departure of these poor devils who have the courage to abandon their homestead forever puts the landlord in a quandary, for the countryside is now depleted of proletarians. In certain tropical colonies the situation is hardly less perplexing for the capitalist. Many of the coloured races are skilled abortionists, and despite all the efforts of the missionaries to impress the members of these races with a proper sense of their duty, they cannot see why they should rear proletarian offspring for the use of the white capitalist.

No matter how unwilling we may be to admit the economic justification of the birth strike, we cannot deny that if it were generally practised by the European proletariat there would in the end be no proletariat left in Europe. The adoption of the one-child system would halve the population in each generation. Under such conditions capitalism could be upheld in no other way than by a miracle or by the import of Asiatic workers. But experience teaches that in all white men's countries the opposition of the workers and of the lesser employers to Asiatic immigration is so fierce that such immigration can never be long continued. Australia offers a typical example. Here Asiatics had invaded many industries, both as workers and as employers, and by the competition of their lower standard of life were making a decent life impossible for those of European origin. Wherever Asiatic employers became numerous, they were able, by paying lower wages, to drive the European employers

out of business. The European employers were, indeed, perfectly willing to engage Asiatics, but could not make a satisfactory use of their services owing to linguistic difficulties. When the European industrials had been ruined, and their white hands sought employment from yellow employers, the white men had to accept starvation wages. The Asiatic employers, in concubinage with white women, were rearing a bastard race. Thus, in the end, a European race-solidarity was produced, and the further importation of yellow labour was forbidden by law. It cannot be doubted that the extensive importation of Asiatic labour into Europe would be followed by similar results, and that Asiatic immigration would be prohibited even were Europe to become as thinly populated as Australia. Seeing that the introduction of Asiatics to compensate a dearth of European proletarians due to a birth strike is in the long run out of the question, and seeing that capitalist production could not be continued if the numbers of the proletariat were to undergo a steady diminution, the only remaining possibility, in those fields of great industry which have attained high technical development, would be the co-operative organisation of labour. Admit the possibility that the European proletariat could do away with itself by the birth strike, and we must also admit that this would put an end to the capitalist system, for capitalism cannot survive without the surplus value it extracts from the proletariat.

In view of these considerations, the supreme question for the German nation is this: what would be the consequences of a German birth strike? Those familiar with the high birth-rate and the low state of civilisation characteristic

of the eastern European peoples, cannot fail to contemplate this possibility with grave anxiety, for as far as the twentieth century is concerned the idea of a general European birth strike is utopian. The conditions in eastern Germany are instructive in this connection. Every year from the great landed properties eastward of the Elbe thousands of proletarians move westward to seek work in factories and mines. Thus, in the eastern districts, this mass migration of proletarian progeny has much the effect of a birth strike. The proletarians of the east procreate more abundantly than other Germans, but hardly have their offspring become ripe for the production of surplus value when the members of the younger generation take the road to the west. Proletarian migration within the German empire has thus depleted of proletarians the agricultural regions of the east, though we should go too far if we were to speak of an absolute lack of proletarians. For year by year, as soon as the winter snows have melted, the eastern provinces are invaded by trainloads of men and women from Galicia, Poland and Russia, who come by hundreds of thousands. Year by year, the majority return in the autumn to their Slav homes, but many remain. There are now in Germany 1,236,000 foreign proletarians, mostly of Slav origin. No protective legislation interferes with the importation of these foreign workers. Now, just as the proletarian exodus from the east has not sufficed to make this region a land without a proletariat, so also should we find in the German west that a birth strike would not permanently reduce the supply of labour below the demand. Immigration from the Slav lands of the east would soon fill the gaps resulting from the birth

strike. The danger, already existent, that the Germans will be ousted by the Slavs, would thereby be enormously accentuated. So long as Slav immigration is permitted, there is no prospect that the conditions of proletarian life in Germany will be bettered by means of the strike. They will, indeed, be worsened, for experience teaches that the continued influx of foreign labourers with a lower standard of life tends to depress wages. Individual families may secure greater material comfort by the successful adoption of the one-child or two-children system, but the proletariat as a class gains nothing. Should the apostles of the birth strike win the German workers over to their views, the German nation will go down to destruction. These are reasons enough, in my opinion, why we should discountenance Neo-Malthusianism, even in its latest guise, and however brilliantly and attractively it may be presented.

Apart from the question whether the birth strike is competent to improve the social position of German workers, we have to recognise that the campaign against the idea of birth-control must not be waged on this ground alone. Those who are indifferent whether Germany be peopled by German or by Slav workers, may see little objection to a systematic refusal to bear offspring. From the outlook of a misunderstood internationalism the contention may even be urged that it is a matter of indifference whether the proletarians who supply surplus value for German capital are the offspring of German or Slav loins. In my own opinion, however, although the idea of the birth strike was promulgated by reputed Marxists, it is impossible for a socialist to ignore the national side of the issue. Nor

could the national danger involved by the acceptance of this idea be averted by the prohibition of Slav immigration. A serious decline in the birth-rate would expose Germany to a dangerous limitation of her fighting forces, and no one can regard this as a guarantee of peace. Opposition to the birth strike is, primarily, a fight for national existence. This is a consideration which no socialist can venture to ignore.

DECLINE IN THE BIRTH-RATE NATIONALITY AND CIVILISATION

DECLINE IN THE BIRTH-RATE, NATIONALITY, AND CIVILISATION

By EDUARD BERNSTEIN

THE choice of the locution "birth strike" for the rehash of the somewhat ancient propaganda in favour of the deliberate restriction of births is an instance of the extent to which a luxuriant growth of sensationalism tends to stifle the desire for a golden mean in the matter of expression. When applied to actions, the word *strike* signifies a complete and conspicuous suspension of these. But the aim of the propaganda noisily initiated and heralded with this high-sounding catchword, is merely to advocate the practice of the old recipe of the Neo-Malthusians, restriction of births among the workers as a means for the improvement of their economic position. We cannot fail to recognise the good intentions of the new propagandists, but in truth the arguments they advance are not conspicuously better than those presented long ago by John Stuart Mill, and subsequently by Drysdale and others, in favour of the restriction of births by members of the working classes. Indeed, contemplated from their own outlook, the propaganda of the new enthusiasts is far less timely than was that of Mill and his school.

Half a century ago, when John Stuart Mill announced his conviction that restriction of births among the workers

would secure them a more favourable share of the national income, it was still possible to believe that there was a tendency to over-population, not in England alone, but in the greater part of Europe. In England, the birth-rate was extremely high, and the excess of births over deaths was considerably greater than in any other country in Europe. Moreover, Mill wrote for a land where the majority of the inhabitants continued to hold strict religious views, and where any attempt to interfere with the consequences of the sexual act was regarded as immoral. Thus it was that many of Mill's arguments dealt with the question from the ethical point of view. Besides, Mill was enmeshed in the dogmas of the wages-fund theory, the doctrine according to which the struggle between workers and employers always concerns the distribution of a wages-fund of a definite size. The believer in this theory was perfectly logical in holding that the most effective way to promote the welfare of the working class would be to reduce its numbers. If there are x workers and y means of subsistence, y being a constant quantity, every diminution in the number represented by x must increase the share of the individual in the national supply.

During Mill's lifetime, however, the wages-fund theory was already exploded. Even in England the strictness of puritanism has abated. A decline in the birth-rate is manifest throughout civilised Europe. Less than ever, therefore, is restriction of births in the economic interest of the working classes. From the economic standpoint, such restriction is significant solely in relation to the domestic balance-sheet of the individual worker or the

individual working-class family. In particular cases the worker will doubtless be better able to make ends meet if his family remain a small one, but it is no longer necessary to proclaim this to the workers from every public platform. A glance at the birth statistics will show that the result for which the Neo-Malthusians have so long and so zealously been working has been brought about by quiet and unobtrusive means, and not primarily by propagandists pointing a specific moral. It has been interesting to note how, in debates on the birth strike, speakers on either side have discussed generalities, or have wandered off into side issues, instead of systematically considering the economic and general social factors which influence the family life of the worker, and which ultimately prescribe the number of children it is desirable for him to have. Had the debaters followed this latter course it would soon have become apparent that the very conditions of modern existence, the perpetual rise in the standard of life, the increasing opportunities for amusement, enticing people away from a vegetative life between the four walls of the home, tend automatically to bring about a decrease in the number of children. I once jestingly observed: "A numerous family is not compatible with modern furniture." The build of the houses in which the workers have to live, the shrinkage in the size and number of playgrounds, the need for continuous life in the streets, have collaborated to make people dread the "blessing" of many children. Contributory influences in this direction are the increasing extent to which life is lived outside the home, and the growing desire for intellectual and artistic enjoyment. The old saying that to beget children is the poor

man's only pleasure, becomes ever less applicable to the working classes, the change being largely, though not exclusively, due to the labour movement. This movement exercises an influence in favour of the restriction of births, and it does so quite independently of any direct aid from the Malthusians. Owing to the unceasing demand for improved popular education, for the raising of the school age, for the prohibition of child labour, and for the restriction in the employment of young persons in manufacturing industry, the age has been progressively deferred at which the offspring can begin to contribute to the family income, can become accessory breadwinners; and these changes necessarily counteract the impulse to unrestricted procreation. In addition, the labour movement tends to deter the worker from spending his few hours of leisure in the public house, it leads him to think of the future, and it induces him to care for his children to the best of his ability. Wherever these changes are effected, a restriction of births automatically follows. It is obvious to any one who becomes intimate with the workers and who is concerned for the wellbeing of working-class families that the tendencies in this direction are now extremely strong, and that there has been a notable change in working-class opinion.

Thus agitators on behalf of the birth strike are merely knocking at an open door, fighting with empty arguments for that which already exists. In this matter of the restriction of births, other points have doubtless to be considered, such as various questions of personal and social hygiene, but these are mere details of practical application, questions of how, and how much, which do not in-

volve the principle *per se*. No reasonable person will wish that children should be brought recklessly into a world that has no room for them, nor will any one deny that instruction should be given regarding the essential prerequisites for the procreation of healthy offspring.

To admit, however, that in actual fact birth-control is already widely practised among the working classes, is not to say that the problem is completely solved. There is a seamy side to the matter, and perhaps more than one. At meetings where the birth strike is under discussion, opponents raise what they consider a decisive objection. The social revolution, they contend, can be effected only by an increase in the number of the workers, and to decimate the proletariat by the general inauguration of the birth strike would postpone to the Greek calends the attainment of the socialist goal. The social problem, they asseverate, "cannot be solved in the marriage bed." This last assertion is irrefutable, for the realisation of socialism will not be brought about by any single measure. But the main objection rests upon an economic fallacy resembling the wages-fund theory (of which it may be regarded as the counterpart), for the objectors overlook the fact that in a period of world-wide intercourse and of profound transformation in the mechanism of production, the need for human labour is not an inalterable quantity.

The objections brought forward by Ludwig Quessel to combat the idea that the birth strike will in any way alleviate the lot of the workers, are serious and are based upon facts that demand careful examination. Quessel aptly points out that where among a comparatively well-

to-do population the number of workers does not increase to a degree commensurate with the increase of the economic demand for labour, immigration of labour from economically backward countries ensues. Thereby, he says, wages are depressed, or at least a rise in wages is rendered impossible. On the American continent, the United States, in Europe, France, and in recent years, Germany, have all given examples of this. The increase in the number of foreign workers employed in Germany is well-known. In the census of employment of the year 1907 it was found that there were in Germany 799,863 foreign wage earners, and that more than half of these, 440,800, were employed in manufacturing and mining industries. At that time the total number of employés in manufacturing and mining industries was 8,593,000, so that something over 5 per cent were foreigners—a percentage by no means insignificant.

Now, has the presence of this 5 per cent of foreigners in the German labour market actually had the effect of depressing wages? There is an obvious temptation to answer the question in the affirmative, and as regards individual cases, which may speciously seem typical, an affirmative answer will almost certainly be given. But if the question be examined from a wide economic outlook, the conclusions that must be drawn will be found to differ from those of Quessel.

German statistics of occupation show that the number of skilled workers engaged in manufacturing and mining industries rose from 3,851,929 in 1895 to 4,944,009 in 1907. Thus, during a period wherein the total population of Germany had increased by no more than 19.22 per

cent, the increase in skilled workers in these departments amounted to 28.35 per cent. But the distinction between skilled and unskilled workers, as a basis of statistical classification, is open to serious criticism from a technical point of view. Those charged with taking the census, the employers of labour, and even the workers themselves, usually adopt the rate of wages as a criterion of "skill." But though the classification is thus technically indefensible, it is extremely convenient from that social outlook from which we are now contemplating the subject.

In the first place we see that in the period under consideration the rate of increase of highly paid workers outstrips that of the general population, and does so despite the increase in the number of foreign workers. It seems possible, moreover, and even probable, that we might say "*because* of the increase in the number of foreign workers." During this period the number of unskilled workers increased to a considerably greater extent than the number of skilled workers. The majority of foreign immigrants belonged to the unskilled category. Now in most industries there is a definite relationship between the number of skilled operatives it is possible to employ and the amount of unskilled labour available. Unless there be an adequate supply of unskilled labour, skilled labour lacks employment. The strict proof of this thesis by an analysis of the statistics of occupation would require a more detailed investigation than I am now able to undertake. But in so far as conclusions can be drawn from the data furnished by the census of occupations, we find that in the case of manufacturing industry the influx of foreign labour has not depressed, but has tended rather to elevate,

the wages of native workers. Those only whose habit it is to judge economic data from obvious externals will regard this as paradoxical. The outward phenomenal form and the ultimate economic significance of a process are fundamentally different. I do not ignore the injurious consequences which may ensue from the extensive immigration of workers from economically backward lands. But the temporary disadvantages to the native workers must not blind us to the fact that in the long run the influx of able-bodied people raises the general economic efficiency of the country, and must therefore prove advantageous to the native workers. Statistical proof of this can be secured in many countries. On the other hand it would be difficult to point to any country whose economic life as a whole has been injuriously affected by such immigration.

So much for the economic side of the question. Passing now to consider the national aspect of the matter, I differ strongly from Quessel, and am inclined to deny categorically that it has a national aspect at all. Certainly were the limitation of births to be carried to such lengths as to merit the designation of a birth strike, were it to lead to race suicide, then the fight might appropriately be termed a fight for national existence. But we are so far from such a possibility that no ground exists for speaking of a problem. What is of importance to us in the near future is the question to what extent an admixture of immigrant workers is likely to occur. We must definitely understand, in this connection, whether we intend to treat the question of nationality as one of civilisation or as one of race. As a socialist, I can admit the first conception only, and I

believe that I am justified in assuming the same of Quessel. But the passage in his essay which begins, "From the outlook of a misunderstood internationalism the contention may even be urged that it is a matter of indifference whether the proletarians who supply surplus value for German capital are the offspring of German or of Slav loins," admits of an interpretation to which I must demur. In this matter of immigration, the sole question which concerns us is that of assimilation, of the absorption of the immigrants into the civilisation of our own nation considered as an integral part of the great international commonwealth. If we abandon this outlook we place foot on a dangerous declivity, and shall slip down it into the abyss of nationalist exclusivism.

The peril thus indicated appears to me more imminent than that of the birth strike. There is a risk that we may lose our bearings amid the currents of nationalist agitation which encompass us. The most dangerous tendency of our day is the luxuriant overgrowth of the nationalist spirit. It is no exaggeration to say that herein we see the reaction of reactions, the movement wherein all other reactions are subsumed. For example, not only do the so-called national churches engage in nationalist propaganda, but the church of Rome likewise enters into the fray. At an epoch when social life in general is more international in spirit than ever before, we find that in political literature nationalist catchwords exercise unprecedented influence. In the domain of practical politics, moreover, alike legislative and administrative, the tone is set by a nationalism narrower-minded than that of any earlier date, a nationalism that tends to degenerate into

the extremest exclusivism. I am, of course, aware that Germany is not the only country touched with this evil, but that others are similarly affected in varying degree. But our internationalism must be maintained intact; we must make no concessions; we must beware of sacrificing any part of our intellectual gains on the shrine of this false sentimentality.

We do not deny nationality; we do not deny that the state which represents nationality may have specific national interests; we are willing in case of need to take our share of national service. But if we forget that the nation is but the limb of a greater organism, this omission may lead us to the fatal sacrifice of the grand historical task of socialism. Although this greater organism is not as yet consolidated into a compact state structure, it is none the less sufficiently developed to endow its adherents with a higher degree of spiritual and material solidarity. I am thinking not only of the working-class international, but also of the great family of nations and nationalities which combine to form what is known as European civilisation. Though it is possible to maintain that humanity as a whole is still too amorphous to constitute a political entity, this objection cannot be sustained in the case of the European peoples. So intimate is the intellectual and economic intercourse among these peoples, so numerous are the threads of common interest by which they are interconnected, that they have attained to a higher degree of unity than was exhibited by those world empires that were held together solely by the force of arms. Unless we conceive nationality as a limb of this greater unity, we

shall drift rudderless between the Scylla of nationalism and the Charybdis of a formless internationalism.

When we endeavour to give a precise definition of the term nation, we find that we have to regard the nation as no more than the ideal product of historical and environmental tendencies. This view is accordant, not merely with socialist thought, but also with the assured results of sociological research, while it conflicts sharply with the doctrines of those socialists who talk so glibly about "race." The widely trumpeted theories that special racial endowments exist, and that these endowments have been decisive factors in history, have crumbled to nothing. Above all, the speculations regarding a connection between race and the form of the skull have had to yield to scientific criticism. It is doubtful if a pure race can be said to exist anywhere in the civilised world, and it is certain that no civilised nation is composed of one stock to so overwhelming a degree as to warrant the use of the term race as equivalent to nation. Wherever we look we find an intimate admixture of races. Darwin long ago pointed out that the races of man are not sufficiently differentiated to be able to exist side by side without mingling. In a weighty book, which discusses nationality principally from the outlook of the history of civilisation, Techet remarks in illustration of Darwin's theory: "For lack of knowledge we are unable to make any comparison between a mixed race and a pure race. When we speak of a pure race, we are using an erroneous expression to describe a mixed race whose characters have become fixed. Such terms as 'pure bred' and 'race become pure' are unmeaning when applied to human divisions, for when after many

minglings a race ultimately attains to an approximately stable form, it is still improper to speak of it as 'pure.' " Elsewhere he writes: "The whole history of Europe testifies to the wholesome effect of racial admixture effected under favourable conditions, and it also proves that no race has ever created a progressive civilisation without a certain admixture of foreign blood. Every civilisation in the world has been built up by racial minglings. For example, the contention that the Germans, had they been able to keep to themselves, and to avoid the infusion of Slav, Latin, and Celtic blood, might have attained an unprecedented and fabulous development of faculty—is an utterly erroneous one, conflicting with the whole history of civilisation. . . . There is no ground whatever for the belief that in the future the mingling of races will be replaced by a process of purification. We must rather say that the admixture of races is likely to proceed more rapidly, above all among the peoples of European civilisation."[1]

This sequence of ideas is more worthy of close investigation than is the cry of distress which Roosevelt, the imperialist, has raised concerning race suicide. Birth-control makes its appearance whenever civilisation attains a certain level. Doubtless restriction of births will not furnish a socialist solution of the social problem, and were it not that immigration compensates for the deficiency of offspring, such restriction would hinder economic progress. But the movement must be far more widespread before it will become permissible to speak of a serious dan-

[1] Techet, *Völker, Vaterländer und Fürsten,* Munich, 1913, pp. 149 and 162.

ger to national existence. The socialist aim must rather be to favour those political changes whereby the immigrant worker will be welcomed and uplifted to become a fellow partaker in the national civilisation.

PHILOSOPHY OF THE BIRTH STRIKE

PHILOSOPHY OF THE BIRTH STRIKE

By Ludwig Quessel

THE philosophy of the birth strike is at once practical and ideal, at once sober and fantastical. The philosophers of the strike are practical and sober-minded when they assure the workers that by refraining from having children an increase in material wellbeing may be secured. The larger the number of persons among whom the proletarian's income is shared, the lower will be the standard of life. No matter how much we may appreciate the joys of parenthood, the fact remains that the duration of life and the vital efficiency of working-class children are profoundly influenced by the relationship between the available means of subsistence (food, clothing, shelter and care) and the number of those among whom these means have to be divided. It is also true that though increase of wages may be secured by an arduous struggle with the employer, any advantage that might have accrued thereby may be annulled by the addition of another child to the family circle. The upholders of the small family system maintain that an income of £75 a year provides as much and more for a childless married pair than £85 would provide for man and wife with two children. This appears incontestable, for every board of guardians knows that £10 per annum is the minimum that will supply the needs of one orphan. When certain socialist opponents of

the birth strike ventured in public to ignore this indisputable fact, the women among the audience at a public meeting in Berlin were justifiably incensed. No more than socialism itself, can the birth strike be refuted by the denial of obvious facts. The argument that in rural districts families can be reared less expensively no longer carries weight in Germany, for during recent decades the influx into the towns has been continuous, and German life is now predominantly urban. Nor is it possible, as an argument against the birth strike, to encourage the hope that the necessaries of life will become cheaper. Sering was right when, on February 9th, 1912, at a meeting of the Committee on Rural Economy, he declared: "The pressure formerly exercised upon the prices of cereals and cattle by the existence of land on the margin of cultivation will never again be operative, for all virgin soil has now been brought under the plough." It is suggested that the means of subsistence may be increased by intensive culture, but under such conditions prices will remain stable or will rise; they will certainly not fall. With good reason do agricultural economists reckon upon a further increase in the world-prices of the means of subsistence. Persons, consequently, who consider material wellbeing the leading need of the working classes can find no valid arguments with which to counter those who advocate the birth strike.

However sober-minded and practical the philosophers of the birth strike may be when they demonstrate to the worker that, without any personal sacrifice, and merely by voluntary sterility, he may improve his natural wellbeing and may enjoy a far higher standard of life than

his fellows who procreate without restriction, they are no less fantastical and visionary in the exposition of their reasons for desiring to cut proletarian life at the root. The denial of the will to live on the part of proletarians derives from Schopenhauer, whose philosophy has received a very peculiar interpretation at neo-malthusian hands. Whereas with Schopenhauer the denial of the will to live is a purely spiritual process, not one inducing activity of any kind, but leading rather to quietism, renunciation, and resignation, in the case of those up-to-date Neo-Malthusians whose war-cry is the birth strike, the denial of the will to live is a form of socialist activity, a means of direct action whereby they hope to destroy the ancient structure of bourgeois society. This phenomenon is most plainly manifest in France. The French apostles of the birth strike spread pamphlets and leaflets broadcast among the working classes; they hold meetings in public and in private; they organise courses of medical instruction at which young working women are taught the means of birth-control; and they carry on everywhere an active trade in means for the prevention of conception.[1] Though this active propaganda against working-class procreation seems so alien to the philosophy of Schopenhauer, yet it cannot be denied that the new theory has much in common with his views. According to Schopenhauer, all life, all existence, is an evil. Witness our almshouses, invalid homes, and hospitals; witness all the poverty and illness with which we are confronted, and which no amount of fine words can conceal from us. There seems to be no

[1] Cf. Bertillon, *La depopulation de la France*, Paris, 1911, pp. 218 et seq.

possibility of doing away with or even essentially mitigating the misery of existence. Schopenhauer's contention is that the progress of civilisation makes men cleverer and more refined, but not a whit better or happier. On the contrary, with the advance of culture and with increasing knowledge, the misery of existence is felt more keenly. If, notwithstanding these considerations, very few persons throw off existence as an unbearable burden, this is because the inborn will to live is stronger than the philosophical reason which denies the value of life. By the denial of the will to live Schopenhauer becomes an opponent of marriage, for by marriage new beings are brought into the world to suffer the misery of existence. We learn from the philosopher's disciples that with all the power of his eloquence he endeavoured to dissuade them from marriage. Schopenhauer remained true to his own teaching, passing his prime in the company of a faithful poodle and a morose elderly housekeeper. He died childless. Once in youth he seems to have experienced temptation, but when he came to set down on paper the pros and cons, the column recording the objections to marriage was soon overwhelmingly full.

The philosophers of the birth strike differ from Schopenhauer in that they do not deny the value of life *per se,* but merely the value of proletarian life. Nor does their philosophy lead to renunciation and self-denial in the sexual sphere. They regard as purposeless and irrational, even as immoral, the struggle against the power of the senses, and they consider that they do good work by instructing proletarian women how to renounce childbearing without denying themselves any of the joys of

love. Why should new lives be awakened to the miseries of working-class existence? Let the possessing classes, whose days are an unceasing round of beauty and joy, see to the perpetuation of the race, since for them life is really worth living. In the case of ninety per cent at least of the working class it would be better had they never been born, for their existence is squalid and miserable. Neo-Malthusians present us with a picture of proletarian misery even more horrible than that limned by the anarchising socialists. "The life of our working classes," writes Drysdale, "is worse than that of most of the beasts of burden. They toil unremittingly for ten or twelve hours a day, at a laborious, monotonous, and in many cases a deadly occupation; without hope of advancement, or personal interest in the success of the work they are engaged in. At night their jaded frames are too tired to permit their enjoyment of the few leisure hours; and the morn wakens them to the same dreary day of ceaseless toil. . . . This shows us that a deeply rooted scepticism on human affairs, for which so many thinkers have been blamed, is in reality the only view warranted by the real state of matters." [2]

The Neo-Malthusians are thus led to the conclusion that it would be far better not to live at all than to live as proletarians. But they are not, as was Schopenhauer, averse from marriage. All sexual relationships with the exception of marriage are, says Drysdale, full of miseries, disappointments, and ignominy. Marriage alone can provide a free and dignified sexual life for man. This con-

[2] George Drysdale, *Elements of Social Science*, 35th edition, Standring, London, 1905, pp. 332 and 339.

ception is shared by the modern enthusiasts for birth-control, yet their ideal of sexual companionship for the proletariat is not found in marriage as hitherto known, but in a voluntary sterile marriage, one which shall not call into existence any new proletarian life. Thus, in the philosophy of the birth strike, the ideas of Schopenhauer recur, though strangely distorted. Schopenhauer, who was under no illusions regarding the power of the sexual impulse, believed that nothing short of a miracle could release humanity from the miseries of existence. The modern enthusiasts for birth-control, being men of action, wish to bring this miracle about. But they do not remain faithful to the teaching of the master, for they desire to abolish, not life in general, but only working-class life, the life of poverty, slavery, and degradation, considering that such an existence is not worth living. In no other way, they contend, than through the annihilation of proletarian life can the philosophy of optimism once more come into its own. In truth, it is not the working class alone which suffers from the oppression of proletarian misery. The gloomy atmosphere of poverty permeates modern life in its entirety and sensitive members of the privileged class are influenced by this atmosphere, and are unable to take an unalloyed delight in existence.

Modern as the movement may appear, it is not without precursors. In the days of classical antiquity, indeed, the idea of restricting births seems to have affected the possessing classes alone. In ancient Rome, down to the destruction of the empire, the lower classes were especially distinguished as those who bred without restraint, and this is the origin of the term "proletariat." He who

could call nothing his own but his children, he who bequeathed nothing to posterity but his offspring was *proletarius*. Lack of other worldly goods and rich endowment in the matter of offspring, were the essential characteristics of this class, and the needier the proletariat the more fruitful was it. We have no record of any philosophising concerning the purpose of existence on the part of members of this class.

Not until the middle of the eighteenth century, in the writings of the physiocrats, does such philosophising first make its appearance. French peasant farmers, who could call neither house, nor farm, nor cattle their own, being asked why their families were so small, made answer: "Is it worth while to bring children into the world that they may endure so miserable an existence?" The reply was full of weariness and resignation, but it aroused grave anxiety at Versailles. For centuries it had been taken as a matter of course that the nobleman's land would continue to bring forth increase, this increase including its stock of human serfs. But it now became evident that even among the lowest strata of the French people the difference between sexual union and procreation had been recognised. The miserable peasant farmer had begun to make the production of offspring dependent upon social considerations. Since the days of the physiocrats, the idea of optional sterility, which underlies that of the birth strike, has made continuous progress in France. Church and state may rail as they please against the two-children system; the French people clings firmly to its practical philosophy of life, and will not swerve from the convic-

tion that to have more than two children is to endanger the material wellbeing of the family.

In Germany as late as the beginning of the nineteenth century, even among the bourgeoisie, infant mortality was the only regulator of the population. The proletariat begat so recklessly that year by year infants to the number of hundreds of thousands, insufficiently nourished and badly cared for, fell like blighted buds from the tree of humanity. Under the influence of the malthusian doctrine that population tends ever to press upon the means of subsistence, the idea of a restriction of births began to make its way into Germany. Schleiermacher attempted to provide a moral foundation for the notion of birth-control; and he formulated a new commandment, "thou shalt not heedlessly create life." But the sexual ethics of Schleiermacher did not permeate the general population. His ideas remained an esoteric doctrine of the upper classes, who gradually learned to protect themselves from the pressure of life by restricting the size of their families. Throughout the nineteenth century, German workers remained ignorant of neo-malthusian philosophy. Leading a perfectly natural sexual life such as is characteristic of aspiring peoples, the German proletariat furnished such a wealth of offspring for the purposes of capitalist production that the growth of the population was enormous. It was not until the end of the nineteenth century that a change became manifest. Per thousand inhabitants, during the decade 1871-1880, the births numbered 40.7; during the decade of 1901-1910, they numbered 33.9; during the year 1911, they had fallen to 29.5. The fall in the German birth-rate during the first decade of the twentieth

century is so remarkable, especially if the urban population be separately considered, that it is no longer possible to doubt that enlightenment as to the methods of birth-control has spread among the working classes. Just like the French peasant farmer of a hundred and fifty years ago, the German operative is beginning to ask himself whether the calling of new human beings into life is likely to bring happiness to him or to his household. He answers this question with an emphatic negative. It is true that in the decline of the German birth-rate we see as yet no more than a weak manifestation of the refusal to procreate, but the change in the outlook upon the sexual life is unmistakable, and the ingenuous naturalness which regulated proletarian sex relations during the nineteenth century has passed away for ever. A new epoch of sexual philosophy and morality is dawning.

Can this development be arrested? At the outset we must make it perfectly clear that we have to do with an intellectual movement against which compulsory measures will be fruitless. An optimistic philosophy may be opposed to the pessimistic conceptions which prevail among the proletarian enthusiasts for birth-control, but we cannot expect that the optimist will convince the pessimist. The pious Christian and the Neo-Malthusian are both impressed with the philosophical conviction that this earth is a vale of tears. The former looks forward to the joys of a future life, whereas the latter endeavours to make pessimism endurable by the contemplation of a brighter temporal future in a society without a proletariat. The conflict between pessimism and optimism has existed since the dawn of thought, making its appearance in ever new

forms. The individual's choice between these two philosophies is dependent, partly upon his natural temperament, and partly upon the social conditions of his personal environment. Whilst the economics of the birth strike can be critically examined and refuted in detail, the philosophy of this same strike is, in ultimate analysis, an affair of feeling and of belief, and is therefore impregnable to purely rational considerations. It is, further, indubitable that a pessimistic estimate of working-class life will secure increasing acceptance during an epoch in which the masses find it ever more difficult to maintain their standard of life if they have large families. Unquestionably the philosophy of the birth strike is one well calculated to gain adherents in times when rising prices and an increasing difficulty in securing employment impose such grave difficulties upon working-class housekeeping. It remains for the future to show whether the optimist views of socialism will be strong enough to form an effective counterpoise, and thus to protect the nation from the dangers which a refusal to bear children inevitably involves. One thing, at least, is clear. The diffusion of a knowledge of birth-control among the working class opens a new epoch in the history of European humanity, and foreshadows noticeable changes in social and moral life. It is impossible to contemplate this turning point in human history altogether without concern.

Of all the dangers involved in the adoption of birth-control, the greatest in my opinion lies in the domain of nationality. Eduard Bernstein, it is true, refuses to admit the national danger of the declining birth-rate, and even goes so far as to deny that there is any occasion to

speak of a national danger at all. The extensive immigration of Slav workmen to take part in agriculture, mining, and manufacturing industry, seems to him a matter of no importance so long as we succeed in assimilating the immigrants, in incorporating them into the framework of our own civilisation. I admit that racial differences between the white nations are not sufficiently great to impose any serious difficulties in the way of such a process of assimilation. But the important question is whether the Slav workers will allow themselves to be assimilated.

Language is the essential basis of every national culture. In conjunction with its artistic and literary irradiations, language constitutes so important a constituent of civilisation, that it is impossible to conceive of any community of culture without a community of tongues. To me, at any rate, it seems inconceivable that a man who does not know the tongue of Kant and Goethe can be accepted into the civilisation of the German people. No doubt the German language can be learned, and in this way a unifying bond can be created between the German and the Slav workers living in Germany. But the period during which the Slav immigrants were willing to accept unresistingly the language of the country in which they were seeking a livelihood, has long passed away. To-day national sentiment among the Slav workman is so powerful that we can no longer hope to win them for the German language and thus for German civilisation. The upshot of Slav immigration can best be studied in the manufacturing districts of Rhenish Westphalia, where whole areas have already become Slav enclaves hermetically closed not only to official German civilisation, but

also to the cultural activities of German socialist workmen. It is simply impossible to talk here of assimilation, and German socialists have no ground for believing that they will succeed where the Prussian elementary schools have failed. Now, when two nations speaking different tongues live side by side on the same territory, and when their civilisations are of equal rank, continuous friction arises. It is in this case, perhaps, that the contrast of nationalities first becomes manifest in its fullest intensity. It is impossible to obviate national conflicts by the granting of autonomy, for it is impossible to administer one and the same area simultaneously after the German and the Slav manner. In view of Austrian experience in this matter of national struggles, it is hardly possible to doubt that a population riven asunder by national contrasts has its progress in civilisation gravely imperilled. When the foreign immigrants have a lively sentiment of nationality, the assimilation on their part of their hosts' civilisation becomes impossible. If German socialism, following Bernstein's desire, were to institute a campaign on behalf of political changes whereby the Slav immigrants would be made fellow-partakers in German civilisation, the only result would be to incur the deadly hostility of these same immigrants.

I admit that foreign immigration, extensive and alarming as it already is, does not yet constitute a grave national danger. But such a danger would certainly arise if, owing to a decline in the German birth-rate, foreign immigration were to attain to vaster proportions. Those even who are free from national prejudice will refuse to regard with equanimity the danger of the appearance on

German soil of a population speaking different tongues. In my own view such a phenomenon would be of far-reaching and momentous significance, and in comparison therewith numerous matters about which public opinion is now greatly exercised seem to me of trifling importance. Inasmuch as indications of the genesis of a mixed population, speaking different tongues, are already manifest both in the west and in the east of the German empire, and since the further progress of this movement cannot fail to lead to a violent struggle of nationalities, it would be utterly wrong-headed of German socialists to close their eyes to these possibilities. In my opinion, one of the important duties of socialists is, in the interest of peace between the nations, and while there is still time to take effective measures, to counteract that confusion of the nations which is a characteristic outcome of capitalism.

OVER-POPULATION AS A CAUSE OF WAR

OVER-POPULATION AS A CAUSE OF WAR

By B. DUNLOP

BEFORE August, 1914, few people seemed willing to consider the proposition that high birth-rates are the fundamental cause of war. Yet, in view of the notable and continuous decline in the birth-rate in most civilised countries, this theory was a most encouraging one. It was, moreover, no more than an extension to social problems of the great principle of evolution which had been accepted in all other departments of biology. The reproduction of animals in constant great excess of their means of subsistence is recognised to result inevitably in a struggle for existence. The normal consequence is to force the unfortunate or the unfit out of the race; occasionally, as among ants, the struggle for existence takes the form of that organised strife known as war.

Man, like the lower animals, has been subject to the operation of malthusian checks, for his birth-rate must rarely if ever have been less than 35 per thousand per annum. This means that there has been a continuous tendency for human population to increase at the rate of at least 25 per thousand per annum, although prior to the nineteenth century increase in the food supply can rarely have been effected at a higher rate than 5 per thousand per annum, which very low rate is still that for

the world as a whole. Thus there has always been a high death-rate, and an excess of population for the current means of subsistence.

High birth-rates caused poverty, poverty created unrest, unrest led to migrations or wars. Consequently man's history has largely been one of migrations and wars. But it seems to be part of his evolution that he should remain blind as long as possible to the real cause of his distress; thus, for example, he often believed that he was fighting only for his religion. The great Greek philosophers partially realised the problem, but it was not until the French Revolution gave birth to communism, and this doctrine in its turn stimulated Malthus to formulate his anti-communistic theories, that niggardly nature was clearly shown to be the real enemy. Though Darwin was thus led to discover the principle of evolution, the malthusian doctrine as applied to man was almost eclipsed for many years by the industrial revolution. Yet, in sum, the changes that now ensued served merely to enable the manufacturing nations to advance the rate of increase of food supply from the previous 5 to between 10 and 15 per thousand per annum—whereas, as already stated, their high birth-rate really required at the very least an annual increase of food of 25 per thousand if poverty was to be avoided.

Napoleon is said to have remarked that the French must either reduce their birth-rate or make war. After the Revolution they adopted the former course; and in 1876, or in some cases a little later, all neighbouring countries began to follow the French example. But in Germany a birth-rate of over 30 per thousand per annum

BIRTH RATES OF VARIOUS COUNTRIES—1906-1910

long persisted, giving rise to much poverty and unrest, and inducing extensive preparations for territorial expansion. In 1901, however, the German birth-rate began to fall at record speed, and after 1909 one felt that if peace should last a few years longer it would continue indefinitely so far as western Europe alone was concerned. But, alas, in 1914, the war that had been so long prepared for broke out.

Now look at the map which C. V. Drysdale has kindly allowed me to reproduce here and which he well calls his "War Map of Europe." It will be seen that, consistently with the foregoing rather compressed argument, the war began among the high birth-rate countries—Germany, Austria, Serbia, and Russia; and that Belgium, France, and England (like Norway, Sweden, Holland, Denmark, and Switzerland, which have also been foremost in the movement towards pacifism) were low birth-rate countries.

My conclusion is that there will continue to be great danger of war so long as any large and progressive country has a birth-rate of over 30 per thousand per annum. And in case any one might still be inclined to scorn the scientific evolutionary contention that high birth-rates are the fundamental cause of war I shall close by asking this question: Can you imagine war occurring if no one in the world had more than two children?

THE DECLINE IN THE BIRTH-RATE

THE DECLINE IN THE BIRTH-RATE

By R. MANSCHKE

IN the discussion of the possible causes of the decline in the birth-rate, little consideration has hitherto been paid to the question whether a contributory and perhaps the principal cause may not be a decline in fertility. The existence of such a decline can in fact be definitely proved. The statistical material upon which the thesis of a decline in fertility may be based is far from being so scanty as might be imagined. Most important of all are the Badenese statistics. In Baden, for every 1,000 deliveries there were:

Period	Miscarriages	Premature Births	Irregular Births and Operative Deliveries
1870–1875	12.4	....	....
1876–1880	14.7	34.1	63.3
1881–1885	17.4	36.6	72.9
1886–1890	22.8	38.3	89.5
1891–1895	22.7	36.0	89.2
1896–1898	23.9	36.2	94.0
1899–1900	25.2	36.0	98.4
1901–1902	25.9	37.1	102.9
1903–1904	27.6	36.5	105.8
1905–1906	29.7	39.0	111.4
1907–1908	31.6	40.3	112.5
1909–1910	32.5	40.0	113.2
1911	41.7	45.6	117.6

Thus during forty years the number of miscarriages has increased more than threefold, the number of irregular births and operative deliveries has almost doubled, while the premature births have augmented by more than a third. If we classify miscarriages and premature births with the other anomalies, we find that the frequency of all anomalies has almost doubled, rising from 11.2% to the high figure of 20.5% during the brief period from 1876-80 to 1911. The suggestion that the increase in operative cases is due to improved midwifery can hardly be sustained, for the reports refer only to deliveries attended by doctors or midwives, all other cases being excluded. Moreover, it is the more serious manipulations and operations which have most notably increased.

Per 1,000 premature and full time deliveries, cases of artificial premature delivery, craniotomy, dismemberment of the fœtus, and Cæsarean section, occurred as follows:

Period	Cases
1870–1875	0.96
1876–1880	0.95
1881–1885	1.61
1886–1890	2.16
1891–1895	2.31
1896–1898	2.51
1899–1900	2.63
1901–1902	3.13
1903–1904	3.28
1905–1906	3.78
1907–1908	3.67
1909–1910	5.09
1911	5.65

More especially in those towns which are in general characterised by a very low birth-rate, premature births

and miscarriages, operative assistance during child-birth, and above all severe operations, are strikingly common. In the town of Mannheim, for example, during the year 1911, miscarriages numbered 8.73% of all deliveries; in Weinheim, 8.90%; in Constance, 6.64%; in Lörrach, 6.80%. It is improbable that in these cases we have to do with the deliberate production of abortion, for we are concerned here with miscarriages attended by midwives or doctors, and therefore miscarriages which occurred at a comparatively advanced stage of pregnancy.

Agnes Bluhm reports an increase of operative interference during delivery for the town of Hamburg, accompanied by an increased mortality:

Period	Operations Per Hundred Deliveries	Number of Maternal Deaths		Number of Infantile Deaths	
		Per Hundred Operations	Per Thousand Deliveries	Per Hundred Operations	Per Thousand Births
1885–1889	4.74	4.14	1.96	22.91	10.70
1890–1894	5.15	3.72	2.01	21.11	10.72
1895–1899	6.32	3.30	2.08	19.29	12.97
1900–1904	6.99	4.80	3.35	18.69	12.90
1905–1909	7.49	5.21	3.91	18.08	13.65

Thus improvements in midwifery have not been able to prevent an increase in the maternal and infantile deaths. As in Baden, so here, there has been an increase in the number of premature births (see page 204).

Moreover, as far as statistics are available concerning infantile deaths due to congenital developmental defects, we find that in this case also the increase has been rapid and unmistakable, above all in England.

Year	Premature Births Per 100 Births	Deaths from Debility Per 100 Infants Born Alive
1905	5.82	3.05
1906	5.76	3.66
1907	5.96	3.71
1908	6.44	3.90
1909	6.47	4.06

Of a thousand infants born alive, there died of congenital developmental defects:

Period	England and Wales	Scotland	Ireland
1856–1860	1.67[1]	1.13	....
1861–1865	1.76	1.54	....
1866–1870	1.82	1.84	0.40
1871–1875	1.85	2.19	0.25
1876–1880	2.80	2.40	0.29
1881–1885	3.23	2.76	0.76
1886–1890	3.39	3.19	0.83
1891–1895	3.86	3.65	0.92
1896–1900	4.18	3.95	1.23
1901–1905	6.12	5.42	2.79

For the British Colonies in Australia the figures were as follows:

Period	New South Wales	Victoria	Queensland	S. Australia	W. Australia
1891–1895	3.39	3.67	4.02	3.27	1.07
1901–1905	4.63	5.51	8.50	2.88	4.40

In Ireland, where, though the birth-rate is very low, infantile mortality being minimal, conjugal fertility is

[1] 1858-1860.

high, cases of congenital developmental defect are rarer than elsewhere in Great Britain, though here also they are increasing. It must be noted that in England, notwithstanding the great increase of deaths due to congenital developmental defects, there has been a continuous decline in infantile mortality in general.

If the deaths from congenital debility be classed with the deaths from developmental defects, the increase is even more striking. Of 1,000 infants born alive, there died of congenital debility and congenital developmental defects:

Period	England and Wales	Ireland	Netherlands
1858–1860.....	12.7	....	....
1861–1865.....	13.0	....	....
1866–1870.....	13.4	1.9	....
1871–1875.....	14.4	1.8	....
1876–1880.....	16.6	2.1	6.2
1881–1885.....	17.4	3.4	5.2
1886–1890.....	19.5	4.0	5.2
1891–1895.....	22.3	4.6	9.6
1896–1900.....	23.8	6.4	10.2
1901–1905.....	26.5	9.2	22.8

In Prussia, too, notwithstanding a notable decline in infantile mortality, a similar phenomenon is discernible. Of 1,000 infants born alive, there died in Prussia from congenital debility and from congenital developmental defects. The number given at top of page 206.

Thus, after a trifling decline in the extraordinarily high rate, there occurs a fresh increase in the death-rate. It must be remembered that were it not for skilled assistance

Period	
1876–1880	31.1
1881–1885	34.2
1886–1890	34.7
1891–1895	36.3
1896–1900	37.4
1901–1905	36.4
1906	34.8
1907	35.3
1910	35.9
1911	38.6

at child-birth, which is available especially in the towns, the deaths would probably have been far more numerous.

In the following circles in Prussia (1911), conditions are especially bad:

Circle	Infantile Mortality per 100 Born Alive	Deaths from Infantile Debility Per 100 Born Alive	Births Per 1,000 Inhabitants
Culm	23.0	9.17	38.4
Brandenburg-on-the-Havel	24.3	6.07	23.7
Adelnau	19.8	8.83	39.3
Schmiegel	13.6	6.83	37.6
Kempen in Posen	18.1	8.74	38.6
Stanislau	20.3	8.38	32.9
Rosenberg in Upper Silesia	17.5	8.92	36.2
Tost-Gleiwitz	22.0	8.32	39.1
Beuthen Land	22.9	8.43	44.4
Osterholz	18.1	6.36	28.6
Sigmaringen	17.4	5.96	27.5
Haigerloch	26.2	6.54	31.3

The table shows that in some of these circles the birth-rate is comparatively low. The objection may however be raised that in general the causes of the high infantile mortality are a high birth-rate, lack of skilled assistance in child-birth, and the like. A table may therefore be given to show the conditions that prevail in such backward regions as Galicia and Dalmatia.

Prefecture	Total Number of Births During 1910	Birth-rate Per 1,000 Inhabitants in 1910	Deaths from Infantile Debility Per 100 Born Alive	Percentage of Women Delivered in 1900 Without the Assistance of Either Doctor or Qualified Midwife
Bohorodczany...	3167	46.1	0.13	77.7
Zolkiew.....	4020	40.7	0.10	79.1
Bencovac.....	2207	50.7	0.23	95.2
Imotsky.....	2085	50.1	0.00	97.1
Jaslo.....	2975	34.0	0.20	86.3
Limanowa.....	3003	37.2	0.17	96.0
Skalat.....	3523	36.9	0.09	81.2

Such instances are by no means isolated. Speaking generally, in Galicia, Bukowina, and in the greater part of Dalmatia, deaths from infantile debility are extremely rare, whilst in Prussia there is not a single district where the frequency of deaths from this cause is less than 1.5 per hundred born alive. Among all the governmental districts of Prussia, those in which the infantile death-rate is (comparatively) low are shown in the following table:

Governmental District	Birth-rate Per 1,000 Inhabitants for 1911	Deaths from Infantile Debility for 1911 Per 100 Born Alive
Oppeln	39.3	6.14
Sigmaringen	27.5	5.99
Allenstein	33.9	5.17
Posen	36.3	5.11
Danzig	36.3	4.63
Bromberg	38.0	4.58
Marienwerder	37.1	4.26
Magdeburg	26.8	4.25
Breslau	31.3	4.24
Stralsund	29.6	4.16
Sleswig	27.4	4.10
Potsdam	23.4	4.00
Cassel	27.6	1.77
Aurich	30.2	2.19
Coblenz	28.1	2.56
Luneburg	26.6	2.60
Hildesheim	26.2	2.61
Osnabrück	32.5	2.62
Wiesbaden	24.3	2.62
Köslin	31.4	2.70
Hanover	24.8	2.70
Minden	29.9	3.11
Erfurt	27.8	3.18
Treves	33.4	3.29

The corresponding figures for Bavaria for the year 1910 are given on page 209.

In Prussia taken as a whole, with a birth-rate of 30.2, there died during the year 1911, of infantile debility, per hundred born alive, 3.85; in Bavaria the figures for 1910 were, birth-rate 32.4, deaths per cent from infantile debility 5.62; whereas in Austria for the year 1910, with a birth-rate of 33.4, the deaths from infantile debility per

District	Birth-rate Per 1,000 Inhabitants	Deaths from Infantile Debility Per 100 Born Alive
Upper Bavaria	30.4	6.08
Lower Bavaria	37.8	8.44
Palatinate	32.8	3.29
Upper Palatinate	37.2	6.40
Upper Franconia	30.5	4.92
Middle Franconia	30.0	4.73
Lower Franconia	30.8	4.06
Swabia	32.4	6.72

hundred born alive were only 2.40. The conditions prevailing in the individual provinces of Austria are shown in the following table:

Province	Birth Rate Per 1,000 Inhabitants	Deaths from Infantile Debility per 100 Born Alive
Lower Austria	25.2	3.28
Upper Austria	29.5	3.61
Salzburg	30.9	3.83
Styria	30.5	1.56
Carinthia	32.5	4.53
Carniola	34.7	3.34
Trieste	33.9	5.50
Görz and Gradisca	40.1	8.59
Istria	40.1	3.62
Tyrol	32.4	2.35
Vorarlberg	29.3	2.45
Bohemia	29.4	3.25
Moravia	32.6	3.19
Silesia	35.0	1.30
Galicia	39.7	1.14
Bukowina	40.7	1.11
Dalmatia	42.3	3.00 [2]

[2] The mortality in Dalmatia, if the prefectures of Zara and Knin be excepted, is 1.78.

If, in Austria, with the exception of Dalmatia, the general infantile mortality be high notwithstanding the low mortality from infantile debility, the reasons must be sought elsewhere.

Somewhat similar results are furnished by an examination of the comparative frequency of still-births. The still-births per 1,000 births were as follows:

	Sweden	Denmark	Prussia	Bavaria	Austria	Belgium	France	Italy
1896–1900..	25.5	24.4	32.3	29.9	28.1	44.6	45.8	40.7
1901–1905..	26.0	23.7	30.8	28.8	26.5	43.5	45.2	42.9
1910 ..	....	23.1	29.6	27.0	24.6	43.4	44.4	42.1

	Spain	Portugal	Netherlands	Switzerland	Russia in Europe	Serbia	Rumania	Bulgaria	Japan
1896–1900..	....	9.9	43.4	35.1	3.5	11.8	15.4	5.6	88.3
1901–1905..	24.9	14.6	40.8	34.8	....	21.4	19.3	5.7	93.6
1910 ..	....	....	39.0	32.6	....	....	26.5	....	86.5

It thus appears that in the countries of western Europe still-births are far more frequent than in Russia or Bavaria. The deliberate production of abortion has nothing to do with the figures, for miscarriages are not registered at all. In all these cases we have to do with the still-birth of infants which have lived at least until the seventh month in the mother's womb.

Especially unfavourable is the relationship if we compare the figures for certain restricted areas with those for Galicia and Dalmatia. The statistics of the following Prussian circles are exceptionally bad (1911):

Circle	Birth-rate	Still-births Per Hundred Births
Jüterbog-Luckenwalde	22.0	4.65
Lübben	23.6	4.52
Trebnitz	30.7	4.96
Guhrau	33.0	4.65
Sprottau	29.8	5.43
Goldberg-Haynau	32.8	6.20
Liegnitz Land	32.8	4.96
Jauer	32.5	4.85
Schönau	34.1	5.40
Bolkenhain	30.9	5.16
Hirschberg	29.1	4.92
Löwenberg	30.1	4.89
Bremervörde	32.6	5.37
Fritzlar	28.7	4.74

Astonishingly high are the figures, above all, in the smaller towns. Austria in this respect presents us with records. For example, in the fashionable spa of Carlsbad, in the year 1909, 11.8% of the births were still-births, and in addition 2.7% of those born alive succumbed from infantile debility, leaving still-births out of account, the birth-rate was only 17.4 per thousand. In the Galician town of Tarnopol with 30,000 inhabitants, half of whom are Jews, the still-births in 1909 were 10.9%, and 15.8% of those born alive died of debility. Here, while the birth-rate was extraordinarily low, being only 14.1 per thousand inhabitants (still-births not counted), infantile mortality attained the almost incredible figure of 47.1%. It is true that in many small towns in Germany similar results are recorded, but these may be chance instances, whereas in

Carlsbad and Tarnopol we have to do with conditions which have persisted for years.

Extremely interesting, in this connection, is a comparison between France and Dalmatia:

Department	Number Born Alive Per 1,000 Inhabitants (Corrected Birth-rate)	Infants Who Have Not Breathed per 100 Born: Average of the Years 1907–1910	Duration of Pregnancy (Miscarriages Not Counted) Per 100 Births		Per 100 Births Regarding Which Data are Available, Number Attended by a Doctor (1907–1910)
			Less than 8 Months	8 Months	
Finistère	29.7	2.50	1.55	0.99	23.2
Gers	13.3	4.20	2.13	1.27	10.7
Gironde	16.3	4.05	2.61	1.61	12.9
Alpes Maritimes	22.5	6.18	4.27	1.82	18.4
Territoire de Belfort	24.0	5.45	3.61	1.51	4.8
Manche	21.5	3.32	2.74	1.22	57.0
Orne	22.9	3.14	2.24	1.48	56.2
Corsica [3]	21.1	0.92	0.85	0.19	3.5
Yonne	15.0	3.61	2.65	1.09	45.8
Seine	20.1	5.06	4.70	2.23	14.4
Vaucluse	18.5	5.02	2.62	1.40	23.1
Var	17.6	4.80	2.60	1.49	12.9
Rhone	17.1	4.67	2.26	0.80	38.9
France (general)	20.3	3.83	2.60	1.39	22.6

Thus, in France still-births are extraordinarily common, the only exceptions being Corsica and Finistère, the most prolific regions of the country. The more backward Slav regions of Austria offer a striking counterpart to France: the figures relate to the year 1910:

[3] Notwithstanding the low birth-rate, the mean number of children is higher than anywhere on the French mainland.

Provinces and Administrative Districts	Births per 1,000 Inhabitants	Still-births Per 100 Births	Per 100 Births Number of Deliveries Unassisted by Doctor or Qualified Midwife
Dalmatia	41.5	1.62	68.4
Bencovac	50.7	0.14	95.2
Imotsky	50.1	0.24	97.1
Knin	50.4	0.29	98.8
Macarsca	37.9	0.38	82.8
Sinj	44.9	0.38	86.0
Galicia	39.0	1.76	75.5
Husiatyn	38.0	0.61	78.1
Bohorodezany	46.1	1.00	77.7
Lemberg Land	41.9	0.98	69.6
Przemyslany	41.6	0.75	86.5
Skalat	36.9	0.77	81.2
Zbaraz	36.2	0.92	83.4

In contrast with this it is to be noted that, as far as Prussia and Bavaria are concerned, the highest and the lowest percentages of still-births occur in the districts named in the following table, the high percentages being given on the left and the low percentages on the right:

	Still-births Per 100 Births		Still-births Per 100 Births
Liegnitz	4.52	Sigmaringen	1.38
Berlin	3.68	Oppeln	2.11
Breslau	3.56	Lower Franconia	2.14
Frankfort	3.37	Swabia	2.30
Aurich	3.34	Lower Bavaria	2.32
Middle Franconia	3.31	Münster	2.33
Stralsund	3.29	Erfurt	2.43
Cassel	3.22	Danzig	2.44
Hanover	3.25	Aix-la-Chapelle	2.48
Potsdam	3.21	Osnabrück	2.51

The tables show beyond question that conditions in the "more highly civilised states," in comparison with such countries as Russia and Bavaria, and above all in comparison with the backward regions of Austria, are by no means favourable. As far as statistics are available, it can also be proved that in highly civilised countries the mortality of women in childbed is comparatively high.

When we institute a comparison between to-day and earlier times, we encounter the remarkable fact that long ago still-births must have been far less numerous than they now are. Nor can the increase be attributed to the secret practice of abortion, for the available figures refer solely to deliveries at term, miscarriages not having been registered. Among 1,000 births, the still-births numbered:

Period	Sweden	Prussia	Bavaria	France
1751–1755	24.4	....	....	....
1761–1765	25.9	....	....	....
1781–1785	27.9	....	....	....
1791–1795	29.0	....	....	....
1801–1805	24.8	....	....	....
1811–1815	24.7	....	....	....
1821–1825	25.7	32.5	24.8[4]	....
1831–1835	29.2	36.1	27.1	....
1841–1845	30.8	38.5	30.4	32.7
1851–1855	32.1	39.6	30.8	39.1
1861–1865	32.8	41.6	32.8	43.6
1871–1875	32.1	40.7	33.4	44.6
1876–1880	29.4	40.8	34.3	44.1
1881–1885	27.6	39.5	33.5	45.2
1886–1890	26.6	37.2	32.7	45.8
1891–1895	26.6	33.1	31.4	46.8
1896–1900	25.5	32.3	29.9	45.8
1901–1905	26.0	30.8	28.8	45.2
1907	....	29.8	27.4	45.4
1910	....	29.6	27.0	44.4

[4] 1826-1830.

This shows that in earlier times the frequency of still-births was comparatively low; a steady increase took place until the second half of the nineteenth century, to be followed by a decline under the influence of the advance in the technique of midwifery. But even in Prussian towns there has during the last few years been once again manifest an increase in the number of still-births. Per 1,000 births in Prussian towns, there were in the year 1909, 30.2 still-births; in 1910, 30.8; in 1911, 30.9; and in 1912, 31.1.

When we turn, in conclusion, to consider the mortality of childbed, we find that, speaking generally, this mortality is higher in proportion as the centre of population is larger and the birth-rate lower. The figures in the following table relate to Prussia in the year 1911:

	Births Per 1,000 Inhabitants	Deaths in Childbed Per 1,000 Births	Without Puerperal Fever
In large towns	25.7	5.00	2.20
In middle-sized towns (20,000 to 100,000 inhabitants)	28.1	4.03	1.81
In small towns (20,000 & under)	27.7	2.95	1.45
In rural districts	33.3	2.75	1.57
General	30.2	3.34	1.70

By von Gruber and other distinguished physicians and persons of importance who have intervened in this controversy it is taken as axiomatic that nothing but improper interference with the course of pregnancy can be the cause of this high mortality in childbed. But statistics afford a decisive disproof of any such contention. Deaths following

miscarriage, among which instances of the suggested kind must be included, play no part in accounting for the mortality of childbed, while this mortality is mainly dependent upon cases in which we can utterly exclude the question of improper interference. Among the 141 cases of death in childbed (from causes other than puerperal fever) recorded in the Berlin statistics for the year 1910, 15 only were a sequel of miscarriage, while 25 were due to intra-abdominal pregnancy, and 30 were due to eclampsia.

If we compare former conditions with present, we do indeed find that the mortality of childbed underwent a decline owing to improvements in midwifery, for in Mecklenburg-Schwerin eighteenth century statistics show the mortality to have been 8 to 12 per 1,000 of all deliveries, and there was a fall in the mortality-rate throughout the nineteenth century; but recently there has once been an increase.

In Prussia, per 1,000 deliveries, the maternal deaths ranged as follows:

Period	Deaths
1875–1880	5.99
1881–1885	5.86
1886–1890	4.87
1891–1895	4.07
1896–1900	3.19
1901–1905	3.23
1906	2.88
1907	2.94
1910	3.14
1911	3.39

It consequently appears that there must be a progressive decline in the bodily powers of resistance. The mortality

is especially high in western Europe. In England, per 1,000 deliveries, the maternal deaths (leaving puerperal fever out of consideration) numbered:

Period	Deaths
1871–1875	2.99
1881–1885	2.14
1891–1895	2.94
1901–1905	2.28

This should be compared with Prussian conditions. In Prussia, abstracting the deaths from puerperal fever, the mortality in childbed per 1,000 deliveries was in 1906, 1.75; in 1910, 1.71; and in 1911, 1.73.

Worst of all in this respect—no French data are available—are the United States and Australasia, countries

Region	Period	From Puerperal Fever	From Other Varieties of Mortality in Childbed	Total
Maine	1900–1904	2.11	4.24	6.35
Michigan	1898–1902	5.04	5.16	10.20
N. S. Wales	1891–1895	1.78	3.61	5.39
do.	1901–1905	2.49	4.36	6.85
Victoria	1891–1895	1.79	3.21	5.00
do.	1901–1905	1.90	4.10	6.00
Queensland	1891–1895	0.45	4.37	4.85
do.	1901–1905	0.61	4.11	4.72
S. Australia	1891–1895	1.36	3.12	4.48
do.	1901–1905	1.64	2.90	4.54
W. Australia	1891–1895	0.92	3.24	4.16
do.	1901–1905	1.17	4.11	5.28
Tasmania	1891–1895	0.95	2.98	3.93
do.	1901–1905	0.69	3.33	4.02
New Zealand	1901–1905	1.01	4.40	5.41

where the birth-rate is peculiarly low. On the other hand, as far as a judgment is possible, Dalmatia is exceptionally fortunate in this matter! Take first the conditions in Maine, Michigan, and Australasia, where, per 1,000 deliveries, deaths occurred as shown in preceding table.

An exact statement is impossible as regards Australasia, for data concerning still-births are not given in the Australasian records. Consequently about 1 or 2 ought to be subtracted from the figures in the second place of decimals. But the error is so slight that it can be disregarded.

As regards Dalmatia, on the other hand, certain statistics are available concerning the deaths from puerperal fever. We find, for example, that for the entire province during the year 1910 there were 26,843 births, and that only 11 women died of puerperal fever, whereas in Berlin during the year 1911 there were 44,835 births and 243 deaths from puerperal fever. In Galicia, however, where in many districts positive epidemics of puerperal fever occur, the records are less favourable, although even here better conditions prevail than in many parts of Germany.

As regards Prussia in the year 1910, the districts in which puerperal mortality was highest and those in which it was lowest are indicated upon the left and the right side respectively of the table on page 219.

If we leave out of consideration the easterly districts, in which as many as 50% of all births may still take place without the assistance of a doctor or a qualified midwife, we observe that childbed mortality is exceptionally high in many regions with an extremely low birth-rate, and conversely that it is strikingly low in districts where the

Governmental District	Births Per 1,000 Inhabitants	Deaths in Childbed Per 1,000 Deliveries
Berlin (suburban)	22.0	6.97
Sigmaringen	30.0	4.81
Danzig	37.3	4.45
Allenstein	34.7	4.20
Potsdam	24.4	3.68
Hanover	25.9	3.67
Marienwerder	38.3	3.53
Stralsund	30.7	3.39
Königsberg	31.6	3.38
Minden	31.2	3.33
Stade	31.5	1.73
Münster	41.2	2.24
Wiesbaden	26.0	2.27
Schleswig	28.7	2.32
Erfurt	29.7	2.39
Düsseldorf	32.5	2.43
Aix-la-Chapelle	31.6	2.43
Osnabrück	33.3	2.44
Magdeburg	28.0	2.44
Oppeln	40.2	2.63

birth-rate is high. The following towns and circles display an especially high childbed mortality. During the year 1911, per 1,000 births, the mortality in childbed was as shown in the table on next page.

These are conditions in comparison with which those that prevailed in Mecklenburg during the eighteenth century may, when we consider the hygienic environment of those days, be regarded as ideal. In Mecklenburg, per 1,000 deliveries, in the years 1797-1798 (exceptionally favourable, it is true) the deaths in childbed numbered 8.1 only. It is especially in many small towns character-

Town or Circle	Deaths
Graudenz (town)	8.31
Berlin (town)	8.39
Berlin-Schöneberg (town)	10.80
Greifswald (town)	10.30
Hirschberg (circle)	10.82
Görlitz (town)	9.37
Stendal (town)	11.76
Halle-on-the-Saale (town)	9.45
Göttingen (town)	8.05
Towns of the Circle of Aschendorf	21.13
Paderborn (town)	8.52
Hanau (town)	9.76

ised by a comparatively low birth-rate that we find an extraordinarily high childbed mortality. This phenomenon cannot be referred solely to defective midwifery, even though neglect may be partially responsible for the frequent occurrence of puerperal fever in such towns as Greifswald, etc. In the very circles in which as regards skilled midwifery the circumstances are most unfavourable, and where from 40 to 50% of all deliveries are effected without even the assistance of a qualified midwife, we find a moderately and sometimes an extremely low mortality. It is therefore evident that a decline in women's physical powers of resistance must be a contributory cause.

Sufficient evidence has been adduced to establish beyond the possibility of refutation that there has been a decline in the capacity for childbearing. It may be assumed with confidence that the conditions which have led to an increase in the mortality from infantile debility, to an increase in the number of still-births, and ultimately to an increase in the mortality in childbed, have likewise led to a diminution in the capacity for conception. It may

be regarded as no less certain that these conditions are the principal causes of the decline in the birth-rate. All the contentions which refer this decline chiefly to a deliberate restriction of births rest solely upon personal conviction. Not one Neo-Malthusian has ever yet succeeded in furnishing any proof of the soundness of such views. On the other hand, there are ample statistical grounds to enable us to challenge the accuracy of the neo-malthusian assumption, while the occurrence of a deterioration in the physical constitution of the feminine world is indubitable. It must therefore be taken as certain that the decline in the birth-rate is above all a physiological phenomenon characteristic of modern civilisation. It proves nothing that innumerable distinguished physicians and other persons of importance hold the opposite view. The arguments they put forward can prove almost anything you please, but the one thing they cannot prove is that the decline in the birth-rate is the outcome of deliberate interference. With such arguments as they employ we can prove with equal certitude that the devil is black and has an evil odour, for all experts upon the subject have been firmly convinced of these facts.

DYSGENIC TENDENCIES OF BIRTH-CONTROL AND OF THE FEMINIST MOVEMENT

DYSGENIC TENDENCIES OF BIRTH-CONTROL AND OF THE FEMINIST MOVEMENT

By S. H. Halford

IN every estimate of the possibilities that lie before the human race, great stress is laid on the improvement which, it is said, must result from the general spread of education. Although compulsory schooling has been operating for thirty-six years without appreciably adding to the average of intelligence, people still speak and write with the greatest confidence in the ultimate result of compelling every one to be taught. As if learning and teaching were the same thing! If one points to the fact that the general average of mental ability is as low as before the passing of the Education Act, he is told that is an evidence of defect in our system. The human material is all right; therefore we have only to bring our schools up to an effective pitch, and then all men and women will be bright, clever, capable, and thoughtful.

Of course this is not true. Defects in schooling are not the real cause of our low intellectual capacity, and to bring the schools to a greater mechanical perfection will not under any circumstances provide the pupils with brains. Brains are the result of heredity and are an endowment from ancestors. They are hardly more the consequence of education than is the fleece of the merino

sheep. That, we know, is the result of careful selection on the part of breeders, and only by such selection exercised by thoughtful human beings can the average mental ability of men and women be raised. Hence it follows that to attain that object we must see to it that no process is put into operation, or encouraged, by which the unintelligent are allowed to increase at the expense of the more highly endowed. That necessarily involves our scrutinising carefully all those tendencies to birth restriction now so rife, with a view to deciding, not whether restriction is advisable (that hardly needs arguing), but whether, as it is now exercised, there is no danger of the process working so much more powerfully amongst persons of higher mental capacity as to endanger the general intelligence of the race, as to threaten the elimination of the intellectually fit.

Yet if a man be asked to make a contribution to any discussion on such a matter as the voluntary restriction of births, and that in a book intended for the general public, he finds himself confronted by a mass of difficulties. It is a question involving sex, and there is no subject, not even religion, which is fenced about by such extreme prejudice so far as this country and the United States are concerned. Nor is there any subject on which question-begging is more general. For instance, marriage is always pretended to be a matter of "pure" affection. Children and sexual relations are seldom taken overtly into account. This is evident from the fact that not more than a very minute fraction of the marriages which take place in English-speaking countries are ever contracted with the least consideration of the eugenic capacity of the

parties concerned. This is so even amongst fairly conscientious people. It is true that in spite of our tremendous prejudices we do not quite stand still. We should not now-a-days find a novelist doing as Lytton did in *Night and Morning,* that is, making his hero marry a mental defective. Nor would the more thoughtful man of to-day think, as did Horatius Bonar, that it was his duty to keep an engagement to marry after the other party had developed pronounced insanity. But even so, we still very successfully suppress free discussion of sex matters; and most people are still so ignorant of the power of heredity that the trifling advances hitherto made in the eugenist direction are more than outweighed by countervailing influences. Let any person with a wide circle of acquaintances look around and he will find that as a rule a large family goes with inferior parents and a small with superior. Moreover, he will realise that the smaller families are in most cases the result of intention; that the same intelligence which marks out the parents as superior leads them to adopt a policy of voluntary restriction of births. That is the real reason why the average family declines in size as we go upward in the social scale, because, as we rise higher, we reach a better capacity for forethought, and that forethought is exercised in the limitation of the numbers for whom it is responsible. This is implying, what it is difficult to deny, that those individuals who are capable of the greater forethought tend to rise by reason of that superior intelligence into the upper stratum of society and to constitute it.

If we think logically at all, we can hardly fail to realise that birth restriction is an absolute necessity to populations

enjoying the protection of modern sanitary science, if those populations are not to increase beyond the capacity of their countries for the production of food. We can contemplate with comparative indifference a birth-rate of sixty per thousand in a city of the near east, because a death-rate of the same magnitude is secured by the lack of sanitation in which such cities fester. But when a modern European state annexes such a place and imposes from without so much of western civilisation as will reduce the death-rate without giving the people that intellectual culture which will make a corresponding reduction in the births, then there speedily arise very serious problems of over-population. This is aggravated in the case of peoples whose religions impose real or imagined tabus on voluntary restriction. In such instances nothing but famine remains as the ultimate factor which will reduce numbers to a workable point (unless a particular religion, with amazing inconsistency, can countenance infanticide while forbidding restriction of births). Despite all the hypocritical pretences with which in this country we disguise our real attitude on such matters, we are bound to admit that the practice of voluntary birth restriction has made and is making great progress. It is one of the principal causes of our low and declining birth-rate. Another factor is the general postponement of marriage until an age which leaves women with a very reduced period during which childbearing is possible. A third factor, related to the first, is the increasing inability of women to bear and rear children, an inability consequent upon the softening effects of our civilisation, and there is, in civilised peoples a feeling of chivalry which makes husbands more

and more indisposed to impose upon women any burden of childbearing for which they are disinclined.

Now, no thoughtful person would find fault with the general result of these tendencies, so far as birth restriction alone is concerned, if the effect were equal throughout all strata of society. But it is easy to prove that unfortunately this is not the case. Birth-control, as already pointed out, implies forethought; this indicates superior brains; and therefore we get the races with superior mentalities rapidly lowering their rate of reproduction, and, within these races, the most intellectual classes doing this at much greater speed than the rest. Thus we see a vicious and essentially dysgenist process at work. *The higher races are using the resources of scientific knowledge to reduce the death-rate of the inferior peoples and the birth-rate of the superior.* Consequently, if we are honest with ourselves, we ought to be greatly disquieted by an outlook which shows the better types voluntarily declining at a vastly greater rate than the inferior, and also by late marriage losing the most vigorous years of reproduction.

We can get no comfort from realising that the whole course of what is called "feminine emancipation" intensifies these disastrous tendencies, that all influences making restriction of births greater in the circles in which it should least operate are those receiving the approval of every "woman's advocate." Postponement of marriage is approved because it defers that important contract until "a woman is old enough to know her own mind." Restriction of births is welcomed as evidence that "women are gaining the control of their own bodies." The re-

munerative employment of clever women is held to indicate that "woman is taking her place side by side with man, as simple justice requires." The higher education of women, more potent perhaps than any other influence in rendering them unwilling to undertake either marriage or motherhood, is likewise acclaimed as an act of "simple justice."

We know that all advocates of feminine "emancipation" very naturally and reasonably make their first plank the question of the "moral right" of women to certain reforms, and rely upon advancing this "moral right" as a conclusive argument. Now, morality must mean that course of conduct which will lead to the greatest common good. It is not enough to prove that certain actions will result in benefit or increased happiness to the individual or individuals who perform them. This consideration is invalid if it can be successfully shown that such benefit will be outweighed by the injury wrought to the community. Yet injury to the community is imminently likely to result from much, if not from all, that is advocated in the programme of the woman suffragist.

No one can deny that the particular section of the population most affected, or to be affected, by feminist reforms, or by any process making for birth restriction, is the intelligent section. It is equally easy to prove that the whole course of feminine emancipation tends, in that section of women most influenced by feminist ideals or reforms, to lower both the marriage-rate and the birth-rate. Now if we admit the contention of such authorities as Forel on the continent and Galton and Nott at home, that high intelligence is largely, if not entirely, the result

of heredity, the increasing exclusion of intelligent women from motherhood must decrease the proportion of able children born into our community; and so must steadily lower the average of intelligence in our nation. Yet this decrease is undeniably a consequence of the very social changes which feminists aim at extending. Look, for instance, at the case expressed roughly in figures:

In this country the proportion of married in the total population *of marriageable age* has fallen during the past forty years from 55% to 45%.

Now if we suppose that of our population the highly intelligent section numbers 3,000,000 (and that is a very liberal estimate) we get a proportion of intelligent of one in fifteen in the existing community.

Let us suppose that only 40% of the intelligent section marry (a very favourable estimate), and let us assume that, whereas per marriage of non-intelligents 5 children attain to maturity, per marriage of intelligents no more than 3 children attain to maturity (again an estimate unduly favourable to the intelligents), the relative prevalence of intelligence and non-intelligence will be as follows in successive generations:

45% of Total Population				
45,000,000	= 20,250,000	= 10,125,000	Marriages	
40% of Intelligent				
3,000,000	= 1,200,000	= 600,000	"	Intelligent.
(=1 in 15)				
	Leaving	9,525,000	"	Non-Intelligent.

600,000 Intelligent	× 3 =	1,800,000	= 1 in 27
9,525,000 Non-intelligent	× 5 =	47,625,000	
Total—2nd Generation		49,425,000	

45% of 49,425,000 =	22,241,250 =	11,120,625	Marriages
40% of 1,800,000 =	720,000 =	360,000	" Intelligent.
	Leaving	10,760,625	" Non-Intelligent.

360,000 Intelligent	× 3 =	1,080,000	= 1 in 51.
10,760,625 Non-Intelligent	× 5 =	53,803,120	
Total—3rd Generation		54,883,120	

45% of 54,883,120 =	24,697,404 =	12,348,702	Marriages
40% of 1,080,000 =	432,000 =	216,000	" Intelligent.
	Leaving	12,132,702	" Non-Intelligent.

216,000 Intelligent	× 3 =	648,000	= 1 in 95.
12,132,702 Non-Intelligent	× 5 =	60,663,810	
Total—4th Generation		61,311,810	

Let it be remembered that the foregoing is a very favourable estimate; both as to the present and future proportion of intelligence. It is not likely that even the existing low birth-rate of intelligent people will be maintained; or that it will fall at as slow a rate as the other. We have to face the practical certainty that the gradual throwing open of trades and professions to women will involve the payment of large salaries to the more capable, and that this will place a premium, in women, upon celibacy or childlessness.

In any case there seems no other prospect, if the full feminist ideal be realised, than the entire extinction of British or American intelligence within the next two or three generations. The fate which, according to Bateson, overtook ancient Greece will be ours; only in our case it

seems likely that it will be, if possible, more complete.

It is certainly only right that these arguments should be supported by actual quotation from statistics; and I therefore adduce certain figures from the registrar general's reports which were quoted by me in an article in the *Socialist Review* for October and December, 1914.

TOWNS WHERE HIGHER EDUCATION OF GIRLS IS GENERAL:

	Population	Number of Births, 1910
Dulwich	14,975	201
Hampstead	95,510	1,269
Hornsey	84,602	1,377
Stoke Newington	50,683	955
Total	235,770	3,802

TOWNS WHERE HIGHER EDUCATION OF GIRLS IS RARE:

	Population	Number of Births, 1910
Audley, Staffs	16,107	480
Chester-le-Street	78,595	2,825
Canning Town	82,261	2,756
Poplar	56,327	1,740
Total	233,290	7,801

This provides us with a comparison of current birth-rates in the two types of community; but note how rapidly the rate declines in the better class:

	1904		1910	
	Population	Births	Population	Births
Stoke Newington....	51,247	1,147	50,683	955
Hampstead.....	81,942	1,445	85,510	1,269
Hornsey.....	72,056	1,626	84,602	1,377
	205,245	4,218	220,795	3,601

So here we find that, with an increased population of 15,000, these towns have reduced their annual quota of births by 15%; and that in six years! If the 1904 birth-rate had been maintained there would have been 4,533 births; therefore the real fall is about 21%.

Now make the same comparison with the four working class towns for the same period:

	1904		1910	
	Population	Births	Population	Births
Audley, Staffs.....	15,008	547	16,107	480
Chester-le-Street.....	60,552	2,590	78,595	2,825
Canning Town.....	70,718	2,786	82,261	2,756
Poplar.....	58,514	1,940	56,327	1,740
	204,792	7,863	233,290	7,801

These statistics show that what has been presumed here as to the decline in the birth-rate of the intelligent is really an understatement of the seriousness of the position. For the rate of reduction revealed by the four or five towns whose figures have been utilised is so great that if it continue and be general throughout the middle

and upper classes their practical extinction will not take even the three or four generations that I have allowed. It is assumed that intelligence and the middle and upper classes are synonymous, not because the working people produce no mental ability, but because ability appearing among the workers usually effects a rise into the middle class, or at least the adoption of such ideals as ensure the same restriction of births. That it is right to claim this can be proved by comparing with the birth-rate of Audley, Chester-le-Street, etc., the rate in a town populated by members of the engineering class, who are generally considered the most intelligent of working men. We have already seen that the four towns quoted with a population of 233,290 produce 7,801 births. They are very poor working-class districts inhabited by miners and dock labourers. Here is the case of an engineering town:

	Population	Births, 1910
Barrow-in-Furness.....	63,775	1,611

Now if the birth-rate of Audley, Chester-le-Street, Canning Town and Poplar, obtained also in Barrow, the number of births there would be 2,130. So that even among the workers we see that any improvement in intelligence or ability is reflected in a reduced birth-rate.

Now compare this town in 1904 and 1910:

	1904		1910	
	Population	Births	Population	Births
Barrow.....	57,856	1,894	63,775	1,611

Here is the same picture—an increased population with a positively smaller total of births. But the worst aspect is that the percentage of fall is only slightly less than in the wealthy towns quoted. Hence we find that statistics bear out the anticipation that the drop in the birth-rate is in direct proportion to the intelligence of the population; so that it is greatest in the highest classes, smallest in the lowest, and intermediate in those that lie between.

It ought to be mentioned in this connection, as an evidence that the working classes do not retain any considerable proportion of intelligence, that Havelock Ellis, in his *Study of British Genius* finds their contribution to the ranks of eminent men and women practically nil. I confess to having been much impressed by his statements.

Now it is my contention that all these evil tendencies in the way of reduction of intelligence are caused and are being stimulated by the very alterations in society for which the feminist is striving. If that be true, the injury resulting is more than sufficient to outweigh any claim for the women's case which is based upon its "positive" morality. There is no such thing as "positive" morality. Morality is merely a means to an end; and that end is more life. By its result in that direction must every course of conduct be tested; and the result in more life or death is the proof of morality or immorality.

It is all very well to say glibly that if the human race depends for its continuance on the (supposed) subjection of women, then it had better die out. It will not die out. What will take place will be its steady and continuous debasement by the progressive elimination of its best

factors. Let any man imagine a stockbreeder breeding cattle on the lines which feminism makes compulsory among men, and he will see the disastrousness of the policy. The whole argument of this essay is an appeal for the preservation of female intelligence. It is better to preserve and continue this to *all* future generations, than to cultivate, employ, and destroy it, by education and emancipation, in one or two. By this I mean to imply, not only that economic factors are being enlisted in the destruction of intelligence, but that psychological influences, the result of higher education, also contribute substantially towards the unfitting of women for marriage.

Feeling usually being so strong among Anglo-Saxons when sex matters are referred to, it is natural that British writers should err on the side of caution when they deal with any subject that involves sex. Yet McDougall, speaking with all the weight that his statements carry, hints guardedly at what has been contended here. In the conclusion of his little volume on *Psychology* in the Home University Library he says: "Especially we want to know what changes, if any, are being brought about in the innate mental constitution of these populations under their present conditions; whether, as some assert, various forms of social selection are making strongly for deterioration; or whether, as is commonly believed, the civilised stocks continue to evolve a higher type of mental structure; or, lastly, whether the principal change being effected is not a greater differentiation, resulting in the production of a comparatively low-grade mass of population at one end of the scale, and of a number of stocks of exceptional ability and moral stamina at the other. All these ques-

tions must be answered in detail before we can build up a true science of society."

Are there not suggestions here that it is the Jewish race that will form the stock of "exceptional ability and moral stamina"? Its womenfolk alone seem able to absorb all the influences of civilisation without being sterilised by them.

There is a suggestive passage in Keith's recent book on the *Antiquity of Man.* He is dealing with the extinct Cro-Magnon type of prehistoric man and is pointing out its very large brain capacity. He answers the natural objection that the type with the larger brain ought not to have become extinct, by asserting that a large brain is by no means a guarantee of the survival of a race; but that strong sexual desire and a great capacity for reproduction are far better securities. Hughlings Jackson, who was a genius in these matters, once made a similar remark.

It must be evident from the foregoing statements that, in my view, women exist primarily for racial ends. The tendency to exempt the more refined of them from the pains and anxieties of childbearing and motherhood, although arising out of a very attractive feeling of consideration for the weaker individuals of the race, is not, admirable as it seems, in essence a moral one. The assertion that woman exists primarily for racial ends is justified by the fact that most moralists are ready to admit that no individual, male or female, exists for himself or herself alone. To be truly moral, conduct must be regulated by consideration of its effect upon the community as a whole. It is indeed difficult for men to regard women from this standpoint,

for the sexual instinct in men affects them with illusions which, although known to be such by most psychologists, are regarded by nearly all men as realities. As Mercier puts it, "The lover falls in love, not with his adored object as she exists, but with the imaginary attributes with which he invests her"; and this illusion is not confined altogether to a man's conception of a particular woman. It powerfully influences most men's conceptions of the entire sex. This is the grave difficulty, this devotion of men to women, because it is greatest in the best men and in the best social strata. Hence each man tends, even if he recognises the value of the contribution of his class to the total births, to exempt his own wife and to hope that his omission will be exceptional. In a word, each will leave the duty of childbearing to some one else, not from selfish, but from unselfish, motives. Effectively to counteract modern tendencies making for the elimination of the intelligent, it is necessary not only to persuade intellectual men and women as to their value as parents, but also to convince each one that the argument "my individual contribution hardly counts" is totally false. Each one will so argue until the whole class falls behind in its necessary rate of reproduction. After all, an ideal of woman for herself alone which results in the wholesale debasement of the race, male and female, cannot be a moral or justifiable one. Even if the present generation were to gain substantially by the propagation of such an ideal, and that is open to question, it is impossible to argue that such gain to one or two generations would outweigh the injury inflicted on a vast number of succeeding ones.

Moreover, the argument that woman in no sense exists

for the other sex implies what is not true—that men can as a rule exist happily without opportunities for the exercise of the sexual act for itself. That is a favourite assertion and implication of English and American writers, and is part of our conventional hypocrisy in dealing with sex matters. Even if it be admitted that the effects of modern progress in what is called "emancipating" women may add a considerable amount to the total of their real happiness (and that has not yet been demonstrated irrefutably), yet if these processes of education and emancipation result, as they are resulting, in a large development of sexlessness amongst women, then it can hardly be doubted that the injury done to one sex will outweigh the benefit which accrues to the other. Of course this implies, what is here claimed, that the sexual act is something which is justifiable as an end in itself. Despite the current hypocritical conventional opinions concerning this matter, to which all of us are expected as a matter of course to subscribe, it is not true that to all men continence is at once easy, healthy, and practicable. It is not so even for all women, although it becomes so by acquired asexuality in most highly educated ones. The strain of prolonged continence is most severely felt by the very best and most generous men. As a tender conscience and pronounced sexual desire go together (they are intimately related), it follows as a necessary consequence that deprivation such as the woman's movement must inevitably ensure will press most painfully and harshly on those who are entitled to the greatest consideration—on those who least deserve the suffering in which they will be involved. It must be admitted that the fact is rarely ac-

knowledged in England either in press or pulpit. This is part of our racial hypocrisy, a characteristic which is shared by our American cousins to perhaps an even greater degree. But the hypocrisy of the puritan tradition, enforced both by Christians and Agnostics, cannot alter facts, as is evident from the examples of pronounced neurasthenic breakdown from excessive and prolonged sexual repression to be found amongst our eminent divines, Anglican, Roman, or Nonconformist. However carefully dissembled under the euphuism of overwork, by the trained observer the principal and ultimate cause can be clearly discerned.

Many feminist ideals are tolerated for the sole reason that public opinion compels an outward assent to the idea that sexual intercourse for its own sake is not only essentially degrading, but quite unnecessary.

Although in what has been said here the general attitude of British and American writers on this subject has been so freely condemned, let me acknowledge that there are notable exceptions. Mott, for instance, frankly admits that "sexual passion although it may not be manifest to the external world, nevertheless occupies a large place in the conscious and subconscious self; it suffuses silent thought and consciousness . . . ; its suppression is one of the causes of insanity." One of his colleagues, a woman, says much the same thing in a recent number of the "Practitioner." There are of course others; but they are all men and women high up in the profession, holding salaried posts that give them a certain independence of fees. For, as a very accomplished physician said to me when I protested against his silence in face of the popular

and conventional lies that hold the field on the subject, "To speak the truth on this matter would mean the loss of all my patients." Americans, too, although even more held captive by the puritan tradition than we, are sometimes outspoken—witness Brand Whitlock in an article that appeared in the *English Review* a year or so back. It is true that he is not a medical man, but the U. S. Minister to Belgium; still that does not affect the fact that he says some painfully true things about our and his fellow countrymen's opinions on this matter.

After all, however hypocritically we may assume that love and passion are different things, the scientific investigation of these forces shows that they are identical. Therefore a society where processes making for passionlessness in women are allowed free play, is one which tends to render love in its most intense sense an impossibility. If, as Browning declares, the chief thing in life is to love, are the gains to woman from the aforesaid processes worthy for a moment to be compared with the losses to both sexes which will ensue?

There is already quite enough concealed misery as a consequence of our unwillingness to permit the public recognition of sexual needs. There is real cruelty involved as a result of generally assuming as highly moral this refusal to admit necessity. The whole tendency of modern refinement, reinfored by feminist ideals, is to create for the best of men a public opinion and an economic and psychological situation which makes their position one of superlative suffering. Their inevitable need calls for preferential consideration over the sentimental grievances

of women or the cowardly prejudices and fears of conventional moralists.

The whole question of birth restriction and sexual relations bristles with problems because of the tremendous difficulty of accepting necessary conclusions opposed to sentimental, emotional, economic, and pseudo-moral prejudices. Let us, however, once rid ourselves of the illusion that beliefs scientifically false are in any sense profitable in the long run, even although consonant with these prejudices, and all the difficulties of recognition will disappear, and it may then become possible to practise birth restriction, which is a necessity, without either debasing the race or rendering its best individuals wretched.

WOMEN AND BIRTH-CONTROL

WOMEN AND BIRTH-CONTROL

By F. W. Stella Browne

EARLY in July, 1914, a very subtle artist and humanitarian pioneer pointed out that "the social problem in nearly every department has overtaken the organising efforts of our experts and administrators"; that "the least scientific and the most haphazard branch of our training and education of the young, and of our social organisation, is that of sex"; and finally, that "nothing concerning sex can be rightly dealt with apart from the full equation."[1]

Much blood has flowed under all Europe's bridges since these words were written, and we have had ample opportunity to observe what Geddes has defined as "the tendency to masculine dictature always renewed by war." We are threatened with a more mercilessly systematic exploitation both of women's industry and their reproductive fertility than has ever before been attempted; and the lines on which this artificial stimulation to breed will be essayed are already clearly indicated. They include the extra taxation of bachelors and possibly of self-supporting spinsters; the remission of taxes together with special educational facilities in the case of large families; some municipal or national scheme of maternity insurance or re-

[1] Publication No. I of the British Society for the Study of Sex Psychology. Policy and Principles.

lief; a specialised education for girls, concentrating on the sentimental and the domestic; and a fevered propaganda in favour of what some reactionaries already term "the normal family"; a propaganda in which the licensed imbecilities of the pulpit are backed up by the venal and impertinent irrelevancies of the press and the pomposities of the debating platform, and stiffened by determined attempts to penalise (or at least to restrict) the sale of contraceptives to the poor.[2]

To this propaganda there can be only one answer from the woman who claims to be, not a domestic utensil, but a citizen, a human being, and free in her motherhood and her love.

Let us admit, for the sake of argument, that the bearing of children *is* women's supreme duty to the state. This duty postulates rights and reciprocal duties. The state as it at present exists, in all the large monetarist and militarist national entities, is a masculine structure exclusively. It gives to women neither equality of opportunity nor adequate special protection. If women are to devote their best energies and the period of their effective womanhood to bearing and rearing children, they must do so under tolerable conditions and with some reasonable probability of a tolerable existence for their children. The realisation of these demands as regards one country alone, namely Great Britain, would include the following indispensable items:

(1) A thorough measure of housing reform on broad

[2] Cf. the senile tirades of Sir James Crichton Browne, at the Guildhall, October, 1915: cf. also the "Cape Times," October 30, 1916; and the clerical and capitalist press generally.

and generous lines, giving scope to the social and aesthetic qualities of human nature, and recognising to the full the infinite possibilities of co-operative housekeeping.

(2) The reform, root and branch, of that ancient iniquity, the British system of land tenure.

(3) A really scientific and practical treatment of agriculture.

(4) The safeguarding of the people's food supply and the resolute abolition of efforts towards protectionism.

(5) A national educational system which would not be a disgrace to our heads and hearts alike, which would recognise both individual variations and communal needs, and would make some provision for definite sex instruction.

(6) An efficient public health service, including a free supply of all appliances, drugs, and services necessary for the care of pregnancy, child-birth and infancy, and equitable and thorough measures for combating venereal diseases.

(7) The reform of the English laws of separation and divorce on the lines suggested by the majority report of the recent Royal Commission (1909-1912).

This is the absolute minimum that should be demanded; justice and common sense suggest, further, the concession that the married mother should be regarded as the legal parent of her child.

(8) The amendment of the English bastardy laws, which are mainly responsible for an infantile death-rate among illegitimate infants twice as high as among those born in wedlock, and for an enormous amount of prostitution, infanticide, and physical deterioration. Teutonic and

Scandinavian Europe is far ahead of us in this respect: the German government recognises that, even from the strictly militarist point of view, it is inadvisable to throw away potential cannon-fodder; while the recently enacted Norwegian statute "concerning children whose parents have not married each other" is a splendidly sane, fair, and courageous measure.

(9) Finally (if the forms of democracy are still honoured), universal adult suffrage—one citizen, one vote.

The government of the state, until it has instituted these necessary steps towards just and decent conditions for its present and future citizens, has not the faintest right to demand a single additional birth. A political system which denies women alike equality of opportunity and adequate special protection; an economic system which is iniquity and waste incarnate; and sexual institutions founded on the needs and preferences of a primitive type of man alone, and now in their debacle, creditable and satisfactory to neither sex—these can have no moral claim on women's bodies as instruments of propagation. And women's side of the case must be put forward with emphasis and persistence, or in their present inferior economic and political status it will be ignored. It has never been safe for women to trust to the gratitude and justice of groups of men. (E. g., in spite of the praise and promises showered on women for their services to the national state in war work, the Barristers' trade union has refused women the entrance into that profession, by an overwhelming vote; and all that is basest and most blatant in the British press is now demanding that women shall be

subjected to industrial conscription, before they have even the tiny safeguard of the vote!)

There is one propagandist body in particular, on which there lies a peculiarly heavy responsibility with regard to this matter. The Eugenics Education Society has among its members many most open-minded and truly progressive individuals; but the official policy it has pursued for years has been inspired by class-bias and sex-bias. The society laments with increasing vehemence the multiplication of the less fortunate classes at a more rapid rate than the possessors of leisure and opportunity. (I do not think it relevant here to discuss whether the innate superiority of endowment in the governing class, really is so overwhelming as to justify the Eugenics Education Society's peculiar use of the terms "fit" and "unfit".) Yet it has persistently refused to give any help towards extending the knowledge of contraceptives to the exploited classes. Similarly, though the *Eugenics Review,* the organ of the society, frequently laments the "selfishness" of the refusal of maternity by healthy and educated women of the professional classes, I have yet to learn that it has made any official pronouncement on the English illegitimacy laws or any organised effort towards defending the unmarried mother.

The Women's Co-operative Guild, on the other hand, has pursued a boldly constructive policy. I cordially recommend that deeply poignant and absorbingly interesting collection of personal testimonies from working-class women, *Maternity,*[3] to all students of social conditions, particularly as affecting women.

[3] Published by George Bell & Sons, London, 1915, 2/6 net.

Apart, however, from the present laws and customs affecting women, and apart from the hazardous cruelty of bringing numerous human lives into the world as it will be for the next thirty or fifty years, the fundamental question arises whether maternity can ever be a duty towards any outside entity—state, individual or deity.[4]

I deny that it can.

The maternal relation, like the sexual, is in certain respects peculiar and unique. It is more deeply instinctive, more intensely personal, than any other. Its value, its beauty, its very raison d'être, depend on its complete spontaneity. In my opinion, an enormous percentage of mental and physical degeneracy, of deficient vitality, and of obscure perversions of instinct and will, are due to the unwilling and unloving conception and gestation of such life. This may be regarded as a fantastic hypothesis, but it is founded on a good deal of personal observation. Remember how intimate is the connection between mother and baby during pregnancy; how the mother's mental as well as physical state may influence the child.[5] Such compulsory breeding is an outrage and a vile cruelty to both mother and child. But, in the past, men's instinctive wonder and idealisation of the physical side of maternity has been untroubled by any questioning of its spiritual content. The ascetic ideas incorporated in Christianity

[4] The question has been put very ably, without special reference to women, in the "International Journal of Ethics," October, 1916. *Birth-Control and Biological Ethics,* by Warner Fite.

[5] The increasing number of women who study medicine and biology may bring valuable contributions from their special feminine experience, if they have the courage to refuse the masculine mythology which has gathered round motherhood.

have seized on the pangs of child-birth, as a divinely appointed purgation for the exercise of the sex function—although the particular partner on whom the ordeal of parturition fell may have had very little definite pleasure in the act of intercourse. There has grown up a masculine mythology suppressing and distorting all the facts of women's sexual and maternal emotions. Thus we find even an expert biologist like Walter Heape assuming that sexual gratification is a matter of indifference to women and only of moment to them as an indispensable prelude to motherhood.[6]

It is this complacent blindness and dogmatism which needs to be met by a perfectly candid and explicit statement of the women's point of view. In their individual attitude towards maternity as a matter of choice, women show the very wide range of diversity which is characteristic of them in all the functions and emotions of sex. But when the chance of refusing compulsory motherhood is offered them, women of the most diverse types of temperament (so long as all intelligence and spirit has not been crushed out of them) respond with eager gratitude. Under proper conditions, the majority of women would probably prefer to have more than one child. Even women who were not specially philoprogenitive or domestic, would probably prefer to experience maternity at their own choice of times, circumstances, and father of their child. The birth-control movement, far from being a movement for general sterilisation, is the expression of a more intelligent and discriminative maternal love.

[6] *Feminism & Sex Antagonism*, by Walter Heape, F.R.S., F.Z.S., London, Constable, 1913.

And here the sentimental idolaters of motherhood may be reminded that thousands of women of a strongly maternal type, who love children and would be devotedly happy with a child of their own, are condemned by the obsolescent patriarchal system and the sickly chastity tabus consecrated by religion, to remain without their deepest instinctive need. We women are out to smash compulsory sterility, with its tragedy of bitterness and disease, just as much as compulsory maternity.

Our point in regard to this claim has been wantonly obscured by the putrescent remnants of canon law, and by the carefully cultivated ignorance of women concerning their own physiology—an ignorance still responsible for much gratuitous suffering. The right to prevent the conception of life must logically and justly include the right to remove the life-seed which has been fertilised against the mother's will, either through accident or intention.[7] No woman's right is more fundamental than this, and none has been more disregarded. Yet if abortion be procured in the first or second months of pregnancy, no sentient life is destroyed; and if the operation be effected with proper skill and care, under cleanly and sanitary conditions, it need have no injurious effects on the mother. No country, in the past or in the present, has ever succeeded in extirpating abortion by the severest legal penalties: what has been done is to create a criminal occupation, and a largely criminal class; to endow blackmail;[8] and to ruin the health and sanity of many women.

[7] This right has been vindicated by certain feminists in Scandinavia and Germany.

[8] An appalling case, in which hundreds of women were blackmailed by scoundrels who advertised as pharmacists, is recorded in *A History of Penal Methods,* by George Ives.

To a really humane and rational age, none of our established sexual or social barbarisms will seem more hideous than this: that even when conception was the result of rape, the woman's right to abortion was denied. Consider the recent decisions of the French Government, concerning the French women and girls who were with child as a result of abuse by the invading enemy. The most cumbrous methods—change of name and residence, and state rearing of the children (unhappy children whose origin will never be forgotten against them!)—were adopted: rather than that women's right over their own bodies should be officially admitted.

Note that I do not defend the destruction of the life of the unborn child at seven months. But in the early stages of gestation it should be the woman's absolute right to say whether her incipient burden shall develop or not. If her decision is in the negative, the resources of science should be at her disposal for its execution.

The right of abortion is also an indispensable second line of defence, pending the invention and circulation of an absolutely reliable preventive. There is no doubt that existing methods might be greatly improved. Here is a humane field for our constructive experimental chemists.

I do not doubt that in the finer social order for which some of us are working (in however insignificant and piecemeal a fashion), abortion will be very rare. But it will be recognised, and respected as an individual right.

The hope of any amelioration of sexual habits and of any increase of human happiness in this direction lies in the power to differentiate between the erotic and the reproductive functions, and in bringing the exercise of the

latter completely under volitional control. This is also the only line of freedom and a more varied and active life for women. It is a sheer confusion of the issue to maintain that birth-control is synonymous with desexualisation. Undoubtedly the patriarchal family tends to produce a profound disparity between the sexual impulse of men and women respectively. The chastity tabu on unmarried women puts a premium on infanticide and enormously fosters secret self-abuse. On the other hand a group of powerful vested interests, and a whole despised and demoralised social class, live on the stimulation of sexual desire, of the crudest type, among men. These conditions do not seem to some of us very admirable, and if they are final and irrevocable we should, on the whole, prefer extinction. No doubt sexual anæsthesia [9] among a large percentage of "civilised" women presents a cruelly difficult problem to the more refined type of man, who desires an equal and actively responsive mate. The remedy is to make the conditions of women's sex life more dignified and congenial, to free women from that terror of undesired pregnancy which is so often a source of incomplete gratification and nervous ruin.

Excessive and rapid childbearing is also sexually devitalising, and many women have been exhausted by maternity before they were able to enjoy and benefit by sexual relations.

No doubt the quality of the race is not improved when many of its most intelligent, determined, and morally

[9] In judging this point, women's sexual variability is often forgotten. Apparent sexual anæsthesia may mean constitutional anæmia —and a stupid or clumsy lover.

elevated women refuse maternity. But these women will have love and children under conditions which do not offend against their own human dignity, conscience, and reason, or—not at all. Education and social readjustments are necessary here; and an attitude of greater sympathy and consideration for the more diffused and complex sexual requirements of women.

The whole power of voluntary maternity to improve the race is intimately dependent on free sexual selection by women. It should be for them to choose whether they will have children or not: and if so, how many, at what intervals, and with whom.

This will imply revolutionary changes in all departments; but it will also imply the development of hitherto isolated human harmonies, of intense and vivid variations of faculty and type, in however remote a future. Meanwhile, the birth-strike is already, and increasingly, practical politics.

EDITORIAL SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

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IN the selection of contributions to this symposium on population and birth-control, it seemed needless to the editors to invite discussion on the moral bearing of the question. To those who were good enough to compose essays to fill special gaps in the argument, the suggestion was made that detailed reference to moral issues would be superfluous. For in our view it is preposterous to stigmatise birth-control as immoral, absurd to involve antiquated religious sanctions and outworn legal enactments against a practice almost universally adopted by self-respecting persons who can acquire the necessary knowledge. What is *customary* among normal human beings is *moral* or *ethical* in the narrower sense of these terms (derivatively, the words all mean the same thing); and those who, in order to fulminate against customary actions, borrow the lightnings of mediæval theologians, succeed merely in making themselves somewhat ridiculous.

But there is a wider sense in which the moral objection deserves serious consideration, the objection of those who, like Halford (supra, p. 238), consider that "to be truly moral, conduct must be regulated by its effect upon the community as a whole." We may agree that the civilised human being will not ignore communal reactions, but this is not to say, as Halford seems to imply, that it is the duty of men, and still more the duty of women, to procre-

ate undesired children for the sake of an abstract entity, the race, the community, or the state. We need not echo Hilda Wangel's impatient exclamation against "that ugly, horrid word 'duty,'" but we can at least say of duty, as was so finely said of liberty, "How many crimes are committed in thy name!" To prove this, it is unnecessary to go back to the times when the holy inquisition flourished in Europe; we need merely look around us to-day. To ask a woman to bear an undesired child for the sake of "stern duty, daughter of the voice of the state," is to commit a crime, and to make of the state or of the race what Stirner aptly termed a spook. "Thou shalt not exploit" is not merely the premier commandment, but the essence of the entire decalogue; and to exploit a woman's faculty for maternity, to do this for the sake of the community, present or to come, is, in our view, an immoral action. It is customary, of course, but it is repugnant to the higher civilised sentiment of the day, and will therefore be neither customary nor ethical in the commonwealth of to-morrow. This is the aspect of the matter that is so spiritedly voiced by Stella Browne. None the less we agree with Halford that those who favour the practice of birth-control (the advisability of which, under conditions, he himself frankly recognises in the second paragraph of his essay) would err should they fail to take into consideration the possibly unfavourable reactions of the measures they advocate, and should they fail to point out how these contingent social disadvantages may best be obviated. To this matter we shall return.

It will be profitable to discuss here, in the light of Achille Loria's luminous exposition, the bearing of

Malthus' theory of population upon the problem of birth-control. In all the writings of this distinguished Italian economist, the pressure of increasing population is treated as a prime factor of social evolution. But in the essay translated for the present volume he shows that while Malthus elucidated a profoundly important truth, the author of the *Essay on Population* erred in respect of many of its applications. In existing conditions, at any rate (i. e., under capitalism), there is no general excess of population over food supply, but merely, in certain countries, an excess of people in relation to the privately owned capital which is able to secure profitable investment —a very different matter. Hence, as a result, not of over-population, but simply of capitalist conditions, we have, in addition to the mass of the workers who obtain subsistence, on the one hand the owning class with a superfluity, and on the other a parasitic class of dependents, paupers, semi-criminals, and criminals. Loria contends, further, that Malthus' theory is invalidated by the ascertained fact that, as far as human beings are concerned, an excess of food over population does not necessarily lead to an increasing birth-rate, that a rising standard of life is nowadays apt to be characterised by diminished procreation. Elsewhere than in the Malthus essay, apropos of the risk of over-population, he writes of certain post-malthusian applications of Malthus' theory: "Some also suggest various physiological expedients—the obscene abominations of the so-called Neo-Malthusians—to limit population. Do they not see that there is no excess of mouths to be fed, and that procreation will of itself diminish with the amelioration of the condition of the working

classes, without recourse to loathsome and unnatural practices.''[1] Terms of abuse, such as ''obscene abominations'' and ''loathsome practices,'' may be ignored by the scientific controversialist, and the significance of the accusation that birth-control is ''unnatural'' will be reserved for subsequent consideration. Suffice it to point out that in the passage quoted, and repeatedly in the *Malthus,* Loria fails oddly, for so acute a mind, in his analysis of operating causes. As a result of a rising standard of life—consequent upon improved economic conditions among the proletariat—the labourers, we are told, ''become less prolific.''[2] Thus the growth of population is ''automatically'' regulated by economic means, and it is needless to have recourse to ''physiological expedients'' to limit population. Yet nowhere does Loria attempt to elucidate the working of this economic factor, or to show how it can possibly operate unless precisely in virtue of what he is so strangely and so inconsistently moved to condemn, namely the deliberate application of physiological knowledge, by individual couples, in order to regulate the size of their families. In a word, by birth-control. Bernstein's error is analogous to that of Loria when the German socialist declares (supra, p. 166) that the labour movement ''exercises an influence in favour of the restriction of births . . . quite independently of any direct aid from the Malthusians.'' Doubtless knowledge of the possibilities of birth-control will, in favourable circumstances, spread slowly from individual to individual, even among the more

[1] Loria, *Contemporary Social Problems,* Swan Sonnenschein, London, 1911, p. 79.

[2] Op. cit., p. 80.

ignorant strata of the community, as happened presumably in eighteenth century rural France. But information as to the most approved methods is rarely thus acquired, and it seems to us preposterous to deny that the existence of a group of enthusiasts, well-educated, inspired with the zeal of the propagandist, and even with that of the martyr, has had a potent direct influence upon the natality statistics of the last forty years.

This leads us to examine Manschke's contention that the observed decline in the birth-rate, beginning in France in the middle of the eighteenth century (for, as a reference to Quessel will show, Dunlop is mistaken in dating it from the Revolution), manifesting itself a century later in England, and subsequently spreading, as if by contagion, to Germany and the other countries of western Europe, is not due to the adoption of deliberate measures, but is dependent upon a spontaneous physiological decline in fertility. Manschke's figures are interesting, but they fail to prove his case. Admitting the increase in stillbirths, operative deliveries, etc., and ignoring the possibility that (as in the analogous case of the alleged increase in the prevalence of insanity) this increase may in large part be apparent merely, due to a progressive improvement in statistical records, we must dispute the contention that there is any manifestation here of a spontaneous decline in the capacity for child-bearing. As far as the female partner in the sexual act is concerned, the capacity for child-bearing depends upon three factors—the capacity for conception, the capacity for successful gestation and parturition, and the capacity for rearing the offspring. Manschke's figures have no bearing whatever upon the

first-named element, and this is the one with which we are mainly concerned, for the decline he shows to exist in the capacity for successful gestation and parturition, and the decline in the capacity for the successful rearing of infant life, are utterly incompetent quantitatively to account for the observed decline in the birth-rate and for the circumstances in which that decline has become apparent. His assumption of a decline in woman's capacity for conception is far more baseless than the assumption to which he takes exception, that the observed failure to conceive is the outcome of deliberate interference. The phenomenon to which he draws attention deserves careful study. It is important that we should ascertain why increased urban life, why capitalist civilisation, should have these disastrous accompaniments, and some of us may have a shrewd idea where to look for the root of the mischief—but the matter has little bearing, either positive or negative, upon the question of birth-control. Manschke lays much stress upon the absence of direct statistical evidence that the fall in the birth-rate is due to the use of contraceptives. He might as reasonably complain that, in the absence of direct evidence, hundreds of men are executed every year for murder. People do not (except in war time) make a point of killing one another *coram publico,* and if circumstantial evidence were to be ruled out of court a great many murderers would escape judicial punishment. Similarly as regards birth-control. In this respect we live in an age of transition, and the majority of those who use contraceptives do not trumpet their doings from the housetops. They are not ashamed of their actions; they pass on information quietly to their friends;

but, in view of the continued prevalence of widespread prejudice, they avoid undue publicity. When we have outgrown certain musty conventions regarding sex, direct statistical data will doubtless be available. Meanwhile, many of us use contraceptives, and are perfectly frank about the matter; many of us have advised friends and patients where to get contraceptives and how to employ them; there will be few readers of this book who will not number among their personal acquaintances many young married couples, childless or with very few children, whose use of contraceptives may be considered a moral (or immoral) certainty. The opponents of birth-control have no doubt where the enemy lurks: they clamour for repressive legislation. Need those who favour conscious procreation seriously doubt that the general adoption of the practice is the main cause of the decline in the birth-rate?

When we find that so cautious a sociologist as Havelock Ellis assures us that "the whole tendency of civilisation is to reduce the birth-rate";[3] when, with Ellis and in defiance of Manschke and of Loria, we believe that the fall in the birth-rate is mainly due to deliberate birth-control; when we refuse to condemn on abstract moral grounds a practice thus universally characteristic of advancing civilisation, and (as Halford, to give but one instance, conclusively shows) predominantly adopted by the more intelligent and therefore presumably the more "moral" members of these advanced communities—what remains but to look upon the problem as one of pure expediency, and to ask ourselves what are the comparative advantages and disadvantages, respectively individual and

[3] Havelock Ellis, *Essays in War-Time.*

social, of this new phenomenon of conscious procreation?

The most comprehensive claim on behalf of birth-control is that put forward many years ago by George Drysdale in his *Elements of Social Science* (first published in London in the year 1854), and ably voiced in the present volume by his nephew, Charles V. Drysdale, to the effect that birth-control will *per se* suffice to solve the problem of poverty. These writers are anti-socialist, but the same contention is urged by certain socialist and syndicalist advocates of *la grève des ventres.* It is hard to allow the claim in its entirety. The cause of poverty to-day is not so much pressure of population upon the means of subsistence, as a defective distribution of those means owing to the nature of the economic system now dominant. The matter is so brilliantly elucidated by Loria that it is needless to recapitulate his arguments. So long as the means of production are privately owned and used primarily for the furnishing of private profit, it is difficult to understand how any restriction of proletarian births could completely solve the social problem, though it might well prove a powerful adjuvant. Birth-control would here act like abstinence from alcohol. This latter, in a society in which a tendency to the abuse of alcohol is prevalent greatly favours the economic welfare of the abstainer, and redounds to the advantage of his family; but directly the society as a whole becomes abstinent, the preponderant advantage to the individual abstainer is cancelled. One whom the French Malthusians term a *père lapin* is worse off than his fellow workmen who adopt the two-children system; but the total disappearance of *père-lapinisme* would not lead to the cessation of economic competition

between individual workers, nor would it put an end to the class struggle between workers and capitalists; it would merely deprive the father of a restricted family of his present comparative advantage. In France, restriction of births is now so general as practically to furnish a test case. As far as urban districts are concerned, large families are exceedingly rare. In a land where the housing standard is set by childless, one-child, and two-children households, the indiscriminate procreator and his family have to suffer almost intolerable hardships, and their woes bulk largely in the newspapers during the "general post" which takes place among Parisian tenants on each succeeding quarter day. At these times, the *familles nombreuses* have to be housed by the municipalities until landlords willing to accommodate can at length be discovered. But the number of such exceptions is in actual fact so small that something closely approximating to the birth-strike is a reality among town operatives. Now the present writers are not relying on hearsay evidence, but upon personal observation as residents in working-class quarters of Paris, when they assert that, in accordance with the iron law of wages, the subsistence level is that of a small family. The French working man and woman, with average families of one to three, are no better off than their English compeers with average families of three to five. In Paris a far larger proportion of these small families live in one room tenements than is customary in London, and they pay the same rent for a single room that a similar but larger London family pays for two rooms or three. In other respects the standard of life is much the same in the two countries. Special advantages, where they exist,

are due to effective trade union action and to other causes which operate in France as they do in England in practical independence of the question of birth-control. Further, wherever birth-control is so effective as to limit the supply of labour demanded by productive capital, the results are those ably sketched by Quessel in the present book. To supply the deficiency, foreign labour is imported from more prolific lands, and the national integrity is threatened. We may be told that the remedy is, as in Australia, to prohibit such import, but this measure has not eliminated poverty in Australia, nor has it hitherto. "Labour governments" notwithstanding, threatened there to effect the final overthrow of capitalist domination. Possibly if there were no "more prolific lands" to furnish an unlimited supply of proletarians, the economic power of the birth-strike would be more effective. Since this is but one among several instances in which the deficiencies and dangers of birth-control might be overcome if its practice could but be universalised, the further consideration of the matter may be deferred. Meanwhile, let those who find Drysdale's arguments, so ably marshalled, thoroughly convincing, turn back to pages 35 to 38 in Loria's essay, and reconsider these. Loria does not contend that insufficiency of food may not be a cause of poverty, but he provides ample ground for the conclusion that such insufficiency is not the main cause of poverty under capitalism, and he supplies cogent reason for believing that birth-control would not alone suffice to render poverty unknown. He shows that even Malthus confusedly recognised this truth.

Another important advantage claimed for birth-restric-

tion is that it will prevent war. Dunlop urges this view in a brief contribution to our symposium, illustrated by a striking map. His contention is endorsed by the high authority of Havelock Ellis, who writes (op. cit., p. 65): "If we survey the belligerent nations in the war we may say that those which took the initiative in drawing it on, or at all events were most prepared to welcome it, were Russia, Austria, Germany, and Serbia. We may also note that these include nearly all the nations in Europe with a high birth-rate. We may further note that they are all nations which—putting aside their cultural summits and taking them in the mass—are among the most backward in Europe; the fall in the birth-rate has not yet had time to permeate them. On the other hand, of the belligerent peoples of to-day, all indications point to the French as the people most intolerant, silently but deeply, of the war they are so ably and heroically waging. Yet the France of the present, with the lowest birth-rate and the highest civilisation, was a century ago the France of a birth-rate higher than that of Germany to-day, the most militarist and aggressive of nations, a perpetual menace to Europe. For all those among us who have faith in civilisation and humanity, and are unable to believe that war can ever be a civilising or humanising method of progress, it must be a daily prayer that the fall of the birth-rate may be hastened."

In the report of the so-called National Birth-Rate Commission recently held in this country under the auspices of the National Council for Public Morals, we read: "A pressure of population in any country brings as a chief historic consequence overflows and migrations into neigh-

bouring or other accessible countries, not only for peaceful settlement but also for conquest and for the subjugation and exploitation of weaker peoples. This always remains a chief cause of international disputes and wars."[4] Mrs. Billington-Greig writes still more uncompromisingly: "This present inferno of destruction in Europe is due to the pressure of population. The rate of increase of the German people is rapid. The Kaiser's claim for a place in the sun is merely the claim for food and drink for the flood of German babies. The German people have been brought to welcome and rejoice in a warfare of aggression, not so much by militarist propaganda as by the ever-increasing pressure of their numbers. On their east frontier they had also the menace of a Russia increasing even more rapidly than themselves, and all history went to assure them that an outlet would be found for the Russian millions across their borders within another generation, unless they first took the initiative. This is a very rough presentment economically and internationally of what the lack of restriction of births means for us, of what it has meant all down the ages."[5]

A distinguished German sociologist, likewise writing since the outbreak of the war, declares that Europe should fortify the peoples of the east against their domestic oppressors, thus creating for itself allies from among these same peoples. "No longer, then, will the swarming masses of the east be a menace to the west, a menace against

[4] *The Declining Birth-Rate: Its Causes and Effects,* Chapman and Hall, London, 1916, p. 43.

[5] Billington-Greig, *Commonsense on the Population Question,* Malthusian League, London, p. 10.

which the west must provide by rivalry in armaments and rivalry in uncontrolled procreation."[6] Finally, to quote but one more authority, William Archer, writing on *The Education Problem* in the *Daily News* of January 4, 1917, concludes his article with the words: "It is certain that if no check is ever to be placed on human fecundity, wars of conquest and extermination can never end."

Imposing as is this array of opinions (and many more might be cited), the editors are by no means convinced, either that pressure of population was the main cause of the present war, or that the universalisation of birth-control would suffice to prevent war in the future. Grant that in certain stages of human evolution pressure of population upon the means of subsistence was the leading and ofttimes the sole cause of war, grant with Malthus that this was the main factor in inducing the barbarian migrations of the epoch that bridged the gulf between the classical and the modern world (though even as far as these movements of population are concerned few will be so bold as to deny that sheer human pugnacity and love of adventure may have been a contributory cause), there are other economic phases wherein the motive forces of war are of a very different character. What evidence is there that the aggressive wars of later republican and of imperialist Rome were the outcome of over-population; what evidence is there that the imperialist conquests of Spain during the sixteenth century or those of England during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, were conditioned by the pressure of population upon the means of

[6] Rudolf Goldscheid, *Deutschlands grösste Gefahr*, Orell Füssli, Zurich, 1916. p. 35.

subsistence? There is no such evidence. They were due (once more ignoring wanderlust and innate pugnacity) to economic causes of a very different kind, to the desire of dominant classes to augment their wealth and to aggrandise their position by the exploitation of more backward races. We will not enter into the vexed question of the causes of the war that is now raging. Suffice it to express the belief that the dispassionate historians of a later age will decide that pressure of population was but a subsidiary factor, and that, apart from the instinctive combativeness of semi-civilised humanity, and apart from the widespread influence of misrepresentations and misunderstandings, the leading determinant was the rivalry of capitalist imperialisms. Surely the unimportance of pressure of population in Germany is sufficiently proved by Quessel's account of the regions in eastern and western Germany in which the dominance of the German type is threatened, just as the dominance of the French type is threatened in certain districts of France, by the flood of alien proletarian immigration?

The same considerations apply to the future. Restriction of births is for many reasons eminently desirable, but we shall delude ourselves if we believe that the universalisation of the practice will, *unaided*, prove competent to suppress the menace of war. Dunlop terminates his paper with the enquiry: "Can you imagine war occurring if no one in the world had more than two children?" We answer: "We can imagine it very well, so long as large-scale exploitation continues. While the government of 'civilised' nations remains in the hands of profiteering classes, other causes of war will continue to operate,

causes which no restriction of population, however effective, could possibly put out of action."

Let us turn from these social advantages of birth-control which, though realisable to a degree, are not, we think, realisable in the completeness anticipated by certain enthusiasts, to consider the individual advantages likely to accrue from conscious procreation. Some of these need not be discussed at length, for they are familiar to all. It is precisely because the individual benefits are so plain, that the practice of birth-control makes unceasing progress, so that the more fanatical among its opponents, those with an eye only for its real or fancied social dangers, are led to clamour (as fanatics invariably clamour) for repressive legislation. People would not interfere with the natural consequences of the sexual act unless experience showed that, under present conditions, such interference promotes material wellbeing. Let us never speak slightingly of the desire for material well-being. Whether it be or be not man's leading need, it is at any rate the first of all his needs, and if it can be satisfied (without exploitation, active or passive, and without excess) we may trust that the other graces will follow in their proper places.

Like most other questions in our "man-made world," birth-control has until quite recently been mainly regarded as a man's question. But of late, in England, Germany, France, and Italy, and not least in the United States, it has been brought much to the fore by women, and as a matter concerning individual women and children even more than individual men. In the case of children the benefits of birth restriction are overwhelming.

Not only is the decline in fitness among the later children of a large family established beyond the possibility of dispute, but it is obvious on a priori grounds that a few children can be better cared for by their parents than can many, and that a reduction in the ratio between children and adults throughout the community will enormously facilitate the solution of educational problems, rendering it possible to have smaller classes in our schools, and in various other ways enabling the reduced numbers of children to receive more of that intelligent individual care and attention which is the central feature of sound education. As we write there comes to hand a letter from a personal friend, a skilled manual worker in a large midland town. Apropos of the problems of heredity and environment, he says: "The smaller families now common among the artisan class are hopeful in so far as environment is a factor in the child's development. Generally the children are better nourished and placed in the world with a much greater regard to the child's wishes and general aptitudes, than among the labouring classes with their much larger families." We do not deny that many large families are wonderfully well cared for, among the poor no less than among the well-to-do. But on the average, wherever *lapinisme* prevails we have numbers of neglected children, a fact to which the fall in the youthful death-rate that invariably follows a fall in the birth-rate bears eloquent testimony.

But it is when we come to consider the individual woman that we find the advantages of birth-control overwhelming. It is not needful to discuss the matter in detail, since the possibilities are eloquently set forth in the essay on *Women*

and Birth-Control. If a word of cautious editorial criticism be permissible, we would say that while we fully agree with Stella Browne that enforced maternity is "an outrage and a vile cruelty to both mother and child," we think that in her observations on page 252 she is inclined to replace by a new feminine mythology the masculine mythology which she tells us (truly enough) has gathered round motherhood. The connection between the mother and the child *in utero* is not of such a character as to render it likely that "an enormous percentage of physical degeneracy, of deficient vitality, and obscure perversions of instinct and will, are due to the unwilling and unloving conception and gestation of such life"; and we venture to express the opinion that the personal observations to which the writer appeals are likely, on close analysis, to prove no less unconvincing than those commonly adduced in support of the belief in telegony and in maternal impressions in general. But we pass from minor points of difference between the editors and Stella Browne to envisage the social reactions of the change in the status of womanhood that will ensue upon the generalisation of birth-control.

Many influences are co-operating in modern social life to secure the economic independence of women, but among these influences the factor we are now considering will prove in the end more potent than all the others combined. For not merely will birth-control render motherhood a purely voluntary profession, enable women to remain independent wage earners for as long as they please; but further, as will be shown in the sequel, it will positively compel the community to endow motherhood, and will thus

render all adult women, married as well as unmarried, and with or without children, completely independent of the economic caprices of the individual male. This will assuredly remove the economic pressure which is one of the potent factors in keeping up the supply of women for the modern slave market of prostitution. It will not suffice *per se* to abolish prostitution; but it will diminish its prevalence and will transform its characteristics in ways whose consideration lies beyond our present scope. On the one hand, while the curtailment of opportunities for casual and purchased sexual gratification will intensify the masculine need for early marriage, the practice of birth-control will, on the other, enormously facilitate this desirable consummation. (Incidentally, the decline in the prevalence of prostitution will greatly simplify the problem of preventing venereal disease—another notable social gain.) But only upon one condition will the consummation be thoroughly desirable. If marriage were to remain an inseparable bond, if marriage were still to be "wedlock," it had better be entered upon late rather than soon, for the unlikelihood of securing that suitability of temperament upon which conjugal happiness so largely depends would be enormously greater if unions necessarily permanent were to be formed between comparatively immature and entirely inexperienced couples. (Briefer, too, would be the period of misery under an ill-fitting yoke!) Now, in the past there have been two chief reasons for maintaining the institution of coercive marriage—the protection of women against being left economically defenceless with one or more children to support, and the protection of the community against the liability of having

to provide for such mothers and their children. But the whole case for coercive marriage falls to the ground if motherhood becomes a voluntary act and if motherhood be endowed. People will marry, as of old, that is to say they will enter into publicly acknowledged sexual unions in the hope that these unions will prove enduring. But for various reasons, and not least because they will wish before rearing a family to feel reasonably secure of the permanence of their mutual affection, they will not as a rule begin parenthood until they have lived together for a considerable time. All marriages will, in fact, be trial marriages. To many contemporary minds, to not a few even among the advocates of birth-control, the idea will be alarming, if not actually repulsive. But to the present writers, not only does trial marriage seem an inevitable outcome of the diffusion of knowledge of birth-control, but, under the changed circumstances, they welcome the institution as certain to have the most widely beneficial social reactions. The matter cannot now be further considered, and we will content ourselves with referring those interested in the outlooks thus opened to a recently published sociological study by a German writer of established repute.[7]

If, however, in these directions the effects of birth-control will be revolutionary, greatly improving individual status, and radically transforming the social environment for the general advantage, there are two ways in which the practice entails dangers of the gravest character. These dangers are interrelated, and both are fully discussed in

[7] Grete Meisel-Hess, *The Sexual Crisis.* Critic and Guide Co., New York, 1916.

our symposium, for Halford, in especial, dwells upon the tendency of injudicious and partial restriction of births within each national unit to promote the preferential survival of the unfit; while Quessel, in all three of his contributions, shows how less prolific racial and national types, assumed by him to be superior, are threatened with extinction by the preponderant procreation of inferior or at any rate less advanced national and racial stocks. In both cases the same dysgenist influence is at work, and the greater fertility of the less fit is tending to reverse the gains of biological and social evolution. We may appreciate much of Bernstein's shrewd criticism of Quessel's nationalism; we may agree with Techet, whose admirable *Völker, Vaterländer and Fürsten* Bernstein quotes, that every civilisation is built up by racial minglings; we may go further than either Bernstein or Techet, and consider that new ideas contribute more potently than new blood to the upbuilding of a progressive civilisation; we may be inclined to criticise Halford's assumption (strange in a socialist, though supported by the general drift of Niceforo's investigations concerning the anthropology of the non-possessing classes) that the dominant classes of capitalist civilisation and those who make their way into these classes from beneath are of superior biologic type —and we may yet feel that we cannot contemplate with perfect equanimity the lesson of Halford's figures, the menace of race suicide in the United States, or the possibility mooted by Quessel that the German type is destined to submergence beneath the flood of Slav alien immigration. When (p. 170) Bernstein, speaking of race suicide, cheerfully declares, "we are so far from such a pos-

sibility that no ground exists for speaking of a problem," he reminds us of those Gallios who, if we ask what is going to happen to our civilisation and to the industrial system upon which it is at present based when, within a few brief centuries, the coal measures will be exhausted, reply without concern, "Take short views! The coal will last our time; and when the problem presses the men of science will find out how to tap some new source of energy." The sociologist is one whose business it is to take long views, and when Quessel lays stress upon certain tendencies which, *if not counteracted,* will before long produce undesirable social results, he shows himself a more thoughtful sociologist than Bernstein.

As regards the United States it is not necessary to add much to the facts and figures adduced by Quessel. Immigration from eastern Europe has been suspended by the war, and it is by no means certain that the suspension will be brief. But there are other sources of supply, and the problem will persist even though its form be changed. Apart from the outcries of those whose national emotions are genuinely stirred but whose outlook is unquestionably narrow, there are many thoughtful observers to whom this American problem presents itself as a matter for grave anxiety. E. A. Ross, for example, in his book, *The Old World and the New,* expresses the opinion that Slav immigration is bringing the middle ages into America, and is profoundly concerned lest what he calls the "pioneer breed" should be squeezed out by what he regards as refugees from inferior civilisations. Robert J. Sprague, again, a man free from spread-eagleism and far from unfriendly to the idea of birth-control, spoke

as follows in a lecture he recently delivered at the Massachusetts Agricultural College: "If the insufficient birth-rate of the upper classes were to continue, and we were obliged to get our increase in numbers either from the overflowing poverty-stricken families of foreign countries, or from the poor classes of our own population, I should say let us draw the increase from our own people, reared under our own flag, language, and customs, even though in poverty. The adoption of birth-control by poor families to the extent that it is practised by the economically higher classes will condemn this continent forever to be not only the mixing bowl of the world but the scrap heap of the races." America, however, is not yet a unified nation, though the great area of the United States has long been under unified rule. The question of national survival threatened by birth-control presents itself in its simplest form in the case of France, a national unit now for many centuries, and a land in which, though racial admixture is plentiful enough, a comparatively unified national type is unmistakable. Nor is the danger merely one of foreign immigration, for from the militarist point of view the risk involved in the more rapid multiplication of the German neighbours had attracted serious attention long before the present war, and had led to the foundation of the *Alliance Nationale pour l'Accroissement de la Population Française.*

It is usually preferable to let enthusiasts state their own case. With this end in view the editors procured a number of the publications of the *Alliance,* respectively entitled (we translate): *The Country is in Danger; How to Save France; Birth-Control and National Defence; We'll*

do for them—But afterwards? (This by a military man, the reproduction of a lecture delivered to soldiers at the front in July, 1916); *The Decline in the Birth-Rate and the Future of France.* The two first-named are mere pictorial squibs, of the familiar type of election literature, like those of the "big loaf campaign" in England or of the "honest dollar campaign" in the United States, and every picture could easily be countered by a similar *ex parte* reply. Numbers three and four, likewise, have little scientific value. But the last enumerated is a well-written pamphlet by Paul Gemähling, and had we been able to obtain permission to translate it we would gladly have incorporated it as a chapter in the present volume. The *Alliance,* however, refuses to countenance the reproduction *in extenso* abroad of the arguments which it thinks good enough for home consumption (justifying its refusal on the same patriotic grounds to which it appeals in its domestic propaganda), and we must therefore content ourselves with a summary.

Nations, contends Gemähling, must either increase or disappear; but while the population of France is stationary and even threatens to diminish, the population of neighbouring lands is increasing with alarming rapidity. In the year 1911 the births in France numbered 742,000, the deaths 776,000. During the years 1906-1910, per ten thousand inhabitants, the excess of births over deaths was, in Germany 141, in Great Britain 115, in Italy and in Austria-Hungary 113, in Belgium 87, and in France 5. In 1871, just after the Franco-German war, the population of France (36,000,000) was nearly equal to that of Germany (40,000,000), and was greater than that of Great Britain (31,000,000). What has been the subsequent

growth of population in Europe? For every 100 Russians living in 1871 there were 177 living in 1911. The corresponding increase in the other leading countries during the same period was: Germany, from 100 to 161; Great Britain, from 100 to 146; Austria-Hungary, from 100 to 137; Italy, from 100 to 129; France, from 100 to 109. Regarding Germany as the most dangerous neighbour, the following comparison is instructive. In 1850, there were 97 Germans for every 100 Frenchmen. In 1872, the ratio was 116:100. In 1911, it was 168:100. In 1926, if the movement of population in the respective countries is continued, if the Germans go on propagating at the present rate and if there is no further diminution in the French birth-rate, the ratio will be 200:100. In fifteen years (Gemähling was writing in 1911) the population of Germany will be double that of France.

The decline in the birth-rate, continues the writer, lies at the root of all the problems that press for solution in France. It is owing to this decline that France tends to fall out of the ranks of the great powers. Judged by population, in 1856 France was the second of the European states, Russia alone being more populous; but in 1910 France came sixth on the list—or seventh if Japan be counted among the great powers, for in the period named the population of Japan increased from 20,000,000 to 53,000,000. For the same reason, the influence of the French language and of French civilisation has been lessened throughout the world. The country's powers for defence are gravely compromised, for with fewer children she has fewer soldiers at her disposal. Her colonial expansion is hindered; she herself tends to be colonised by strangers.

She is under-populated, for she has but 74 inhabitants per square kilometre, whereas Germany has 120. Her economic development is enfeebled.

Nor, contends Gemähling, are these evils compensated by either material or spiritual benefits. There is an actual diminution in material wellbeing. Under modern conditions, the financial charges which the great nation has to meet are continually increasing, and in default of a proportional increase in population there is per head a heavier burden of taxation. Nor does the fall in birth-rate improve the condition of the working class, for when the economic life of society languishes in consequence of an arrest in the growth of population it is impossible that the workers should fail to suffer. Even if a reduction in their numbers should render it possible here or there for them to enforce the payment of better wages, the improvement is but temporary, for capital soon breaks the opposition by the import of foreign labour or by the multiplication of machines. As regards spiritual losses, to restrict the family would greatly limit possibilities for the production of genius. The writer quotes Henri Joly to the following effect: "If no one had ever had more than two children the world would have known neither Montaigne, nor Descartes, nor Richelieu. Had the family never exceeded three, there would have been no Michelangelo in Italy, no Cromwell in England, no Napoleon in France. Had the limit been four, Mozart and Mirabeau would never have seen the light. Benjamin Franklin was a fourteenth child." Another evil attendant on family limitation is that it increases the preponderance of elderly people in human society. Where the mature and the elderly are dispro-

portionately numerous, thrift and routinism are in favour, misoneism is rife, and the revolutionary and venturesome tendencies needful for great enterprises are discouraged. Legislation is likely to concern itself more with the interests of maturity and age than with those that concern youth and the future of the race.

Of all Gemähling's arguments, the two last seem to the editors to be of most enduring weight. But because in the past certain great geniuses would never have let their light shine into the world had their parents adopted the two-children-system, we need not therefore assume that the universal and rigid adoption of this system (a highly improbable event) would completely deprive us of geniuses. Even if we restrict our possibilities by limiting the field of production, it is the contention of the advocates of birth-control that we shall be enabled in the future, by improved nurture, to make a much better use of this restricted field. Of some of the geniuses mentioned by Joly it may be contended (no names need be named, and readers may make their own selection) that the world could have got on very well without them. Besides, our present tendency is to lay less stress on breeding giants than on elevating the race. A high average of faculty with thorough and judicious cultivation of that faculty is what the world needs for happiness and continued progress, and the means for securing this end are sketched in the essay on *Eugenics, Birth-Control, and Socialism.* In the future commonwealth, where the average of intelligence will be much higher than at present, genius will not be lacking, but it will necessarily be less conspicuous:

Ah, though the times, when some new thought can bud,
Are but as poet's seasons when they flower,
Yet seas, that daily gain upon the shore,
Have ebb and flow conditioning their march,
And slow and sure comes up the golden year.
When wealth no more shall rest in mounded heaps,
But smit with freer light shall slowly melt
In many streams to fatten lower lands.
And light shall spread, and man be liker man
Through all the season of the golden year.
Shall eagles not be eagles, wrens be wrens?
If all the world were falcons, what of that?
The wonder of the eagle were the less,
But he not less the eagle. Happy days
Roll onward, leading up the golden year.

More serious is the danger attributable to the preponderance of maturity and old age. Yet in a world in which young people were rarer, and in which their birth was a matter of choice not chance, they would certainly be better educated, and would perhaps be better valued. Age, too, is not simply a question of years. Largely it is a question of cares, and those who become parents in the early twenties of life, and bring up a numerous family, tend to age early. Premature elderliness and an excessive respect for the aged have ever been characteristic of exceptionally prolific races like the Japanese and the Jews. May not the admitted tendency of people to remain young longer than they did in our grand-parents' times be in large part due to the limitation of families and to the deferred parenthood characteristic of our own epoch? The possibility at any rate, is not one to be lightly dismissed. The counsels of youth and the counsels of maturity have always been essential to the good ordering of the world. The coun-

sels of senility have ever been disastrous. Two remedies suggest themselves as likely to counteract the prevalence of senile influences. The first is that as the world grows wiser we cease to revere age, qua age, having of late made much healthy progress in this respect. The second remedy is perhaps novel, and is considerably more radical. It will be lightly indicated in bringing this essay to a close.

Turning for the nonce to examine Gemähling's proposals for meeting an undeniable danger, we cannot but pronounce them disastrously absurd. "Increase or disappear" is to be the motto. Because Germany increases more rapidly than France, because Russia increases still more rapidly than Germany, the French are to hearken to the gospel expounded by Zola in *Fécondité;* they are to resuscitate *lapinisme;* they are to breed, breed, breed. At this rate, within a few generations, there will be positively no standing room left in Europe—and the slaughter of the war begun in 1914 will be as nothing to that which is to come. For the whole propaganda is conducted with an eye to the future military struggle. "Rivalry in armaments and rivalry in uncontrolled procreation!" It is no wonder that those Frenchmen who can contemplate the problems of civilisation only through the blood-tinted spectacles of the soldier should assure us, as Captain de Blic (author of *We'll do for them—But afterwards?*) gravely assures us, that neo-malthusian propaganda in France is encouraged and subsidised by Germany.

If we refuse to accept this nightmare vision of an increasingly prolific and increasingly militarised world, what is the alternative? There is but one, the universalisation of birth-control. Hardy, editor of *Le Néo-Malthusien,*

round whose name birth-control propaganda centres in France, as it centres in England round that of Drysdale, in Holland round that of Rutgers, and in America round that of Dr. Robinson, is unquestionably right when (arousing, doubtless, the virtuous and patriotic indignation of all the Captain de Blics of Germany) he declares in a letter addressed on October 19, 1916, to the French government of national defence: "The only way of avoiding a new catacylsm is to reduce the deplorable fertility of the more prolific races. Far from asking Frenchmen to imitate their enemies, we must, on the contrary, teach them our own wisdom. Peace and general disarmament will never become possible until, in every nation, births are regulated in accordance with the national resources. After the war, and even from this very hour, we must circulate by the hundred thousand in Germany pamphlets popularising the methods of birth-control.—To make a beginning, I beg permission to distribute among the German prisoners of war in this country a pamphlet on the subject which I published in Paris in the German language a few months before the outbreak of war. The pamphlet is entitled *Mittel zur Schwangerschaftsverhütung* (Means for the Prevention of Pregnancy), and will, I doubt not, secure among the prisoners a success comparable with that which attended its circulation in Germany at the time of its first publication.—Who can doubt that when the war is over the prisoners will pass on the information to their fellow countrymen? This pamphlet, or similar pamphlets, should be translated into all other languages, and above all into the Slav tongues, for the coming peril is the Slav peril. All governments desiring national security and

world peace should see to it that the necessary literature is circulated in enormous quantities."

These rival arguments, Gemähling's and Hardy's, may be illustrated by analogy. Let us suppose that among the nations of the world, four, A, B, C, and D, occupy leading positions, and that these four are neighbours. In one matter A is greatly behind the others, in respect of habits of personal cleanliness. The trouble is not merely æsthetic, for the A's are infested with body-lice, and typhus is consequently rife. Intercourse between these advanced nations is free, and the inhabitants of B, C, and D are seriously endangered by the dirt-engendered disease. Are they to join forces and exterminate their good friends of A? Apart from the other losses that would be involved, it is unquestionable that under the conditions of camp-life B, C, and D would also be ravaged by typhus. Are they to enclose A within a ring fence, and rigidly avoid all communications? In the modern world the suggestion is impracticable; and were it practicable B, C, and D would lose more than they would gain. Some vociferate that the only salvation for the peoples of B, C, and D is to return to the simple and uncleanly habits of their less artificialised forefathers, and to accept lice and typhus, with resignation and even with gratitude, as divinely ordained institutions. Others, more revolutionary, contend that the inhabitants of A should be taught to rid themselves of lice. To drop the parable, the remedy for the national perils attendant upon the partial application of birth-control is simple. The practice must be universalised.

Similiar considerations apply to the very real danger pointed out by Halford, and the same method must be

utilised to counteract the dysgenist tendencies of imperfectly adopted birth-control. For birth-control has come, and it has come to stay. The *Alliance Nationale*, like similar groups in other lands, demands the prohibition of neo-malthusian propaganda and desires to penalise the sale of contraceptives. The result of course, would be to stimulate the employment of comparatively undesirable expedients for birth-control, and to accentuate the dysgenist tendencies of the practice. In America, for instance, the coloured sections of the community and the most ignorant among the immigrants would continue to indulge in indiscriminate procreation, while the limitation of the Anglo-American stock would persist. In every community, racial questions apart, the better informed would still make use of the new knowledge, while the ignorant, kept ignorant by a reactionary law, would increase and multiply. Worst of all, there would be no legal means, no reputable means, no practical means of any kind, for realising the eugenist advantages of birth-control, for restricting the multiplication of the biologically unfit. Dysgenist tendencies would be reinforced, and eugenist tendencies would be counteracted. In these conditions, the gloomy vaticinations of Halford would to a large extent be fulfilled and racial degeneration would be inevitable. It is above all among the masses, and among the inferior stocks, that the knowledge of birth-control must be diffused with the utmost speed and by all possible means; hence the absurdity of repressive legislation; herein the supreme value of the work of such enthusiasts as Margaret Sanger.

Our analysis has shown that the benefits of birth-control are predominantly individual (with, it need hardly be re-

peated, important social reactions of a most advantageous character); and that the drawbacks and the dangers are predominantly social. Thus there is a justification and a need for social action in this matter; but, as we have seen, merely repressive measures could not fail to be disastrous. The community desiring to improve the quality of the population, and the community in which the need for a larger population is felt, will have to take appropriate means to check the multiplication of less desirable types, to promote the procreation of the biologically and socially fit, and, in case of need, to stimulate the growth of a more abundant population. Halford, indeed, assures us (supra, p. 236) that the goal of morality is the production of more life. Surely it is not *more* life but *better* life that is the supreme need? This is the answer to the injunctions of the militarists who tell us to multiply and to replenish the earth in order that there may be more soldiers, more munitioners, and ever more breeders of future soldiers and munitioners. That way madness lies, and many of us, while content to live out our own lives even in a militarised world, would certainly refuse to introduce "more life" into a world wherein military efficiency is to be the supreme test of civilisation. In Sylvia Pankhurst's recent pamphlet on *The Birth-Rate* we read: "Dr. Saleeby urged that the birth-rate must be increased in order to provide more soldiers. But women have no desire to produce mere cannon-food, and the determination is undoubtedly beginning to mature in the minds of many thoughtful women not to bear any more soldiers while conscription is able to claim their sons and war remains a menace." These sentiments are not confined to

women. For example, in a pamphlet published before the war, and entitled *Socialisme et Population*, Léon Marinont writes of the fall in the German birth-rate, and goes on to say: "The Germans, we see, are as little inclined to make children simply to be a mark for our lebels as we Frenchmen are inclined to make children who may be used to test the penetrative power of the German mausers."

We have a sufficiently robust faith in the human mind to believe, not merely that this war will come to an end, but that its lessons will perchance be so impressive as to relieve us before long of the worst aspects of militarism. In that case we shall not be forced to waste our energies, in a war after the war, upon a struggle which will find its extremest expressions in the birth strike against militarism on the one hand and in repressive measures against birth-control on the other. We shall have sane communities, willing to accept birth-control as they have accepted other advances in man's control over nature, willing, while wisely counteracting its disadvantages, to utilise its advantages to the full. The first thing, clearly, is to universalise the practice, to diffuse the new knowledge among all races and through all classes of the community. This alone will suffice to minimise the dangers indicated by Halford and by Quessel; and even if it will not inaugurate the social millennium (as suggested by Drysdale) nor put an end to war (as hoped by Dunlop) it will at any rate greatly ameliorate social conditions and will furnish powerful assistance in the war against war.

If the universalisation of birth-control should lead, in certain countries, to an actual decline in population, need this prospect alarm us? Is not density of population, like

capitalism and like modern industrialism, no more than a necessary but in many ways extremely disagreeable stage in human evolution? We quite agree with what Loria (supra, pp. 38-41) writes of the stimulus to progress afforded by pressure of population, but there is no reason why humanity, grown self-conscious, should continue for all time to require such a goad. The *Alliance Nationale* complains that France is under-populated as compared with Germany. To a large extent the figures are fictitious, for, as in all advanced industrial communities, the growth of German population is predominantly urban, while in the rural districts of Germany, people are by no means thick on the ground. As regards the countryside, the writers, who have tramped several thousand kilometres on French byways, are convinced that France is grossly over-populated; and the same is true, though perhaps to a less extent, of many regions in rural England. Turning to the industrial and urban areas, and fixing our minds on the ideal, not of more life but of better life, not of quantity but of quality, cannot we look forward with joy rather than with mere equanimity to a future in which such abominations as the English black country, such spreading cancers as Paris, London, and Chicago, will be the almost forgotten nightmares of a remote past? And whatever our individual tastes may be, the time will assuredly come in which the exhaustion of the coal measures will enforce upon the world a more reasonable standard of population. But even if we do not look so far as this into the future, we can at least recognise that the communities of a morrow that is already dawning will attempt to formulate some idea of what population is most desirable for the areas they re-

spectively occupy, and will seek reasonable means of securing that population. They will not leave the matter to all the desperate hazards of fortuitous immigration and promiscuous breeding, but will encourage the growth or the restriction of population as circumstances may dictate. Now so long as social conditions remain of the present, in many ways extremely undesirable, type, it is probable that the universalisation of birth-control (inevitable if humanity is to be saved from racial degeneration and if civilisation is to be preserved from destruction by militarism) will be followed by a notable tendency to the dwindling of population. Personal and family egoism—commendable egoism—can hardly fail to lead to this result. The community, desiring to maintain population, will be forced to react from motives of self-preservation. Since, *ex hypothesi,* it cannot react by repressive measures, it must react in the only other way possible, by the provision of advantages to the parents of a certain number of children. The sole practicable method is the endowment of motherhood, and this reform, essential on other grounds besides the one now under consideration, will have social reactions of the most revolutionary and far-reaching character. The extent of the endowment, the number of children to which it applies, the conditions under which it is given, and numerous other details, will vary in accordance with the good sense and experience of the community, in accordance with the increase in our understanding of eugenics, and in accordance with the degree to which it is desirable to stimulate or to repress the growth of population. The essential point is that (like eugenics and social-

ism) birth-control and the endowment of motherhood are reciprocal necessities.

Birth-control, eugenics, socialism, and the endowment of motherhood, are but fresh extensions of the principle of man's control over nature, that nature of which man himself, and man's social environment, are parts. The control of inanimate nature is of very old date. It began as soon as man became man; it marked his emergence from the status of merely instinctive animality. But the application of conscious purpose and deliberate will to man's own nature, and to the social milieu wherein "human nature" is so largely fashioned, are of comparatively recent growth, and are full of hope for the future. This is the answer to those who tell us that birth-control is "unnatural." So is clothing, so is fire, so is articulate speech. All these are essentially human characteristics, by which man is distinguished from his brute forbears; all these are "artificial," but we do not propose to abandon them on that account. Having discovered them, we endeavour to use them wisely, to make them our servants instead of our masters, as with nature in general. Birth-control? Why not? And why not, too, death-control? Loria tells us (supra, p. 14) that Godwin and the elder Malthus "looked forward to the coming of a social system founded upon equality and anarchy, which was to bring universal wellbeing and even physical immortality." Death-control in that sense is perhaps undesirable, and is certainly beyond our grasp. But the death-control that will enable us to choose our own time for leaving the world is just as much within our power as the birth-control that enables us to determine when we shall bring new life into

the world. Not by a "fixed period" like that of Britannula in Trollope's novel, imposed upon reluctant elders by an authoritative state, but by the free choice of those who, having enjoyed to the utmost the splendours and the delights of life and of love, are ready to depart when the time is ripe, unwilling to lag superfluous on the stage, loath to spoil the record of a fine existence by degenerating into exploiters, and reluctant to lose the savour of independent struggle amid the parasitic miseries of decrepitude. Voluntary death-control is the remedy for the curse of senility in a world that exists for the young and for the mature. A free spirit will not create undesired life, nor continue a life desirable neither to self nor to others.

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