

MORALITY AND BIRTH-CONTROL.

(THEORY AND PRACTICE)

R. D. KARVE.

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BY

R. D. KARVE, M.A. (Bom.)

Diplôme d'Etudes Supérieures (Paris).

*Late Professor of Mathematics,
Gujerath College, Ahmedabad.*

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FOREWORD.

The subject of this booklet is, in my opinion, of paramount importance, not only to those who can lay aside their egotism for a time at least and give a thought to the welfare of humanity in general, but even to those who are so utterly taken up, perhaps in spite of themselves, by family worries that they have neither the time nor the inclination to think on altruistic matters. In fact, one of the principal objects of the practical part of this book is to bring within the reach of these last, such information as will bring them welcome relief and give them time to look round.

I do not claim to have invented anything. Since Malthus enunciated the Law of Population, its truth has been so evident to the scientific mind, that one can only wonder

how such an almost self-evident law remained undiscovered till his time (1798). He demonstrated clearly that poverty, the source of manifold evils, is the direct outcome of the action of this law on ignorant humanity, and suggests a remedy to avoid this. But his remedy is, in our opinion and that of many others who have the right to speak with greater authority, as bad if not worse than the disease it pretends to cure, and further, very nearly impossible to be put into practice by any but an infinitesimal minority. A better remedy, and in our opinion the only efficient remedy, was, I think, first suggested by Condorcet, although he had not a very definite idea as to its practicability. Dr. George Drysdale (1827-1904) in his *Elements of Social Science* was bold enough to declare, clearly and unequivocally, his reasoned opinion that the only practicable and harmless remedy is birth-control by scientific means, gave all the practical information at his disposal, and suggested that it might be

improved upon by scientific research. Dr. Marie Stopes D. Sc., Ph. D. has since written *Wise Parenthood*, dealing with the same subject. Dr. Wm. J. Robinson has also strongly advocated the same opinion, but the American law does not allow practical information to be given. Mr. G. Hardy, a Frenchman, has translated a portion of Drysdale's book into French, and written an independent one giving up-to-date practical information. He was prosecuted on the ground of indecency (a mere pretext invented by opponents of this theory) but was acquitted. France has recently passed a severe law against the spread of practical information on this point and Mr. Hardy's book has been proscribed and copies confiscated.

The present booklet presents the author's view of the subject, in essential points the same as Dr. Drysdale's, and also gives up-to-date practical information. It is mainly intended to bring this within the reach of

the poorer classes, who cannot afford to buy the more costly books mentioned above. For the information, I have made free use of these books and others.

Girgaum, Bombay, ()
September 1921.)

THE AUTHOR.

Morality and Birth-Control.

THEORY AND PRACTICE.

CHAPTER 1.

The Law of Population.

The Law usually known as Malthus's Law of Population, often talked about and rarely properly understood, deals with the relative rates of growth of animals, men in particular, and the vegetable produce that serves them for food. It must here be noticed that the life of man as well as other animals is dependent on the growth of vegetables directly or indirectly, as animal food is merely an intermediate stage, and the animals which serve for food are themselves ultimately dependent on plant life. Hence to consider the possibilities of the growth of the human population of any country or the whole of

the earth, the essential factor is the ratio of the rates of multiplication of animals and plants. Now to the superficial observer, it may seem that, there being no essential difference between animals and plants, the law of growth will be similar for both. This, however, is a blunder. For vegetable produce, there is always the difficulty of space. Supposing the productivity of the soil and other conditions equal, the production of wheat will be doubled only if the area under cultivation is doubled, and when all available land in the country is exhausted, all further increase will be impossible. Of course this is modified a little by improved methods of cultivation etc., but the limit is always very quickly reached. In the case of man this limit can be reached only when there will not even be standing room on the earth, i. e. to say it is practically never reached, as man will always make room for himself at the expense of plants and other animals if necessary. Hence the trouble. It is very well-

known that intensive methods, after a certain limit, do not give results in proportion to the energy spent, and finally cease to give any increase. Hence the increase in vegetable production will, if all available area is under cultivation, be very slow indeed. In the case of animals, if we suppose that there is enough of food and other necessities, there is practically no limit to the increase of number. If the population of a country is doubled, say in ten years, it will be quadrupled in twenty, octupled in thirty, and so on, i. e. it will increase in geometrical progression

In the States of North America, where food is plentiful and consequently marriages more numerous than in Europe, the population has, according to Malthus, doubled in less than twenty-five years for more than a century and a half. In western colonies, where life is more healthy and natural, population has been found to double in fifteen years. It is supposed that under favorable conditions it can double in ten years. Taking

the lowest of these rates, we can say that, when nothing particular occurs to prevent it, population doubles in twenty-five years.

It is not so easy to estimate the rate of increase of vegetable produce. However, there are countries like China where it is doubtful whether human industry can ever double the present production. We shall suppose that in a well-populated country, where all the resources of science and industry are utilized for the purpose, people succeed in doubling the produce in one period of twenty-five years. Even this is a flight of imagination not likely to be verified, and will presuppose that all available land in the country is cultivated and that the best methods have been used. Intensive cultivation will after that, according to a well-known law, give what are called diminishing returns, i. e. to say, the increase will be disproportionately small as compared to the expense. During the next twenty-five years, therefore, the increase will be less, i. e. the produce

will not even be tripled. Even if we make the unwarrantable assumption that the increase remains the same in this as well in succeeding years, we shall, as a maximum limit, at best obtain an increase in arithmetical progression.

Hence, while the population of a country tends, in the absence of destructive catastrophes, to increase in geometrical progression, agricultural produce can *at best* increase in arithmetical progression. It is obvious from this that in a country which has not unlimited land at its disposal, the population will rapidly outgrow the means of subsistence, any geometrical progression ultimately increasing much more rapidly than any arithmetical progression. This tendency to superfluous growth has been the cause of untold misery in the past and will continue to be so in future unless the ingenuity of man finds a way out of the difficulty.

CHAPTER 2.

Checks To Population: Positive and Preventive.

The law of increase of population enunciated in the last chapter has obviously not been in full vigour during the long ages that man has existed on the earth. There are countries where the population remains stationary, or even diminishes instead of increasing. What then becomes of the law? The law is there, but like all other laws of nature, it is subject to certain conditions. The law of nature is, 'if certain conditions are satisfied, certain results will follow.' If there are modifying or opposing conditions, the result will be modified or even reversed. It is obvious that there have been and are now at work several causes, such as wars, famines, epidemics &c. which check the increase of population and produce an adjustment of it to the means of subsistence.

All such checks to population may be classified under two categories: positive and preventive, the former increasing the number of deaths, the latter diminishing the number of births. The latter, if voluntary, are peculiar to man and depend on his faculty of foreseeing far-off consequences. The others, positive and involuntary preventive checks, are common to all living beings. The more a country is civilised, the more prudent does a man become, and the prudent man thinks twice before he risks a marriage with its consequent progeny, which may reduce his social status even if he is able to feed them. This 'moral restraint' is a preventive check. Positive checks will include all unhealthy occupations, excessive work, unfavourable climate, extreme poverty, excesses of all kinds, diseases, plagues, wars and famines. All these checks together keep the population within the limits set by its means of subsistence. Positive and preventive checks vary inversely, i. e. if one of these diminishes the other increases, and vice versa.

Where the sexual instinct remains unchecked, positive checks have full sway. It may be thought perhaps that there is no connection between a famine, which is caused by scanty crops, and an increase of population, a famine being the result of climatic conditions. Even here, however, the connection between the two is not far to seek. What would ordinarily be a hard year, becomes, with an excess of population, a famine. In ordinary years, an excess of population forces people to live on minimum nourishment and hence to succumb more easily to disease, and so on. This is no exaggeration, for it is well-known that even in normal years, there are vast numbers in every country who do not get enough food, and that not because they are idle fellows, but because there is not enough to go round.

Some religions prescribe the procreation of children as a religious duty, and the Hindu religion attaches special importance

to sons, so that it becomes the duty of every Hindu to go on producing children at least until he gets a son. Marriage is a religious duty, and the preventive check being thus nil, positive checks necessarily and automatically take its place, and the population in India is so numerous that extreme poverty and periodical famines are frequent, and were so even before a foreign government came to put an additional strain on the resources of the country. Wars have always been a powerful check in India before the British Government, and are still, for instance the last great war has killed off an enormous number of Indians. Plagues have always been and still continue to be an effective positive check.

In Thibet, it appears that the preventive check is in full vigour. Celibacy is highly honoured and polyandry is in vogue, and this last is known to be a great preventive check.

In China, marriage is a religious duty and it is a disgrace not to have children. The results are abject poverty in spite of hard work, periodical famines, infanticide etc., and more recently, wars.

In ancient Greece, philosophers and statesmen had considered this point, and one law permitted infanticide. Plato says that men should be allowed to reproduce only when in their full vigour, and that all weak children should be destroyed. Aristotle proposed that men should not be allowed to marry till they were thirty-seven years of age and women till they were eighteen. He also prescribed a limit to the number of children a woman should have, and advised abortions if necessary to keep within the limit. He said that if every one was allowed to have as many children as he liked, the certain result would be poverty, the mother of crime. In addition to the preventive checks, the Greeks had also bloody wars to help them.

Among the Romans, the preventive checks took the form of all kinds of vice. Juvenal complains of the artifices adopted to produce abortions. In other countries, according to Malthus, marriage is considered desirable, but difficult. In Rome on the contrary, morals were so depraved that people hated and avoided marriage.

Among all these nations, the sexual instinct was given full scope and the checks took the form of vice or misery. In modern Europe, conditions have changed. The preventive check is in operation, and in the upper and middle classes there are very few imprudent marriages from the pecuniary point of view. In no country, however, does the poor man postpone marriage till he has the means to support a family, and a large proportion of the mortality in a country is due to this cause alone. It is found that whenever there is, from any cause, a considerable diminution of population or an in-

state of the whole population in an infinitesimal degree. If wealth was equally distributed, the only result will be that the present inequality will disappear and all will be equally poor instead of some being rich and some poor. Socialists very often ignore this. If there is not enough food in a country to satisfy the needs of the whole population, no mere system of equal distribution can make it suffice. In an equal distribution, everybody will starve a little. Is the result worth the trouble?

CHAPTER 3.

Consequence and Remedies: Malthus's Remedy.

The considerations in the preceding chapter prove that, other conditions being equal, the population of a country will vary directly as the quantity of food it can produce or procure. Their happiness will depend on the quantity of food a day's work can buy. Agricultural countries are, in general, more populous than pastoral countries, and rice-producing countries more than wheat-producing ones. But the happiness of the population does not depend on its numbers but exclusively on the ratio of these numbers to the available means of subsistence. Hence people are happiest in new colonies, where up-to-date scientific knowledge is newly applied to a fertile soil. In other countries they are unhappy, having to content themselves with minimum nourishment. *M.

*The rest of the paragraph is taken from M. Hardy's note in his translation of a part of Dr. Drysdale's work.
Author.

Hardy in his 'Population and Subsistence' (1904) has shown that the whole produce of the earth is only sufficient to feed two-thirds of its inhabitants properly. This is why some people must always starve under any distribution. In 1905 M. Guyot, a French Minister, admitted that the meat and vegetable produce in France was not sufficient for the population and that the production of meat and cheese in the world is much less than necessary. In 1908, M. Daniel Zolla, Professor at the National School of Agriculture of Grignon, showed in a lecture that the strictest equality of distribution could not give everybody the ease and welfare which idealist social reformers are wont to promise.

In the natural course of things, in any given country, at any stage of civilisation, so long as preventive checks are not operative, the population will be so exactly adjusted to the means of sustenance, that people have to be satisfied with the minimum of nou-

ishment, with the exception of the lucky few who are rich. Even when there is any sudden cause of prosperity such as improved methods of cultivation, the procreative power of man is such that the numbers are almost immediately adjusted again. It would seem then, that misery is the inevitable lot of mankind in general, with the exception of a lucky few.

This inevitable misery has led several idealists to propose different systems for its alleviation. None of the social systems so proposed is based on a clear perception of the fundamental laws here enunciated, and hence must fail to attain their object. Godwin, for instance, attributes all vice and misery to human institutions. He tries to get over the difficulty of over-population by saying that many parts of the earth are still uncultivated. But these can only be cultivated gradually and population will always keep pace, as we have seen, with any increase in agricultural production and even be in excess

unless preventive checks are voluntarily employed. On the other hand if, as Godwin supposes, his system leads to smaller cities, healthier conditions of life and more comfort, population will increase more rapidly still. He considers marriage a fraud and an unjustifiable monopoly. If marriage is abolished, sexual intercourse will be more free and may upto a certain limit help an increase of population. Of course, it is well-known that promiscuity checks population, but abolition of marriage need not necessarily mean promiscuity. If couples can stay together without the obligations of marriage and without losing their social status, more couples will be willing to do so than are now found willing to marry. Other systems have been proposed by Wallace, Owen and Condorcet. Only the last of all these had seen the necessity of controlling population by artificial means, which Malthus condemned as vice. All the others aim at improving the condition of the poor. Any improvement

in the conditions of life by Godwin's or any other system must inevitably lead to a further increase of population and its attendant evils of poverty, disease etc. Any amelioration obtained by the systems will therefore be exceedingly short-lived.

Apart from these different systems, other specific remedies have been proposed to counteract the effects of the law of population, such as emigration, state-guaranteed work, poor-laws etc. Emigration seems at first sight a very promising measure, but further consideration shows it to be a very mild palliative. Emigration usually means taking forcible possession of lands occupied by savage tribes and exterminating them in order to take full advantage of the resources of their land. For one thing, it justifies our contention that room has to be made for human lives by destroying other human lives. And even if these cruel measures are adopted, as they actually were by Europeans in Australia and America, the question remains: Have the facilities thus

created for emigration ameliorated the condition of the poorer classes in Europe in any appreciable degree? Emigration is a desperate measure, for which one has to break family ties and the love of the native soil, and these are more powerful among the ignorant masses, and these will not emigrate unless pressed by dire necessity. This resource then can never completely replace other checks such as moral restraint, prostitution, premature death etc. And there is a limit even to emigration, which will be reached when all savage tribes are exterminated. What then? Then follow terrible wars between civilized people, such as the recent world war, a fight between so-called civilized nations for the possession of the resources of the earth. The principal cause of the last war was the excessive increase of the population of Germany and the necessity for expansion keenly felt by the Germans. All the nonsense talked about conquest for the spread of German civilisation is on a level with the similar

reason put forward by Great Britain for retaining possession of India. They are mere pretences. When a country cannot produce enough food for its inhabitants, some of them must find a living outside their land (and the rest must help them) or they must all starve. One of the shams of civilisation is to pretend to be different from other animals, to have as little in common with them as possible. Hence when a nation takes possession of land belonging to other people, various names are invented for this act of piracy according to the degree of civilisation of the nation so deprived. In reality, the act is of the same kind as when one savage tribe robs another. It is a fight for the goods of the world and the successful nation then tries to villify the other by writing lies to justify itself in the eyes of future generations. This task is usually performed by historians, who pretend that they base their work on documents and that therefore it must be true, forgetting that documents may

easily contain lies, and especially war documents.

Finally, to balance the small relief given by emigration, we have to consider the resulting evils. Only the strongest people can emigrate, thus weakening the old country. Again, many more men will emigrate than women, thus destroying the proper proportion of men and women both in the old country and in the colony. Thus in England and Germany, the number of women much exceeds that of men. In colonies, on the contrary, men will be in excess. New Zealand, Australia and the United States are instances. This disproportion leads to all kinds of sexual vice.

Some people pin their faith to Poor Laws. In 1595, Queen Elizabeth established the system by which the parish had to support its poor and a special tax was levied for the purpose. Considerable evils ensued. Among other things, the poor tried to have as many

children as possible, to get a larger share. Malthus's work did a great deal towards the suppression of these evils and the tax was abolished in 1834. State-guaranteed work assumes an absurdity, viz. that the State can go against the laws of supply and demand to any extent and can increase at will the amount paid to labourers, which depends on the total capital available in the country.

The problem will never be solved till the fundamental question is considered. Can the resources of any country, however fortunate, be such as to cope with an unlimited increase of population? The answer must evidently be negative in spite of anything that might be said about uncultivated lands, artificial manures, and other devices of a like nature. We can at best ward off the evil for an extremely short space of time. Escape it, we cannot.

Let us finally consider the remedy proposed by Malthus. The only remedy that can,

according to him, cure all these evils, is moral restraint or continence. Malthus strongly condemns (there is a general misunderstanding on this point) all artificial methods of preventing conception on the ground that they are contrary to nature. It remains to be seen whether Malthus's remedy is any less contrary to nature. He says that the degeneration of morals to the extent of preventing the birth of children is degrading. He does not give any reasons why it is to be called degeneration and how it is degrading. Condorcet thinks it more immoral to prevent the happiness of children than to prevent their birth.

Malthus proposes that no man should marry until he can support a family and that he should remain strictly chaste till then, because, in his opinion, chastity cannot be violated with impunity, and promiscuity in love evidently (') destroys the best sentiment and degrades the woman. Of course without chastity, the remedy will not be effective

unless preventive methods are used. We shall criticise this remedy in detail in the next chapter.

Poor people are told by politicians that it is a highly meritorious act to produce soldiers for the country, and they are naturally indignant at the misery consequent on doing what they are told is their duty. The politicians ask them to produce children and then leave them to shift for themselves. Of course politicians are the last people to burden themselves with an unnecessary number of children. They know how to limit the number to suit their income. And so the politicians remain at the top and the poorer classes sink deeper and deeper. Dr. William J. Robinson quotes Dr. Carver, Professor of Political Economy at Harvard, as saying: "Foxes think large families among the rabbits highly commendable. Employers who want large supplies of cheap labour, priests who want large numbers of parishioners, military leaders who want plenty of cheap food for

gunpowder, and politicians who want plenty of voters, all agree in commending large families and rapid multiplication among the poorer classes."

Dr. Robiason gives his own opinion as follows: "In fact, I am almost ready to believe that it would be an excellent thing if all the women throughout the world went on a strike for ten or twenty years and refused to bring a single child into the world during that period. The idea really appeals to me. The labor market would not be glutted, people would not have to cut each other's throat for a little business or a position, and we would perhaps get a semblance of peace of mind or independence. And the alarmed monopolists and statesmen would perhaps then decide to do something real for the people."

Malthus's discovery of the law of population is second to none if the happiness of humanity is a desideratum. It explains the

natural relation between the two things essential to the happiness of man, nourishment and love. Without a knowledge of this law, all science will be hopelessly inefficient in promoting real progress, which aims, or ought to aim, at the happiness of mankind. John Stuart Mill wrote very strongly in support of Malthus and emphasized the importance of the subject. He said that the confusion of ideas on this subject is due to the prudery which refuses to discuss sexual affairs, but that social diseases cannot, any more than diseases of the body, be prevented or cured unless they are frankly discussed. These views have also received the support of many eminent thinkers, among others, Ricardo, Rossi, Whately, Garnier, Bradlaugh, Mrs. Besant, &c.

CHAPTER 4.

The Curses of Humanity: Criticism of Malthus's Remedy.

The principal evil of the law of population is poverty, which is one of the curses of humanity, and one of the very worst. It is incomparably worse than war or pestilence, which occur at long intervals and are temporary, apart from the fact that these are also the results of poverty. Poverty has been omnipresent from the remotest times and in all countries, so much so, that people, being accustomed to it, practically never think about its real causes. Idleness, drunkenness and vice are not, as is usually supposed, the fundamental causes; nay, these are very often the effects of poverty. The labourer very often works from ten to twelve hours a day, and in the evening, is so fatigued that he has hardly the time to rest and recoup his energies for the next day, much less to enjoy himself. He has natur-

ally no time for artistic, intellectual or moral meetings, and the discontent of the labouring classes at this kind of life culminates very often in disastrous strikes and, in extreme cases, revolutions. The poor are supposed to be born for work and the rich think they are absolved from all responsibility by the argument that they are paid for their work—never mind how little!

In 1863, a medical inquiry was made into the condition of the poor classes in England. The report states that in agricultural families, a large proportion were insufficiently fed. Recently a French minister declared that four-fifths of the population of France did not get sufficient nourishment. The condition of women of the working classes is, as is well-known, far worse than that of men as regards wages etc. The result is prostitution, which gives them a living in return for social degradation.

Many of the so-called well-to-do classes are subject to similar evils. Life has been

rendered so difficult by excessive competition, that the anxiety of the professional or business man has become proverbial.

On the richer classes who do not work for a living, the law of population acts in a different but hardly less harmful way. Nourishment and love are two essential factors in the happiness of man. These classes suffer from want of the second of these requisites. This is especially the case with unmarried women, if they remain chaste as they are supposed to do. This undermines their health and happiness, and elegant balls, parties and soirées very often hide an incalculable amount of mental torture. The large number of the unmarried among these classes leads to an unnatural tension between the two sexes, not to speak of other evils like venereal diseases. It has been argued that people can remain perfectly healthy even without sexual satisfaction. Admitting this for a moment (we shall have more to say on the point later on), it is plain

that they cannot be happy. There are very few persons, if indeed there are any, who can avoid thinking of the subject pretty often, and the mental unhappiness thus caused is no less troublesome than physical diseases; nay, it is worse, because to this mental trouble there is no remedy, as the trouble is of one's own making and must last till one chooses to end it.

Here then is the Malthusian dilemma. The choice is between two kinds of death. Death for want of food, or death for want of love, which is preferable? Of course in either case, it may be slow torture instead of death. The two evils supplement each other. If one increases, the other diminishes. Poverty is no doubt a very great evil. But the remedy suggested by Malthus is also a very great evil, accompanied by perpetual discontent and unhappiness. The two essentials of happiness, food and love, are thus apparently antagonistic to and inconsistent with each other. One law of nature brings children

into the world, and another prevents them from being properly nourished. Any remedy, to be effective, must get over this antagonism of two natural laws. Poverty is a sexual question and not one of politics or charity. The remedy must therefore also be in the sexual sphere. The remedy suggested by Malthus is in the sexual sphere. Let us examine it closely.

The mistake in reasoning made by Malthus is due to the fact that he, like most moralists then and now, was ignorant of the evils of continence, which is against the laws of nature. He did not know the necessity of sexual intercourse for the health of man or woman. His ignorance of medicine and his religious austerity led him into this glaring error, which makes his remedy impracticable. He did not recognise the importance of the law of exercise which is equally applicable to all organs and emotions, sexual as well as any other. This law shows that the health of the organs of reproduction, like

that of other organs, depends on a sufficient quantity of normal exercise, and that want of such exercise produces suffering and disease in man or woman. This law is so important that Dr. Drysdale gives three proofs of it.

Physiologically, the nutrition and health of all muscles, nerves, glands and other tissues depend on appropriate exercise. Sexual organs consist principally of muscles, nerves and glands. Hence the nutrition and health of these organs depend on appropriate exercise.

Pathologically, continence produces various evils. It leads to masturbation and other unnatural habits; but these apart, it leads to sexual disease, as may be expected if the law of exercise is admitted. The principal diseases resulting from continence are hysteria, chlorosis, and mental disorders in women, and sexual weakness, spermatorrhea and hypochondria in men. These may of

course be sometimes produced by other causes as well, but they are more frequently caused by continence. In woman especially, the sexual system influences all other functions: digestion, circulation, judgment and general character. In a very large number of cases, these symptoms disappear on marriage showing clearly their origin. An emotion which is naturally very strong in the majority will, if suppressed, show the morbid effects of this suppression in a vast number of cases. This is precisely what has been observed about hysteria, and the medical world is agreed as to the causes of this disease. Villermay (quoted by M. Hardy) says in an article on hysteria that out of ten hysteric patients, nine are the victims of continence. The same is true of chlorosis and menstrual disorders. In man the effects of continence are not so striking and so easily seen by the superficial observer. But this is because man is not so emotional and is less strict in his continence, and the effects

are further complicated by masturbation etc., and man has more distractions than woman. However, inaction is often followed by atrophy of the testicles and ultimate impotence, which is then incurable. Apart from actual disease, it must not be forgotten that continence causes great mental anguish in a very large number of cases, and mental suffering is very often worse than physical.

Therapeutically, doctors are agreed that marriage very often cures hysteria, chlorosis and painful and irregular menstruation. Medication in such cases is of very little use. The same may be said of spermatorrhea, hypochondria, indigestion and general debility in man. The remedy which is most successful is natural intercourse, and in some cases, that is the only remedy.

A great many distinguished medical authorities have endorsed Dr. Drysdale's views. Among the more recent ones may be cited Dr. August Forel's work on the Sexual Question (Marshall's translation). This author,

although he thinks that the evils of continence are generally exaggerated, says he has seen cases, both in men and women, of mental and nervous excitement which may even end in insanity. He adds: 'Continence is not an easy matter for erotic individuals, and requires a heroic internal struggle, especially in men. The Canadian reformer, Chiniqui, whom we have previously quoted, relates the history of a monk who tore off his testicles in despair at being unable to conquer his violent sexual appetite. The fine preachers of morality, endowed with a cold temperament, or simply senile, who hold forth on the immorality of the sexual appetite, would do well to take such facts to heart. A rich and educated young girl, a nymphomaniac but still a virgin, declared to me that if she did not soon find a husband, she would prostitute herself, for she could contain herself no longer.'

Dr. Wm. J. Robinson says: "There is no question within the entire sexual domain which has excited so much discussion as

has this one: is sexual intercourse necessary to the individual, is absolute continence injurious to health? As a rule the question is asked with reference to the male sex only; the female sex is left out of account, as if it did not exist—which shows man's supreme egotism..... Answering the question in a general way, I will say emphatically: yes, absolute continence is injurious to the male.According to Freud, apprehension or anxiety neurosis is due exclusively to sexual repression..... A man who has remained absolutely continent up to age of thirty or forty may on marrying find himself totally unfit for his so-called marital duties. In order to reach a proper solution of this question, we must eliminate from the discussion certain classes of people. We must eliminate the man who is so old that he no longer remembers that he ever was young,...the impotent or pervert,..... the bigoted theologian and the narrow-minded moralist, who consider extra-marital intercourse a *crime*, about on a par with burglary or murder; the

asexualised old maid, and the debauchee who puts an absurdly exaggerated value on the sexual function. In short, the question must be discussed by normal, healthy, free-thinking, scientific men, ranging in age between thirty and fifty." In another place he says: "The men who preach absolute continence to the young generation at all costs, belong to either one or several of the following categories: (1) Men with a weak or absent sexuality. (2) Old or middle-aged men who have become impotent. (3) Men who have married at a very early age. (4) Men who, while believing in the sexual necessity, think the danger of venereal infection and social degradation so great that public policy demands the advocacy of continence. (5) Simply and plainly hypocrites" In another place: "There is a small class of people of very high sexuality to whom sexual life is an absolute necessity. We have no right to counsel abstinence to such people".

The law of exercise above stated is just as much a law of nature as is gravitation, and laws of nature take no account of human institutions. It is for the latter to suit themselves to the former or take the consequences. Nature's laws are impersonal and automatic. Reward and punishment are in the human point of view and have nothing to do with the working of the law. A law of nature is always hypothetical. If you give sufficient normal exercise to an organ, it will be healthy, otherwise it will degenerate and perish, and this degeneration may, as it does in this case, entail disease and other evils. It is for man to choose. If he adjusts his institutions so as to profit by the law, well and good, he will prosper. If not, the law will take its course and he will perish, and may have the satisfaction of dying for his principles! We prefer the former course. We take the progress of the race as our basis for moral conduct, and it serves no useful purpose to stick to obviously harmful traditions.

CHAPTER 5.

A Better Remedy.

The problem before us is then to reconcile the antagonism between two laws of nature in such a way that it will be possible for every one to obtain a sufficient quantity of the three essentials of human happiness: food, leisure and love. And the difficulties of the problem lie in the traditions relating to sexual life. These then must undergo a searching examination, and must, if necessary, be given up, and our ideas on the subject radically transformed. The remedy sought must be such that both men and women will be able to get sexual satisfaction and at the same time avoid over-population. If we analyse the problem a little we see that sexual satisfaction and over-population have no necessary connection at all, since in plenty of cases one occurs without the other. In plenty of cases, the woman gets no satisfaction (for instance in

some rape cases) and still conception occurs. Also in plenty of others, there is complete satisfaction of both parties and still there is no conception. It is obvious therefore that each can exist separately. The solution of the problem consists then, in finding out in what way sexual satisfaction can be obtained without its occasional accompaniment, conception. Here science comes to our help. Scientific research has proved that conception takes place when the sperm cell from the male comes into contact with the egg cell from the female. For this meeting, the sperm cell has to effect an entrance into the womb, the opening of which is situated in the centre of the part which projects into the vagina and can be felt at the end of that passage. In normal coitus, the male organ throws the sperm at the mouth of the womb so that the sperm cells can find an easy entrance into the womb and fertilise an egg if it happens to be there (it is usually there about the menstruation period). If then the sperm

cell can in some way be prevented from entering the womb, or its active properties destroyed before it reaches the opening, what we want is done.

This can be done in various ways. It has been observed (Raciborski) that only about six or seven per cent women can conceive at a time remote from a menstruation period. Hence it follows that by observing continence from two or three days before a period to about eight days after it, the chances of conception are considerably diminished. This opinion has the support of nearly all authorities. However, although this appears to be a simple remedy and an absolutely natural one, there is a strong objection to it which very few usually notice. The sexual desire of a woman is always strong precisely at the time indicated above for abstinence. Dr. Marie Stopes says: 'I am inclined to advise against its observance, because the safe period is obviously the time when the

woman has less physiological benefit from the sex act, and also because I think that so important and fundamental a need as the act of married union should not be thwarted by waiting for dates on the calender, when it could be so much better fulfilled at the normal time of desire if the woman is protected in the way I have recommended (see ch. 7)." If the time-table method is adopted, the woman will have a hard task set before her and will have to repress her desire when it is naturally strongest. It does not matter to the man, but is extremely egotistical on his part. Besides, *this method does not ensure safety in individual cases* although it may reduce the general percentage of births, for any individual woman may belong to the six per cent who do conceive even then. Other methods then have to be found where individual safety is desired. These will be discussed in a future chapter.

CHAPTER 6.

What About Morals?

Before going into the details of the methods known at the present day, we shall try to answer the objections of moralists against these methods. We have mentioned Malthus's objection, that it is going against nature. Apart from the fact that Malthus's alternative is more unnatural still, it must be remembered that even in nature, every copulation is not followed by pregnancy, in fact the proportion of cases in which conception does not occur is very large indeed. As we have seen, conception has nothing to do with sexual satisfaction. The act sometimes results in conception and sometimes stops short of it even normally. Hence it cannot be determined on general principles whether interference with conception is injurious (which is the implication of the objection), and this will have to be considered separately for every method. Dr. Wm. J. Robinson

says: "I have investigated the subject, and I have devoted years to its study, and I have come to the positive conclusion that excessive child-bearing among the poor is one of the greatest curses that afflict humanity... What is the remedy against this condition? To advise people not to marry? That would be as wrong as it would be unfeasible. The only little pleasure the poor man sometimes has is his wife and his little home. To advise bachelorhood would be wrong socially as it would be useless, for the mass of the people would not follow it, and it is absurd to give advice which cannot and will not be followed. "Let them abstain". To advise married people to abstain for months and years at a time is as hypocritical, as insincere, as dishonest as it is pernicious.....Advice to the poor—including in this term workingmen, small business men, struggling professional men—to remain single, or if married, to abstain from intercourse, being unworthy of consideration, what other remedy is there to help them out

of the difficulty? There is a simple remedy, and that remedy is to teach people how to regulate the number of their offspring, so that they may have only as many children as they want and only when they want them; in other words, the remedy is to teach people the proper means of the prevention of conception." Of course he does not give any methods of prevention in his book because the American law is very strict and punishes any doctor who gives such information with five years imprisonment and 5,000 dollars fine. This shows how silly people can be in some respects even in so called advanced nations.

Another objection comes from people who consider prevention similar to abortion, and others who think that if we destroy sperm cells, we destroy so many potential lives. This objection proceeds from a complete ignorance of the details of the process of conception. In each coitus, millions of sperm

cells are given out by the male, and all of these have the potential capacity of entering an egg cell and causing its development into a human being. Sometimes one of these millions of cells succeeds in reaching the egg cell in the womb if one happens to be there, and sometimes none. Hence whether conception occurs or not, millions of potential lives are destroyed at every copulation in the normal course of nature. It is entirely a matter of chance whether all the cells die or one of them survives. Interference with conception, then, destroys this one cell along with the others. It may here be argued that the fact that a large number of people die every day would not justify a single murder. But it must be remembered that we are speaking of potential and not actual life. This is also the answer to those who compare it to abortion. In the case of an abortion, the foetus has already begun its life, while here we destroy a cell which may *perhaps* live.

Felix le Dantec, the celebrated French biologist, has given the following plausible description of the phenomenon of sexual attraction and reproduction. He says that every living cell in the body of an animal is composed of two electrically opposed halves, corresponding to male and female, intimately fused together to give perfect equilibrium. Sperm cells, which are specialised and occur only in the sexual organs of the male, lose the female half in becoming ripe and since only the male half remains, it is no longer a living cell, equilibrium is destroyed, and the body seeks to get rid of it. A similar but complementary phenomenon occurs in the case of egg cells, which are female halves only. These two kinds of electrically complementary halves serve to explain sexual attraction. In the case of some animals, there is no copulation and the mere proximity of the female suffices for the male to give out the sperm. In man, coitus is the natural process for the expulsion of sperm, while the

egg cells in a woman are automatically expelled even without coitus. This is the reason why greater unrest and dissatisfaction are caused by continence to the male than to the female. It seems clear then, if this theory is true, that as sperm cells and egg cells are not living cells, but only capable of producing life by combining, there is not the slightest similarity between abortion and prevention of conception. It is worthy of remark that continence destroys the sperm and the egg cells as effectively as prevention and that therefore if one is culpable, the other is equally so.

Dr. Marie Stopes remarks: "Even when a child is allowed to grow in its mother, all these hundreds of millions of sperms are inevitably and naturally destroyed every time the man has an emission, and to add one more to these millions sacrificed by nature is surely no crime. To kill quickly the ejaculated sperms which would otherwise die and decompose naturally, is a simple

matter.....To those who protest that we have no right to interfere with the course of Nature, one must point out that the whole of civilisation, everything which separates men from animals, is an interference with what such people commonly call Nature. Nothing in the cosmos could be against Nature, for it all forms part of the great processes of the universe."

A third objection still remains. This comes from moralists who object to the spread of knowledge on this subject, on the ground that if people once knew that conception could be easily prevented, there would be a frightful increase of illicit love, that if women found that they need not be afraid of pregnancy, they would indulge in *illicit* love to their heart's content, *as men are free to do*. The strength of this objection lies in its fallacious assumptions. It presupposes that coitus is in itself a sinful act, and that this sinful act is transformed into a laudable or at least a permissible act if the parties go through a

marriage ceremony or sign their names on a register kept for the purpose. These superstitions will naturally not be accepted by any one who is willing to reason about anything, even if it is supported by venerable traditions. It assumes also that it is dangerous for women to be as free as men to dispose of their bodies as they like. The only meaning of this, apart from tradition, is that man does not like to give up the monopoly which a marriage ceremony legally gives him, or to release woman from perpetual bondage. Further, the objection is based on an incorrect view of human nature. It is certainly possible that long repression of an imperious instinct may lead to a violent reaction if the pressure is suddenly removed; but on the whole, there is no reason to believe that women in general will be any worse than men in general. In fact, in this particular matter of sexual selection, it is well-known that women are generally more discriminating than men, when they are not pressed by

the necessity of earning a livelihood. Besides, social systems never change suddenly, and however eager women may be to obtain their freedom, or their men friends to secure it for them, they can only get it very gradually, and in that case, no sudden reaction need be feared.

Dr. Robinson remarks: "Take away the fear of pregnancy, those good men and women say, and there will not be a chaste girl left. They will all rush headlong into never-ending sexual orgies. I wonder whether those good, pious people judge others by themselves. No, I do not believe that the mere taking away of the fear of pregnancy would undermine the chastity of our young girls..... Even if this should be the case, it would be preferable to the conditions that obtain now. It would be preferable that a girl or woman bent on illicit intercourse should use a preventive than that she should haunt the offices of the abortionists, male and female...better than that they should end their existences with

carbolic acid or by jumping into the river. Illicit sexual intercourse is not such a heinous crime that its punishment must be Death. That is my opinion.....I am sure that when the study of sexual hygiene has become universal, when men know that excessive indulgence is injurious, they will abstain from it, the same as they abstain from excessive alcoholic indulgence or excessive eating. It is true, as Shaw says, that married life offers the maximum of temptation with the maximum of opportunity, but as the variety is lacking, things equalize themselves and the vast majority of married couples settle down after the first few months to a temperate existence, sexually speaking." He says in reply to the medical objection that a diminished birth-rate would mean a very much diminished income for the medical profession: "I fully acknowledge the justice of this argument of my medical friends and confess my inability to answer it. Perhaps the language in which I should

answer this argument would not be quite parliamentary." He answers also the objection of people who are afraid the race will die out: "Those who have seen the anguish of some wives who have remained sterile for several years after marriage,..... those who have seen married men undergoing all kinds of treatment in order to be able to have an heir, will not share the fear.....But our opponents say that it will increase in numbers much more slowly...Yes, we admit that. But is this such a calamity?..... Is there any greatness or happiness in numbers alone?.....And is it even true that a diminution of the birth-rate would cause a proportionate diminution in the increase of the population?...The percentage of the children who die in families of many children is much higher than in families with few children."

He also gives some positive reasons for advocating prevention: "Because I know of thousands of young men, who, restrained

from marrying by the fear of too many children, have, in consequence, contracted venereal disease or have become addicted to dangerous sexual irregularities. Because I know of thousands of women who have become chronically invalided by too frequent child-bearing and lactation. Because I know of thousands of men who are pitiable sexual neurasthenics from coitus interruptus, which they practice through ignorance of better methods of prevention. Because I know of thousands of women who have actually killed themselves, have been driven into early graves by abortions or attempts at abortion." And so on.

The health of the mother is, in our opinion, one of the essential points to be considered. Dr. Marie Stopes says that at least a year should be given to the mother to recoup her health and to devote herself to the baby before a second child is conceived, and preferably more than a year. She quotes Sir James Barry as saying: "There is no equality

in nature among children nor among adults, and if there is to be a much-needed improvement in the race, we must breed from the physically, morally and intellectually fit" and she advises prevention in cases of inherited disease such as insanity and epilepsy, where one or both partners are drunkards, where either of them is suffering from venereal disease, where from any cause all the older children are puny, etc. It has to be remembered that reduction of the number of births does not always mean reduction of the number of children ultimately. It is known that Holland, which is very much advanced in birth-control, has a very high survival rate. The fewer the children, the greater the care they receive and the greater their chances of reaching maturity. "You will find" says Dr. Robinson, "that the most wretched nations have the highest birth-rate, while the most advanced, the most civilized nations have the lowest birth-rate." He cites China and Russia on the one hand and France on the

other, and emphatically denies that France is degenerating as some people say, since, in everything that makes life worth living, in general culture, in advanced, liberal ideas, in sculpture, in painting, in literature in all its ramifications, in science, France still stands at the head of nations (1914). He says: "Human beings are not animals, and they should have a right to say how many children they will have, how frequently they will have them and when they will have them."

Finally it must be borne in mind that the knowledge is gradually spreading in spite of the silly and brutal laws against its dissemination that are found in so-called advanced countries like France and America. Only last year the law on this point in France was made more severe than before and books on the subject proscribed and confiscated, the reason put forward being the need of filling the vacancies created by the war! The

results of such ignorant measures are seen in the enormous number of abortions in every country where knowledge of preventive measures is not easily available. If a woman is very much afraid of the consequences of having a child, she will take any risk to get rid of the foetus or the child. We know even married women who have resorted to dangerous expedients to secure an abortion, and the present social system makes it almost compulsory for unmarried girls and widows, if they become pregnant, to secure an abortion at any cost. These would be certain to use preventives if they know them and any sane man will prefer that to abortions, which entail the possible death of the mother when it is done by unskilled hands, as it usually is, since the law makes it a crime for doctors, who have often troublesome consciences. We prefer prevention.

Knowledge is not easy to hide, even with such laws, and if people do not get all avail-

able scientific information on the point, they use such methods as they happen to know, and these are often injurious to the health of both partners and are even then not always effective. We prefer to give scientific information.

CHAPTER 7.

Scientific Methods.

We have seen before that a method of prevention, to be good, must not interfere with the pleasurable contact of the two organs, which is of great physiological benefit to both the parties, and must not be harmful in any other way. We have consequently already condemned the so-called natural method of limiting the sexual act to days remote from a menstrual period, which makes the woman abstain when her desire is strongest, and so deprives her of her legitimate share of satisfaction.

Before we go into the details of the other methods, we must mention one point about which there is great difference of opinion, viz. whether precautions for prevention should be taken by the man or by the woman. One finds eminent names on both sides of the question, but personally we are inclined to

think that they should be taken by the woman. As Dr. Marie Stopes says, "the most perfect procedure cannot be safe in the hands of one who is careless; and the one to whom the consequences of carelessness are most serious, is of course the woman". Dr. Drysdale has said: "If the man has to think of the precautions to be employed, it spoils the passion and the spontaneous impulse of the venereal act." There are also cases in which the man is drunk or half drunk or too brutal to care what happens. On the whole it seems to me that precautions are safer in the hands of the woman. We shall give both kinds of precautions and begin with those that can be used by the man.

These are (1) the coitus interruptus, (2) the condom or French letter, (3) vasectomy, (4) X Rays. Those that can be used by the woman are, besides the timing referred to above, (1) the use of mechanical barriers

between the sperm and egg cells, such as sponges and pessaries, (2) chemical means of destroying the activity of the sperm cells, such as soluble pessaries etc. (3) a surgical operation, (4) X Rays.

We shall consider these in order. (1) The coitus interruptus consists in an interruption of the act just before emission and the withdrawal of the male organ, so that the semen does not enter the vagina at all and so cannot reach the womb. There are several objections to this method although some doctors support it on the ground that it requires no previous preparation and so does not interfere with the spontaneity of the act. This method is in very common use in France, where a knowledge of other methods is difficult to obtain. However, as Dr. Drysdale says, "it may give rise to nervous disorders and sexual weakness, and of course it diminishes the pleasure of both parties." We have already quoted Dr. Robinson's opinion against it. Dr. Marie Stopes says:....."This

method has without doubt done an incredible amount of harm, not directly, but through its reaction on the nervous systems of both man and woman. Individuals who have particularly strong muscular and nervous systems may go through life using this method and feel no ill effects. Their advocacy, however, should not blind the greater number of people to its dangers.....Others who do not trace it directly to this, are nevertheless sufferers through their nerves, and consequently through their digestions and power of sleep. The great majority of women whose husbands practice this method suffer very fundamentally as a result of the reiterated stirring up of local nervous excitement which is deprived of its natural physiological resolution.....The man has to keep a strain upon his attention in order to withdraw at exactly the right second; he is thus straining not only his local nervous system but his central nervous system." It has also to be remembered that if the withdrawal is

not properly timed and a single particle of sperm touches even the outer organs of the woman, conception may take place, as the sperm cells are very active and have been known to find their way into the vagina and then the womb. We are decidedly of opinion that this method should never be used, at least where other methods are available.

(2) The second method consists in covering the male organ by means of a sheath or condom or French letter as it is called (curiously enough, it is called "capote anglaise" in French). These are usually made of rubber or silk or skin and are sold in different qualities and sizes. To this method too, there are certain important objections. Dr. Marie Stopes says: "The sheath prevents the seminal fluid reaching the woman, and.....it has been maintained there is a physiological advantage to the woman in the partial absorption of the man's secretions which must take place through the permeable walls of

the vaginal canal, quite apart from the separate and distinct act of fertilisation..... It reduces the closeness of contact and thus destroys the sense of complete union which is not only pleasurable but is definitely soothing to the nerves." I think George Sand is the author of the oft-quoted remark: "It is a cuirass against pleasure and a cobweb against danger." She means that there is always the danger of the sheath breaking if it is thin, and if it is thick, the act does not differ much from masturbation. Dr. Drysdale says it often produces impotence in the man and disgust in both. Dr. Forel has indicated the use of the vermiform appendix of a sheep or a calf as bought at the butcher's, after being cleaned and disinfected by immersion in a solution of corrosive sublimate (1 in 1000) for 24 hours. One has to verify every time that they are intact. The advantage of these is that they are cheaper than the sheaths. Instructions are frequently given with rubber or skin sheaths for disinfecting

and preserving them for use another time. We recommend that a fresh one be used every time unless very minute attention can be paid to the disinfection. Besides, rubber shrinks with use, heat and washing. Condoms of silk have the advantage of not shrinking. There are also American tips, which cover only the glans penis, and are consequently liable to come off by friction.

(3) The third method, vasectomy, is a simple operation which can be performed in three or four minutes with the help of a local anaesthetic. The patient need not keep to his bed or interrupt his usual occupation. The wound is less serious than that caused by the extraction of a tooth or an insoluble mercurial injection. Dr. Robinson says: "Vasectomy has not yet been performed on a sufficiently large number of individuals, nor have its effects been watched for a sufficiently long period (this is written in 1914), to warrant an absolutely dogmatic statement. But from all data available at the

present time, the statment is justified that the operation has no injurous after-effects. The testicles are not affected, the secretion of semen goes on, tho to a greatly diminished extent, but instead of finding an exit outside, it is reabsorbed, partially at any rate. And physicians who have had experience with hundreds of prison inmates and with private patients assert that the operation, far from being injurious, has a distinctly beneficial effect. The people operated on feel stronger, calmer, have more self-control, and are less subject to bodily and mental fatigue." This operation is now performed in some States in America for sterilising degenerates of all kinds to prevent their multiplication. Dr. Belfield of Chicago first described in 1907 the experiments made and also described the process before magistrates and doctors. It has the advantage over other methods (castration, vasotomy etc.) of atrophying the seminiferous tubes without affecting the sexual power in any way. The patient retains his

desire and the power to satisfy it, erection is normal, the emission, chiefly composed of prostatic fluid, is slightly diminished in quantity, but the pleasurable sensation remains the same. Only the spermatozoa are absent and no fecundation is possible. We shall not here give the technical details of the operation which consists in cutting out a length of half a centimetre of the deferent duct and cauterising the ends. The effect of the operation is permanent and this is one reason why some men might object to it being performed on them.

(4) It is now considered certain that X Rays, acting on the seminiferous elements prevent the formation of spermatozoa while leaving intact the indispensable internal secretions. Messrs. Nogier and Rigaud have shown in 1909 that to obtain sterility in man, it is better to use the X rays obtained by filtration on a sheet of aluminum. Further experimentation is required before anything can be definitely asserted on the point.

We shall now consider precautions that may be used by the woman. (1) Mechanical barriers, to be properly placed, require the woman to know well the position of the mouth of the womb, which is at the end of the vagina and can be felt by a woman if she inserts her own middle finger as far as it will go. It is made of soft but firm tissue and has a slight depression in the middle and a recess all round forming a sort of trench. The depression in the middle has a small opening in the centre, through which the sperm cells enter and one of these will fertilise an egg cell if one is there. This hole has therefore to be stopped so as to prevent the egg cell from entering. Whatever mechanical barrier is used, the fingers and nails have to be thoroughly clean when inserting it, and rubber finger-stalls dipped in an antiseptic solution may be used.

One such mechanical barrier is the 'safety sponge,' which should be well-chosen, with

small pores, not rough to the touch, and about 4 to 5 centimetres (about two inches) in diameter so as to fill the bottom of the vagina. It should be washed with soap, kept away from dust, and wetted with some antiseptic solution before insertion. The silk cord usually sold with it may be cut off. After use, an antiseptic douche should be taken before removing it, and another afterwards, and the sponge should be thoroughly cleaned and kept away. A ball made of fine silk threads or of cotton-wool may also be used instead of a sponge, and may be smeared with borax and vaseline as suggested by Dr. Marie Stopes. The objection to these barriers is that the sponge has to be fairly large to be effective, which may dilate the vagina a good deal. There is the possibility of displacement if the sponge is small. It should be inserted about 20 minutes before the act.

Another mechanical means is the pessary or rubber cap intended to cover the mouth

of the womb. This, according to Dr. Marie Stopes, is the best preventive method. It should be carefully distinguished from the pessary used to correct any deviation of the womb from its normal position. Dr. Stopes says: "The important point about adjusting them is that they should be of the right size. The average woman is fitted by the small or medium size, but the woman who has had several children generally wants them larger. Before insertion, it should be moistened with very soapy water, so as to allow it to slip in easily.....The great advantage of this cap is that once it is in and firmly and properly fitted, it can be entirely forgotten, and neither the man nor the woman can detect its presence. It should be put in at least some hours before bedtime and left in undisturbed till the following day; but I very much advise it being left in two or three days after any individual act of union.....After use, even if the cap is to be again inserted in an hour or two, it should be carefully washed in

soapy water, and though not essential where there is perfect health, it is much better to dip it into a weak solution of some wholesome disinfectant before putting it away in the jar of water recommended in the appendix (a small china or celluloid one with a lid, filled with water, under which the cap is submerged, to preserve its pliability and usefulness). If a woman suffers even trifling ill health accompanied by a slight local discharge, then there is no doubt that the cap should never be left in more than a couple of days at a time, though after being taken out for an hour or two and cleansed, it may be reinserted on the same day, so that it may be in position for every consecutive night for three weeks." She further advises the use of a quinine pessary (see Chemical means, further on) in addition to this so as to make the effect doubly sure, and that the size of the rubber pessary should be the largest size that fits with comfort although not so large as to leave a gap, for then it is entirely use-

less. If a woman is afraid of not being able to determine the correct size, she might get a medical practitioner to fit it on. The only objection to this method is the difficulty of finding the correct size, though this is only an initial difficulty, and the slight danger of displacement.

(2) Chemical means are intended to destroy the activity of the sperm cells. One of these is the soluble pessary made with quinine and cocoa butter. This is inserted as far as it will go, and melts with the heat of the body. The quinine destroys the sperm cells when it comes into contact with them. It should be inserted about five minutes before the act to allow it time to melt. Sometimes gelatine is used instead of cocoa butter to avoid the objectionable odour of the latter. Also as the quinine may be partially absorbed and have bad after effects on some women, a powder containing boric acid, tannic acid and starch may be used instead. A small

quantity of this is projected inside with a special instrument consisting of a speculum with a rubber bulb. In all these cases, it is advisable to take an antiseptic douche (see later) after the act. The quinine pessary has been known to be very successful.

(3) Dr. Forel says: "The most certain means of definitely preventing conception is by *dislocation of the (Fallopian) tubes*. This easy operation is indicated whenever a woman ought to be prohibited from having children, for example, in cases of contracted pelvis, insanity, epilepsy, tuberculosis, etc. We have already seen that castration, especially in women, influences the general health, and is, therefore, only indicated in very grave cases, such as sadism, etc."

(4) X Rays can cause the disappearance of the follicles of De Graaf without affecting the ovarian secretion. This requires more experiments to confirm results so far obtained.

Antiseptic Douche: There is a large variety of douching instruments on the market, and there are some which render it unnecessary to leave the bed to take a douche. In taking it, care must be taken to prevent air being introduced into the vagina. The antiseptic solutions usually used for the purpose are: vinegar and warm water, in about equal parts; common salt and water, two table-spoons to a pint (these two are recommended by Dr. Marie Stopes who disapproves of stronger disinfectants except in case of disease); boric acid and water, a two to four per cent solution; citric acid and water. 1.5 to 1.2 per cent solution; tartaric acid (powder) and water, same proportion as for citric acid. Permanganate of potash is also used in a solution of strength 1 in 2000, but unfortunately this last spoils linen and stains the skin. These stains, however, rapidly disappear on washing with a solution of bisulphate of soda. Alum makes a good antiseptic solution at 1 in 100. Corrosive sublimate at 1 in 10000

is also good. Out of all these, salt and water is hard to beat for simplicity, and is therefore very much to be recommended, especially as some of the others may do harm in the hands of people not accustomed to the use of chemicals.

Appendix.

An Open Letter.

We translate here for our readers an open letter addressed to the French senator, Béranger, the champion of French prudery. The letter is drawn up by M. Hardy on the occasion of some prosecutions directed against neo-malthusian propagandists, and published by him in one of his books, and it was signed by some of the leading lights of the scientific, literary and artistic world.

An Open Letter to M. Béranger, Senator.

“By a false interpretation of the law of 2nd August 1882, modified by those of 16th March 1898 and 7th April 1908, concerning “Offences against Morals”, on your initiative and according to your indications, judgments have been given which compare neomalthusianism to pornography.

“We cannot protest too much against this judicial deviation, which has for its only excuse the want of precision of the texts thus

wrongly applied, but which does grave injury to liberty of opinion.

“Neomalthusianism, theoretical and practical, is in no way immoral or obscene. The result of the work and the discoveries of the most eminent thinkers of all countries and of all times, it does not in any way offend morality.

“Limitation of births, the neomalthusians maintain, is absolutely necessary. The independence, dignity and morality of individuals and of families depend, in great measure, on procreative prudence. Family comforts and social harmony are, without it, impossible to establish.

“Spread among the poorer classes, neomalthusianism will be a powerful help to the amelioration of public health, the abolition of prostitution, the disappearance of abortion, the suppression of international wars, the solution of the social question. This is not, there cannot be, if neomalthusianism is not

