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BIRTH CONTROL

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THE HANDBOOK SERIES

SELECTED ARTICLES ON

BIRTH CONTROL

COMPILED BY
JULIA E. JOHNSEN

NEW YORK
THE H. W. WILSON COMPANY
1925

Published November, 1925
Printed in the United States of America

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The subject of birth control is one that cannot entirely be ignored. In the last few years in particular it has found its way into the columns of popular and conservative journals alike, newspapers, platforms, conferences, conventions, investigations both social and medical, in short, in a multitude of places where formerly it could not be mentioned. So far from being a sexual problem alone, it verges upon many collateral fields of study and thought, social, economic, medical, biological, hygienic, psychological, eugenic, statistical, political, ethical and spiritual. To examine its claims by setting forth compactly, in an open forum, as it were, some of the representative and best available literature for and against, is the main aim of this handbook.

There has been no attempt to go closely into literature chiefly of interest to investigators in specialized fields. It has been thought important, however, to place opinion upon the more stabilized basis that results from the opportunity to examine opposing views side by side, in the light of dispassionate thought. It has been felt important, also, to neglect no view that might add to the stimulation of accurate thought. Such can only be gained by broad excursions and synthesis. "The friction of men's minds causes the sparks of truth to scintillate."

The handbook follows the usual plan of the Handbook Series in presenting reprints under the headings of general, affirmative, and negative, the division being relative, rather than absolute. The discussion includes a survey of the historical basis and present status of birth control, and an attempt to touch upon as many of

the leading aspects presented by it as possible. A large, selected, up-to-date, and similarly classified bibliography is included for the convenience of those who wish to carry on further reading and study. Briefs sum up some of the main contentions on both sides.

The handbook endeavors to be unbiased and impartial and thus to serve more fully the interests of all who feel the right to think and decide for themselves this very personal and broadly social question. It is hoped it will be of service to all who are perplexed by the problems presented by this movement in our social life, to those who are faced by the problem in their own homes, and to those who hold the responsibility for advising others; and that it may not be without interest to many high-minded and sincere investigators in special lines touching upon it who are working to stimulate sound thought and the emergence of clear principles on the highest plane for the guidance of our social life.

Acknowledgement is made to all whose considerate courtesy contributed to the compilation of the volume.

JULIA E. JOHNSON

May 15, 1925

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BRIEF

RESOLVED: *That the dissemination of the knowledge and means of contraception should be made legal.*

INTRODUCTION

- I. The dissemination of the knowledge and means of contraception is prohibited by five Federal obscenity statutes, and by a number of state statutes. The Federal statutes are: Sections 102, 112, 245, 312 of the Criminal Code, and Section 305, paragraphs (a) and (b) of the Tariff Act of 1912.
 - A. It is proposed to modify these merely on the one point relating to the prevention of conception, with or without suitable restriction.

- II. Contraceptive knowledge implies scientific, hygienic knowledge by which the possibility of conception can be consciously controlled.
 - A. It does not include abortion or the interference with life after conception has taken place.

- III. The issues are:
 - A. Is there any immediate need for birth control and for change in existing legislation?
 - B. Would widespread knowledge of contraception and presumably its practice, be beneficial?
 - C. Is contraception sound and moral in principle?

AFFIRMATIVE

- I. Judicious birth control is a necessity, and our laws on the subject need revision.
 - A. The present expansion of population cannot continue much longer.
 1. The birth rate has increased.
 - a. It has doubled in the last ninety-two years and at the present rate of increase will again double in sixty years.
 - b. Experts estimate that in two hundred years there will be ten times the present population on the earth.
 2. An extraordinary lowering of the death rate has been brought about in the last forty years.
 - a. Medical science and public hygiene have done much to vanquish certain diseases.
 - (1) Typhoid, malaria, cholera, yellow fever, small pox, diphtheria, tuberculosis.
 - b. Great advance has been made in the saving of child life.
 3. The earth will not be able to support an unlimited increase of population.
 - a. Food and agricultural experts estimate that in one hundred years the population of the earth will have expanded to as many human beings as could possibly be fed if every acre on the globe was tilled and producing to its fullest capacity.
 - b. All available land is being rapidly taken up.
 4. Sooner or later the people of the earth will have to limit their birth rate through

the volition of parents or die off by epidemics, wars, famines, etc., as throughout past history.

- B. Reckless breeding should be checked for the sake of those who are now here.
1. It costs the lives of thousands of women and cripples thousands more.
 - a. The mortality from childbirth and large families is high.
 - b. Under certain pathological conditions women's lives are jeopardized by pregnancy.
 - (1) When afflicted with serious cardiac diseases, tuberculosis, etc.
 - (a) Sixty-five per cent of women afflicted with tuberculosis die as a result of pregnancy.
 - c. Thousands of women lose their lives or become invalids by resorting to abortion.
 - (1) Various estimates place the number of abortions in the United States at five hundred thousand to three million yearly.
 - d. Repeated confinements at short intervals leave mothers worn out and weakened through disease, overwork and lack of better things.
 2. It causes great waste of child life.
 - a. The mortality among children is great among the poor, the unfortunate, the overcrowded, etc.
 - b. The lives of many who survive are practically wasted through ineffi-

ciency, disease, and lack of opportunity.

(1) They cannot receive proper home care, education, and training.

(2) They must often go to work at an early age.

3. Voluntary parenthood is desirable from every point of view of the family.
- a. It enables husband and wife to enjoy a few years of companionship and adjustment, and to increase their joint income.
 - b. The birth of children at suitable intervals enables the mother to regain health and strength before undergoing confinements anew.
 - c. It enables parents to produce fewer but stronger, healthier, and finer children, who are wanted and loved and to whom they can give proper environment, care, advantages, and opportunities.
 - d. Voluntary parenthood does not mean childlessness.
 - (1) Those who are unfit for parenthood should not have children, but should not, therefore, be denied married life.
 - (2) Those who are able to have several should.
- C. Our laws on the subject need revision.
1. Revision would remove what is essentially the injustice of class legislation.
 - a. The educated, well-to-do, and higher classes already have information concerning contraception and practice it widely.

- (1) This is shown conclusively by their small families.
 - (a) Harvard graduates, according to records over many years, average 1.7 children per family.
 - (b) That births are artificially restricted is shown by an existing birth rate of only 22.8 per thousand, the normal rate being fifty per thousand.
- b. It is the poor who need it most to whom it is denied.
 - (1) They have not the means to get the information.
 - (2) They have the same right to it as the others.
2. Contraceptive information should be legalized in order to free medicine and science, and to place the best information before the people.
 - a. All physicians should be enabled to impart information to proper persons seeking it.
 - b. Scientific research should be encouraged.
 - (1) By permitting investigation, use of mails, publication, and discussion at home.
 - (2) By permitting importation of books and articles from abroad.
 - c. Clinics should be established at suitable points for the benefit both of the needy and of science.
 - d. The legalization of contraceptive

information will not flood the market with fraudulent articles.

- (1) The present secretly circulated unreliable and harmful information could not compete with information openly given.
 - (2) The Food and Drugs Act would be effective in protecting against this as it now protects in regard to drugs, chemicals and compounds used for other purposes.
 - e. The imparting of information can be restricted to physicians and dealers if felt to be advisable.
3. The present laws are anomalous, absurd, and unenforceable.
- a. It is legally no crime to control conception, hence it should not be illegal to disseminate contraceptive information.
 - b. The present laws classify with indecency and obscenity a practice approved in private by multitudes.
 - (1) The dissemination of this knowledge is just as decent and reputable as the dissemination of hygienic, sanitary and eugenic literature.
 - c. To enforce them would require immense and unthinkable espionage.
 - d. The Federal law initiating this legislation was passed under circumstances precluding a reasonable consideration of its bearing and import.
4. The revision of the laws would be practicable.

- a. The removal from the Federal statutes of the prohibition against the knowledge and means of contraception would serve as an example for the states to amend their laws.
 - (1) Half of the states would require no additional legislation.
- b. It would require no appropriations and establish no bureaus.
5. Removal would not sanction abortion nor remove the prohibition concerning it.
6. It is most improbable birth control can be permanently checked.

II. With contraceptive information spread through all classes great social and economic benefits will ensue.

A. The quality of the race will be improved.

1. The discrepancy in the numbers of the cultured and higher classes will be equalized.
 - a. The undesirable elements of the population will tend to die out.
 - (1) The subnormal, mentally defective, diseased, morally unfit, etc., will cease to propagate so fast.
 - (a) Many of these are unusually prolific.
 - b. The more intelligent and responsible members of the community will in any case exercise restraint and have small families.
 - c. Equalization can be attained only from the bottom up.
2. Birth control is the only way to check undesirables.

- a. Segregation cannot be adequately maintained.
 - (1) Every year many insane, epileptic, idiotic, and other men and women are discharged as cured and allowed to propagate their kind.
 - b. Sterilization is still a matter of controversy.
3. It would improve personal and general health.
- a. Promote personal hygiene.
 - b. Increase longevity.
 - c. Help check tuberculosis and social diseases.
4. It would improve inheritable qualities.
- a. Strong, healthy, vigorous physical endowments would be secured.
 - b. It would conduce to finer moral and intellectual development.
- B. It would do away with many of the serious economic and social evils arising from our large and unwanted population.
1. Regulate industrial conditions.
- a. As competition decreases there would be less unemployment, higher wages, better jobs.
 - b. Woman's compulsory work outside the home to augment the family income would be reduced.
 - c. Child labor would be checked.
2. Poverty and misery would be relieved.
- a. There would be less overcrowding, improved housing, a greater financial margin for food, clothing, illness, and unexpected strain.

3. The burden upon the state and self-supporting members of society of caring for the unfortunate would be lessened.
 - a. It would relieve hospitals, asylums, charitable and penal institutions, etc.
 - (1) Crime would be decreased and there would be fewer unfit, mentally and physically crippled, broken families, etc.
 - (2) Families would be better able to care for their helpless members.
4. The peace of the world would be preserved.
 - a. The menace of war will be reduced when over-population, fear of famine, and aggressive scramble for territory are ended.
 - b. Defensive powers will be maintained by the higher quality and fitness of men.
 - c. Other over-crowded countries with high birth rates would be encouraged to bring down their populations also.
 - (1) Without birth control the Far East will menace the peace of the world in the future.
5. It would establish the equality of the sexes.
 - a. Establish woman's personal and economic freedom.
6. There would be no danger from seriously depleted population.
 - a. When eugenically applied it does not lessen numbers but even causes them to increase more rapidly.

- (1) Economic improvement causes the population to increase faster.
 - (2) It encourages birth release, not race suicide, among those best able to care for children.
 - (3) The general death rate drops.
- b. It can be guided to beneficent social ends and restrained as may be to the best advantage of society.
- C. Contraception would do away with the evils arising from deferred marriage and abstinence.
1. It permits early marriage with child bearing deferred until convenient.
 - a. Many would marry young except for the fear of a family.
 2. Early marriage checks immorality and the spread of social diseases.
 3. Abstinence is unnatural and harmful.
 - a. Suppression results in neurosis, in-harmony, and morbidity that may break forth in undesirable ways.
- D. Contraception is non-injurious.
1. According to Dean Inge, medical opinion is overwhelmingly against the view that the practice is physically injurious.
- E. Experience with it in other countries has been favorable.
1. New Zealand and Holland where contraceptive knowledge is general have practically the lowest death rates.
 2. In Holland health, longevity, and stature have improved faster than in any other country.
- III. Contraception is sound and moral in principle.
- A. It is moral in aim.

1. Behind the principle and practice lie the highest and purest motives of humanitarianism.
 - a. To spare the health and strength of the mother.
 - b. To promote the health and highest well-being of the child.
 - c. To raise the general standard of life throughout the community, nation and world.
 - d. To make people more enlightened and happy.
 2. There is no moral wrong comparable with bringing into the world unwanted children who never have a chance, and whose coming is only detrimental to the family and society.
 3. It gives a woman the right to decide for herself whether she will or will not become a mother.
 4. Morality implies control, and it is essentially this.
- B. It is highly ethical.
1. Sex expression is a two-fold function
It exists for
 - a. Procreation.
 - b. The expression of love, tenderness and devotion.
 2. Sex expression is not degrading any more than any other natural function.
 - a. Under all right conditions it is pure and beautiful.
- C. Birth control would not encourage immorality.
1. The morality of women is not based on their fear of consequences.

- a. Virtuous women are chaste because they revere the right.
2. Immoral women are little influenced either by knowledge or lack of knowledge, but in any case those who insist on promiscuity should not add to the situation by bringing innocent children into the world.
3. That the knowledge can be abused is no reason for denying it to millions of responsible, married couples.
 - a. It is an insult to people in general to assume they cannot be trusted with knowledge.
 - b. Knowledge of all kinds can be abused.
 - c. Those strongly impelled to forbidden relations are the ones who most readily find means to secure it.
- D. It leads to the highest happiness and achievement.
 1. It preserves the happiness of millions of married couples.
 2. The sublimation of the sex instinct leads to the highest cultural, artistic and social achievements.
 - a. According to Freud these are due to the sexual instinct.
- E. It does not lead to desecration of marriage.
 1. The holiness of marriage does not depend on conception or contraception.
 - a. It depends on the sense of consecration that men and women feel.
 2. There is no more immorality in small families than in large ones.
- F. It has been approved in the consciences of multitudes.

1. A large majority of married people have already indicated their approval by their lives, as shown by their small families.
 2. It is supported by men and women of the highest repute, of learning, science, religious teachers, and physicians.
- G. It does not violate the Bible or the Commandments of God.
- H. Its use would not be forced on any one.
1. Everyone would be allowed to use or not to use it as his own conscience and sense of right decide.

NEGATIVE

- I. There is no existing necessity for a change in our laws regarding birth control.
- A. There is no immediate need of controlling population.
1. Experts have warned us we need to check our declining birth rate among native and better stock if our inheritance is not to deteriorate.
 - a. Our present generation of good stock is not replacing itself.
 - (1) Thirteen per cent of the present generation of native stock are childless due to mortality, celibacy, infertility, etc.
 - (2) Many classes are producing too few children.
 - (a) The average number born to Harvard graduates is 1.7 children; of two college graduates is 1.5 children. The showing of other colleges and universities is little better.

- (b) The average number of children per marriage is 2.8, while four births per couple are needed to maintain population and ensure survival.
 - (c) Families decrease with improved economic conditions.
2. The death rate is decreasing less rapidly than the birth rate.
 - a. Although many diseases have been conquered, others have increased.
 - (1) Cancer, neurasthenia, etc.
 - b. If the tendency holds, deaths will eventually balance births, producing a stable or declining population.
 3. We can support many times the present population.
 - a. We have vast resources and vacant lands in the United States.
 - b. The development of scientific agriculture and mechanical inventions will still further increase our productivity.
 - c. The saturation point of population as regards our ability to provide means of existence, will not come in our time, if at all.
 4. With the decrease of immigration our population will become stable, if not actually decline.
 - a. Where definite increase of population has been shown, it has been due in large part to immigrants and their greater rate of increase.
 5. A large population is desirable rather than the reverse.

- a. It produces economic and intellectual expansion.
 - (1) It produces able men and abundant competition.
 - (2) Countries and races have developed through large populations in the past.
 - b. It makes for military security.
 - (1) For military reasons it would be foolhardy to reduce our population before other countries do and before we are guaranteed against future wars.
- B. No clear, valid reason has been brought out why the laws should be set aside.
- 1. It is demanded by only a small group.
 - 2. That it exists among the rich is no argument for spreading it among the poor.
 - 3. It is, however, improbable that it is as widely practiced as implied by those who wish to legalize it that it may be available to others.
 - a. No direct evidence has ever been brought out to prove the fact.
 - b. The fertility of the race diminishes with its intellectual and moral development.
 - (1) In all ages and nations, the highest classes, who are assumed to take the lead in practicing birth control, have been the least prolific.
 - (2) Psychic impotence exists in the cultured classes and in those subject to great mental strain far more frequently than generally surmised.

- (3) The educated marry, as a rule past the age of greatest fertility.
 - c. The average girl of today leads a life which tends to reduce her fertility.
 - (1) She will have a relatively small family even though no contraceptives are used.
 - d. The evils of over-fecundity are found largely in certain classes and within certain families.
 - e. A low birth rate may also be due to post-conceptual destruction, which all authorities admit is large.
4. No adequate scientific study of all the phases of the question has ever been made.
 - a. Until such a study is made by competent experts and a knowledge of all consequences is obtained, there should be no concession in a matter so affecting the welfare of society and the race.
5. The decision to bear or not to bear children can scarcely be left to those among whom the advocates of birth control wish to spread the information.
 - a. There is no justifiable reason for putting it in the hands of the unintelligent, irresponsible, and capricious.
 - b. Because a woman does not want to become pregnant is no valid reason for instructing her in its prevention.
 - (1) An unwelcome pregnancy does not necessarily mean an unwelcome child.

- (a) The mother instinct is too strong.
 - 6. Prevention for good and sufficient reasons can be carried on now with the law as it stands.
 - a. Physicians have the legal right to instruct patients in the practice of contraception where conditions demand its use to conserve life.
 - (1) In New York such help is given by physicians and clinics under Section 1145 of the New York Criminal Code.
 - b. It should be left in medical hands alone.
- II. The spread of contraceptive information would be highly deleterious and would not accomplish the ends sought.
- A. The methods advocated may easily become physically injurious and they are generally unreliable.
 - 1. They may easily become a serious menace to the health and even to life.
 - a. Physicians differ in opinion as to whether the practice is injurious or not, but many are strongly inclined to think so.
 - (1) Many methods are known to be injurious.
 - (2) It has never been established by adequate case study that any method is free from injurious effects.
 - (3) It may be potentially harmful, the effects not becoming manifest for a long time.

- b. Psychologists show that if natural effects are thwarted there is an outgrowth of new effects, the cause of which often baffles science. This law is applicable to the physical world as well.
 - (1) To this have been attributed the neurasthenia and other maladies of the age.
 - (2) Neurotic conditions are apt to lead to divorce.
- c. Permanent sterility may be induced, or existing sterility may be hidden that without the practice of contraception would be known and corrected before too late.
 - (1) This would result in the tragedy of a couple having no children at all.
- 2. It is the consensus of medical opinion that all known methods of contraception are unreliable.
 - a. Some studied cases have registered as much as 100 per cent failure.
- B. Great evil might result should the knowledge become universal.
 - 1. It might easily lead to race degeneration and race suicide.
 - a. The superior classes would tend to die out.
 - (1) They multiply slowly in any case, and may be expected to do so even more slowly with knowledge easily accessible.
 - (a) The practice would become more widespread among them than among the less intelligent classes.

- (2) Birth release is to be desired so far as they are concerned, and this cannot be attained by legal procedure.
 - b. It will not reduce the proportion of the lower classes whose reproduction it is desirable to prevent.
 - (1) The subnormal, unfit and irresponsible classes can least be expected to exercise the restraint to control conception by scientific methods in order to restrict the size of their families.
 - (a) The only way we can stop the reproduction of the feebleminded, degenerate criminal and other unwanted classes is by intelligent social control, segregation and sterilization.
 - (2) Ninety per cent of these may be contributed by 5 per cent of families.
 - c. It would very likely in time cause a diminution in natural fertility.
 - (1) Fertility runs in families.
 - (2) Relatively larger numbers would be born of parents lacking the physical stamina to produce large families.
2. The power in individual hands might easily become a force beyond control and menace our very civilization.
- C. Birth control is not a panacea for other social evils.
1. Economic and social evils are rarely due to large families, and they are preventable by other means,

- a. Economic problems are due to maladjustments in our social system, and must be corrected through economic channels.
 - (1) If not so corrected, conditions of supply and demand in the long run become adjusted to the smaller population and the evils remain.
 - (2) Children in due time become economic assets to parents.
- b. Overcrowding, bad housing, etc. are preventable.
 - (1) They are due to rapacious landlords and high rents that are everywhere prevalent regardless of sizes of families.
- c. Vice and crime would not be done away with.
 - (1) They are subjects for eugenic, economic, penal and educational remedies.
 - (a) They are by no means confined to large and to poverty-stricken families.
- d. Birth control would not necessarily result in better families.
 - (1) Fewer children do not necessarily mean better children.
 - (a) There is no biological evidence to prove that better babies are the result of smaller numbers.
 - (b) Better children are the result of suitable heredity and environment.

- (2) Superior health conditions are not necessarily found in smaller families.
 - (a) According to Porcys, Pearson, and Alexander Graham Bell, the greatest longevity accompanies the greatest fertility.
 - (b) The health of mothers and children alike are problems for better medical care and nursing.
 - (3) Families with one child only are not preferable to larger ones.
 - (a) The only child is not generally of the most desirable type.
 - (4) Better families can be attained through better education of rich and poor alike.
 - e. It will not lessen abortions.
 - (1) It would rather cause more.
 - (a) Contraceptives are far from infallible.
 - (2) The majority of abortions are among the idle, richer class.
 - f. It cannot be shown that a decrease in insanity, venereal disease, tuberculosis and the like has accompanied the falling birth rate.
- D. Experience in countries where it has been tried out does not warrant the proposed change.
- 1. At present in almost every country the official attitude is against it.
 - a. Some countries have even gone back on their previous policy.

- (1) Since the war France, has passed new laws making it a crime even to advocate birth control.

III. Contraception is unsound and immoral in principle.

A. It is based on the necessity of sex indulgence.

1. Such necessity is a myth.

a. Continence has always been practised by large numbers of people.

- (1) By priests, nuns, travelers, the widowed, etc.

- (2) By the unmarried.

- (a) There are at present fifteen million unmarried men and women in the United States of child bearing age.

- (3) It is practised more or less in the marriage relation itself, for various reasons.

b. There is no proof that continence is detrimental to health.

- (1) Eminent physicians have declared it is not productive of the disorders attributed to it.

- (2) It is only the few oversexed natures that are disadvantageously affected.

- (a) The remedy for them is to cultivate pure-mindedness and interest in outside activities.

- (3) The transmutation of suppressed desires into higher creative mental power results in greater vigor and strength.

2. To maintain that such necessity exists only delays the ultimate solution of the sexual question and the evils that spring from it.
 - a. It over-emphasizes and increases the sexual side of the nature, not only of the present but of future generations as well.
 - b. It inflicts upon women greater sex-slavery than before.
 - c. Only education in the right understanding of sex impulses and the power to control them will lift the race from the unspeakable conditions due to uncontrolled desires.
- B. It is immoral because it degrades every finer instinct of the nature.
 1. It profanes the sacraments of wedded love.
 - a. The relation becomes one of legalized vice.
 - b. It injures the feelings of sanctification and honor.
 2. It stifles the race instincts of production.
 - a. Motherhood, or the power to give life, instead of being regarded as the greatest gift, becomes feared and shunned.
 3. It degrades character.
 - a. It advocates ease, luxury, pleasure etc.
 - b. It discourages sacrifice, effort, and other ennobling qualities that make for individual and national fineness and progress.
- C. It is based on a materialistic doctrine, ignoring the spiritual view of life.

1. It takes no account of man as a spiritual being.
 - a. The spirit of man when not bound to the sensual plane has the possibility of unlimited vistas, interests, activities, enjoyments, and refinements, taking a great variety of mental, aesthetic and higher forms.
 - b. It is not correct to say that sex life is necessary to the spiritual accord of two beings in wedded life.
 - (1) It gives psychic stimulation to a degree.
 - (a) The many cases of wrecked marriages indicates this experience alone is not sufficient to hold people.
 - (2) The real exaltation and enhancement of love is based on the finer and higher feelings evolved through intimacy, mutual trust, sacrifice and co-operation to common ends.
 - c. Man, through his mental activity, is the maker of his environment.
2. The practice of contraception is unnatural.
 - a. It is the perversion of a natural function.
 - (1) It is the use of a human faculty in such a way as to frustrate the end for which such faculty was created.
3. It ignores moral law.
 - a. Man is morally responsible for his acts and sooner or later becomes the recipient of the fruit of their consequences.

- (1) Deliberate evasion of consequences and compromise with right living is a moral crime.
- D. It encourages immorality.
1. It leads to immoral relationships and moral degradation.
 - a. One of the strongest deterrents, the consequences which immoral practices entail, would be removed.
 - b. The *British Blue Book* containing the minutes of the British Joint Committee on the Criminal Law Bill, states: "It enormously stimulates non-mercenary prostitution with the much greater disease rate that attaches to that."
- E. The approval, even of a majority, which it does not have, or of high-minded people, does not necessarily stamp it as right.
- F. It does not lead to happiness, individual or social.
1. Selfishness, individualism, social particularism, voluntary childlessness, etc. are not the qualities on which to predicate the highest types of character and happiness.
 - a. Only the expansion of the nature that includes altruistic thought and action brings real happiness.

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INTRODUCTION

Those who have given thoughtful study to the subject of birth control, whether or not they support it, agree generally on the need of a clearer understanding of this vital question. It is a question that has the potentialities of immense good or immense evil for our future civilization. There is much evidence to attest to the fact that it already has a widespread hold upon contemporary society—how wide no one seems to know definitely. Frederick L. Hoffman, consulting statistician of the Prudential Life Insurance Company states "Without statistics it is a reasonably safe conclusion that birth control has gained enormously in this country in the last twenty years and that the practice is now almost general among a large proportion of people who have married within the last ten years, certainly after the second child. It is amazing to note the frankness with which the practice is conceded on the part of young women recently married." The studies of Dr. Katherine Bement Davis have further contributed testimony of its practice within a limited cultured group. Discussion of the subject is also widespread. Reports of hearings have been published in the transactions and journals of various social welfare societies, and it has been both upheld and denounced by eminent authorities, with equal sincerity and conviction. Through all has run a popular propaganda and appeal that adds or attempts to add with growing constancy to its converts.

Such being the case it becomes clear that evasion of the question is not only not possible, as some would still like to feel, but is not desirable. It must be and is being faced, with candor, dignity, and such mustering of sci-

entific thought as may be attained at the present controversial stage of the discussion. It must be admitted at the outset that scientific facts established in connection with this subject, are relatively few. A leading gynecologist, who has gone far in research work on the subject, has stated that the case so far rests largely upon assertion and opinion. Its advocates, in many cases admitting this, take the position of welcoming and inviting all possible study.

Further, the subject is a highly complicated one. From being the comparatively simple and personal matter that it is considered by some, who see the one need or desirability of checking their further family increase, it becomes a matter of health, of religion, of morality, of eugenic, economic and social effects, and of national and racial welfare. It becomes a matter as large as life itself, for it touches the roots of life, out of which the immediate future and the far future is to grow. Thus instead of solving the case for one phase alone, let us say the medical one which is extremely important, or the effect on the family and its broader environment, it becomes necessary to consider it from all points of view. No facet that it turns to life may be ignored lest out of some overlooked aspect vital effects may spring.

One additional observation must be made that will become apparent to every careful reader, that the same facts are used many times both to support the subject and to oppose it, and the subject in the last analysis, therefore, rests eminently upon the discrimination of the reader, pending its establishment upon a sounder basis through scientific and moral channels. According to his bent of mind and the numerous factors that go to make up the individual judgment will be the conclusions he forms; and conclusions alone are not proof.

Birth control has been defined as the tendency to limit births below the physiological capacity of the mother. The genesis of the movement is generally credited to

Malthus, although it is certain some methods of contraception were known much earlier than his time. Malthus, strictly speaking, gave no teaching for the prevention of conception by artificial means. His claim was that the earth could support only a certain number of inhabitants, and he, therefore, sought to emphasize the great importance of controlling the population by means of foresight and self-control. Out of his principles the Neo-Malthusian movement grew as an attempt to control the population by the reduction of the birth rate. This movement was largely of an economic nature and taught the additional concept, that had originated with the followers of Malthus, of the artificial prevention of conception. The Neo-Malthusian movement has evolved into the various birth control organizations of today, with the more immediate concerns of the attaining of women's personal and economic freedom, the preservation of life and health of mothers and children, and the relief from overcrowding, unwanted children, and the propagation of the unfit.

Contraception has gained much headway in some European countries, particularly in England, Holland, and France, also in Australia. In the United States the Comstock Law, passed in 1873 in connection with the efforts of Anthony Comstock to suppress obscene literature, early prevented the legal dissemination of contraceptive literature. This law, Section 211 of the Federal Penal Code, included the words "preventing conception" and forbade the use of the mails to anything specifically prohibited in it. Later it was reinforced to prohibit the transmission of prohibited literature or articles by express or any public carrier, or their importation from abroad. Many of the states followed up this Federal law by legislation on their own part, penalizing, in obscenity laws, the imparting of contraceptive information. The right to use the mails for literature dealing with the principle of birth control was established as the

result of the Sanger case lasting from 1914 to 1916 which was finally, owing to protests, dismissed without court decision. The first legislative gain for birth control was in the state of New York, establishing the right of physicians under Section 1145 of the New York Penal Code, to give contraceptive information in their private and public practice for the cure or prevention of disease. This decision made in 1918 by the New York Court of Appeals, was the outcome of the cases following the attempted establishment of the Brownsville Clinic in Brooklyn in 1916. In the meantime the National Birth Control League, the first in the United States, had been established in 1914 and an attempt at the amendment of the New York Law, Section 1142 of the Penal Code, was made in the years 1918, 1919, 1921, 1923, and 1924. The first bills either were not reported from committee or failed of introduction. The bill of 1923, drawn up by J. P. Chamberlain of the Columbia Law School which aimed at permitting physicians to give advice to all married people requesting it, received the support of the Citizen's Union, the New York City League of Women Voters, the Women's Municipal League, the New York Godmothers' League, the Women's City Club, the Gamut Club, the Civic Club, the Child Welfare Committee of the New York City Federation, and the Women's Press Club. Petitions in its favor were signed by over seven hundred New York State physicians and by nearly fifty thousand voters. The bill was killed in committee. A renewed effort was made in 1924 but the Assembly adjourned two days after the introduction of the bill without taking any action. Legislative attempts were made in California and Massachusetts in 1917, and in Connecticut in 1923; while legislation adverse to birth control was attempted in the Stern bill in Pennsylvania in 1918, passed but vetoed by the Governor; in the two Cuvilier bills introduced in New York state in 1923 and 1924, and a bill introduced in Virginia in 1924, all failing of adoption.

The American Birth Control League which has backed the legislative efforts of the last few years in the state of New York has sought consistently to keep contraceptive information under the charge of physicians to be used by them in their legitimate practice. It has only recently drawn up a proposed amendment to the Federal law, but has taken no steps as yet for its introduction into Congress. This proposal reads as follows, similar amendments being proposed for Section 245 dealing with express companies and common carriers and Section 305a of the Tariff Act;

Section 211. This section shall not apply to the mailing, delivering or receiving of any written or printed matter concerning the prevention of conception, or of any appliance, drug or thing adapted or intended therefore, as between lawfully practicing physicians and their bona fide patients, duly licenced druggists, importers or exporters of medical appliances for drugs, manufacturers thereof, wholesale dealers therein and medical publishers, providing such mailing, delivering or receiving is in the due and proper course of such profession or businesses.

A different stand has been taken by the Voluntary Parenthood League which was organized in 1918 for the purpose of getting the existing Federal law repealed. After several attempts it succeeded in 1923 in having the Cummins-Kissel bill introduced into Congress. It was reintroduced in 1924 as the Cummins-Vaile bill (S.2290 and H.R.6542). This bill sought to remove the prohibition to the circulation of contraceptive knowledge and means by striking out in Sections 102, 211, 245, and 312 of the Criminal Code, and Section 305, paragraphs (a) and (b) of the Tariff Act of 1922, the words "preventing conception" wherever they occur. It contained also an additional provision attempting to safeguard the public against harmful contraceptives by providing that all literature giving contraceptive information must be certified by five physicians as not injurious to life or health. Hearings of advocates and opponents of the bill were held, but it was not reported out of committee

before adjournment. The attempt was made to stamp part of the testimony of opponents as irrelevant on the ground that the bill was limited solely to the right of the citizen to have access to knowledge and did not include matters relating to its use which should be left to the judgment of the individual.

In addition to making contraceptive information more accessible, either unqualifiedly or under suitable restrictions, its advocates are interested in the promotion of scientific study and the establishment of scientific clinics. The beginnings of two clinics were made in New York, and one was attempted in Chicago. Local birth control organizations and groups are formed wherever sufficient sympathy and support is gained, the educational effort and organization extending even into Mexico, South America, and Japan. A body of investigators, the Committee on Maternal Health, was also formed to carry on an investigation of the movement at home and abroad from the medical point of view.

By reason of the frequency with which the name of Mrs. Annie Besant, now Dr. Besant, is linked with the early history of the birth control movement it seems important to note, since this is rarely mentioned, that in the light of later ideals she severed all connection with the movement, without, however, losing her feeling for the evident misery of those she had tried to help. Her statement of this transition and of the case for both points of view is given elsewhere. Her view weighs the values of two diametrically opposed aspects of life, the material and spiritual, and the near and distant vision. The spiritual view is taken by other, although not all, religionists, and perhaps most consistently of all by the Catholics.

JULIA E. JOHNSEN

May 15, 1925.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

INTELLECTUAL HOSPITALITY¹

To have some intelligent appreciation of how much of the knowable is yet unknown, conduces to that humility which is the beginning of wisdom. To know something of the past struggles for human progress conduces to an appreciation of how little is probably true of what we think we know. Thus to see our attainments in their true relations to past beliefs and their probable relation to future knowledge conduces to a true measure of our great ignorance. To have this is to be without censure, because without a stupid pride. To love truth more than our vain predispositions; to love harmlessness of life more than moral sentimentalism; to be free from phariseism, because knowing the diversity and uncertainty of standards; to be unafraid of new evidence, and unoppressive toward new allegations of truth; to be controlled by a selfishness of so high an order, that your greatest happiness comes from studying all problems from the impersonal viewpoint, and making all judgments by impersonal standards; to have the desire *to be right* always overpowering the desire that others *esteem* us to be so; never to impose one's opinion by invasive force; never to be impatient, except, perhaps, with dogmatism and intolerance—this is the essence of intellectual hospitality. In addition to this, if you show that rare disposition to make a substantial sacrifice for defending the right to be heard, of those whose opinions you disapprove, you would have a virtue so rare as to be almost heroic.

¹ By Theodore Schroeder, secretary of the Free Speech League. From pamphlet *Free Speech Case of Jay Fox*, p. 11. Free Speech League. New York. September, 1912.

HISTORY OF THE BIRTH CONTROL
MOVEMENT¹

I do not, for a moment, mean to imply that this fragment of history accounts for the whole fact of birth control as it is at present practised; because the prevention of conception has, I suppose, been practiced in one way or another sporadically or by custom, among pretty much all peoples of antiquity and of more recent times. But the birth control propaganda that we hear about has a fairly definite history of a hundred years; and it is that particular history I have been asked to say something about.

It is ordinarily believed, by those who have given attention to this propaganda, that it had its origin in England in the decade of the seventies, or, to be more exact, in 1877. It is true that there was just then an outburst of agitation so much more effective than any that had preceded it that in a sense it was the beginning of the movement of the present day. But in strictness there was at that time not so much new thought as new publicity and a new degree of organized activity in making known the argument for birth control by the prevention of conception.

To understand the story we must go back to Malthus and his essay on the *Principle of Population*, first written in 1798. The central principle of that Malthusian essay was, as you know, that human beings, like all other living beings, are cursed with a power of reproduction quite out of proportion to their power to maintain all the individuals who may be born. At first Malthus contended that this tendency to excessive increase resulted inevitably in either misery or vice. In later editions of his book he so far modified his original position

¹ By Professor James A. Field, University of Chicago. Substance of remarks before the joint session of the Chicago Gynecological Society and the Chicago Medical Society, February 16, 1916. *Surgery, Gynecology, Obstetrics*. 23: 185-8. August, 1916.

as to recognize a possible escape from this dilemma through the exercise of "moral restraint;" that is, through postponement of marriage and of all sexual relations whatsoever until a man saw himself in an assured way to support whatever family he might have. It was substantially in this form that Malthus left his analysis. Pressure of population brings into the world indefinite wretchedness and suffering, which can morally be avoided only by deferring marriage so long that smaller families result. Whether or not this suggestion of moral restraint offers a solution of the population problem depends upon whether or not the mass of mankind can be relied upon for such austere and sustained self-control. There were others among the contemporaries of Malthus who felt that for all practical purposes he left the picture as black as he had originally painted it.

Malthus was associated with the utilitarian thinkers of his time; but when it came to questions of sex morality he abandoned his utilitarianism and clung to the traditional code. Improvident marriages he sternly condemned; yet he refused to discuss or even to countenance the proposal that once persons were married the size of their families should be made subject to deliberate control. Hence to the out-and-out utilitarians it seemed that he had stopped short in the middle of his argument. He had demonstrated that over-population was the main source of suffering and vice, but he had shrunk from the conclusion that such a vast evil might justify resort to distasteful remedies. It remained for his more consistently radical contemporaries to push on where he had paused; to seek the ideal of the greatest good by the expedient of the lesser evil; and to take the stand that in consequence of Malthus' own statement of the population problem it had become the positive moral duty of the married as well as of the unmarried not to give existence to beings for whom they could not properly provide.

Among the distinguished utilitarians whom Malthus' reasoning led to this position may be mentioned probably Jeremy Bentham himself, and certainly James Mill, John Stuart Mill, and Grote, the historian. More important, however, in the history of the Neo-Malthusian birth control movement, is Francis Place, a picturesque and vigorous personage who rose from degraded poverty to the station of a prosperous master-tailor, whose wide reading and remarkable judgment of political and social conditions made him the friend of some of the most intellectual men of his day and a powerful organizer of reforms. Place sprang from the London working class, and with that class his sympathies always remained. The population problem had been presented to him directly and intimately. He virtually owed his whole moral salvation to a very youthful marriage; but this same marriage had burdened him with fourteen or fifteen children and filled his early years with the harshest poverty. He knew by experience what over-population meant; but he was profoundly convinced that to have remained unmarried would have meant his moral ruin. Hence he concluded that the only solution of the poor man's population problem was early marriage and limitation of family. This view he set forth frankly in a book, *Illustrations and Proofs of the Principle of Population*, which he published in 1822.

In the following year a group of radicals of whom Place was very probably the leader began to distribute in the industrial districts of London and Lancashire leaflets designed to acquaint the working classes with means of preventing conception. These, the so-called "diabolical handbills," were the cause of first an outcry and then a more serious discussion. They attained, apparently, a considerable circulation; and they were instrumental in bringing forth a more substantial pamphlet literature of which Richard Carlisle's *Every Womans' Book* and Robert Dale Owen's *Moral Physiology* may

be mentioned as the most important items. These two tracts attempted to deal with the physiological facts of reproduction as well as with the economics of over-population; and very naturally they prepared the way for the entrance of physicians into the Neo-Malthusian discussion.

The first noteworthy contribution from a medical man was the pamphlet entitled *Fruits of Philosophy*, written in this country by Dr. Charles Knowlton, of Massachusetts, and published in 1833. Dr. Knowlton appears to have been not only an eccentric, but a sexual hypochondriac, whom years of worry and depression had led to take an interest in the general question of sex. When he learned of the Neo-Malthusian arguments and read Robert Dale Owen's statement of the case for birth control instead of sexual repression, he was led to put forth his own views, and in particular to devote a chapter to the prevention of conception. His book was reprinted in England and for forty years was more or less known to the working-class radicals and free-thinkers. Then, in 1876, it furnished the ground for a prosecution which gave it great though accidental notoriety.

Meantime another and intrinsically more remarkable book had appeared. This work, later called *The Elements of Social Science*, had at first the more striking title, *Physical, Sexual and Natural Religion*. The anonymous author, Dr. George Drysdale, was a physician of high intellectual ability; and his book, radical and even fantastic as it was, was none the less in its way a brilliant performance for a student hardly out of his medical school training. The book, first published in 1854, strove to show that the physical functions of man are of equal importance and dignity with the mental functions, and equally worthy of cultivation and exercises. To this rule, the sexual function was held to be certainly no exception. Accordingly Dr. Drysdale ventured to

revolutionize the code of sexual ethics. Recognizing, as did Dr. Knowlton, the kinship between some of his doctrines and those of the Neo-Malthusians, Dr. Drysdale turned his attention more and more to Malthus and the economic explanation of poverty through over-population. *The Elements of Social Science*, in its elaborate form, was a literary crusade against what its author regarded as the three great and interrelated evils of poverty, prostitution, and celibacy. Only by the prevention of conception could society escape all three evils.

In 1876 a bookseller of Bristol, England, who had been selling indecently illustrated copies of Dr. Knowlton's *Fruits of Philosophy*, was arrested, tried, and convicted of selling an obscene book. The authorities turned their attention next to the publisher of the pamphlet, whom they persuaded to repudiate the work. This publisher was at that time the publisher also of much of the tract literature of the English secularists. His recantation seemed to some of the free-thinkers equivalent to an abandonment of the right of free discussion; and accordingly the leaders of the free-thought movement, Charles Bradlaugh and Mrs. Annie Besant, wishing to test the right of publication, deliberately brought out a new edition of the Knowlton pamphlet, in 1877, and challenged the police to arrest them. They were presently arraigned and brought to trial in the court of Queen's Bench, before the Lord Chief Justice and a special jury. The Solicitor-General appeared against them: Bradlaugh and Besant conducted their own able and dramatic defense. The case attracted inordinate attention; and by the time it had led to a half-hearted verdict of guilty, which was subsequently set aside on technical grounds, both judge and prosecutor were agreed that the trial had accomplished just what the prosecution had desired to prevent. The plea for Neo-Malthusianism had been proclaimed to all England; and, if Mrs. Besant's figures may be taken as correct, three months'

sales of *Fruits of Philosophy* had disposed of as many copies as would, at the old rate, have lasted for eighty years.

The Bradlaugh-Besant trial brought into prominence the Malthusian League. This organization, which owed its origin to Bradlaugh and Dr. George Drysdale, and which had nominally existed for over fifteen years, was now revived, and under the presidency of Dr. Charles R. Drysdale, brother of Dr. George Drysdale, became influential in organizing and diffusing Neo-Malthusian opinion not only in England but in some of the countries of continental Europe. The Dutch society of similar name which has done so much to further the birth control movement in Holland was suggested by the English league. In other countries the example has been followed.

Organized or unorganized, the movement is becoming practically world-wide. One cannot, of course, contend that the notoriety of the Bradlaugh-Besant trial, or of similar trials elsewhere, is the primary cause of our present-day falling birth rate. No doubt deep lying influences more or less inherent in modern social conditions have led civilized peoples to extend their power of control over nature until they now exert a voluntary control over human propagation itself. But one can hardly venture to deny that the agitation of the seventies must have done much to hasten the effects of these social and economic motives. It is, to say the least, a very striking coincidence that the English birth rate began so abruptly to fall about 1878; that the vigorous increase of population in New South Wales slackened simultaneously with the circulation and legal vindication of Neo-Malthusian leaflets; or that the decade of the eighties was marked by an unmistakable decline of the birth rate in virtually every country where reliable records are kept.

Two general facts stand out prominently in this brief chapter of history, first, the more the movement for birth control has been opposed, the more it has flourished.

Attempts to suppress it have again and again given it fresh notoriety, and have aroused its partisans to new enthusiasm. One community after another has tried prosecution and concluded to drop it. Our own Federal authorities appear to be the latest to learn discretion from the irony of this experience.

The second point seems to me more particularly to concern an audience like this. The champions of Neo-Malthusianism, one after another, have been treated by the mass of the community as intellectual and moral outlaws. They have, of course, been radicals always, and often they have been in revolt against established religion and the existing government as well as against traditional sex-morality. In a sense this fact seems to discredit the propaganda of birth control by making it appear as the whim of immoderate and unbalanced minds. Undeniably some of the propagandists have gone to outrageous lengths in their zeal. But it may fairly be contended that the blame for such excess of radicalism lies in good part at the door of the smug conservatives who have refused to recognize the sincerity of the Neo-Malthusians and have denied them a fair hearing. At any rate the whole birth control program remains clouded in ignorance and prejudice.

The history of the movement, the portentous significance of birth control, no longer as a possibility only but as an accomplished fact, demand our most discerning scientific attention. The practical question now is not whether prevention of conception shall be tolerated—it is already tolerated and approved by great numbers of persons—but under what circumstances it is to be tolerated: in what forms, for what purposes, to what extent, and so on. Our effort should not be to keep it outside the moral pale, but to find a place for it among our civilized discoveries; for since mankind has acquired rational mastery of its own reproduction it will hardly forget or abandon its knowledge and power.

Time will test this prediction. In the meantime there is an almost unlimited opportunity to bring to bear upon these questions the dignified and intelligent discussion which physicians in good standing can bring.

HISTORY OF THE BIRTH CONTROL MOVEMENT¹

The birth control movement first launched in the Anglo-Saxon world by Reverend Robert Malthus as a purely economic theory of population has achieved more immediate practical and international results than dreamed of in the philosophy of Malthus. It is not generally recognized that the United States of America has played a primary role in the development and growth of the idea. Two of our earliest Presidents, Thomas Jefferson and James Madison, were ardent champions of Malthus. Robert Dale Owen, United States Senator and also Ambassador to France, advocated the limitation of families. His book *Moral Physiology* played an international role in the great battle against prejudice and tradition. Ralph Waldo Emerson, Robert Ingersoll, and others expressed sympathy and understanding of the idea, and the practical treatise which precipitated the great fight in England in 1877 was written by an American physician.

The history of the great events in the development of the conception of birth control can most briefly and clearly be summed up in this list of great dates and quotations:

1798: First edition of Malthus's *Essay on Population*.
1803: Second edition, introducing and emphasizing the need of prudential checks and late marriage to limit the birth rate. 1818: Dawn of the idea of scientific prevention of conception. 1821: James Mill writes in *Ency-*

¹ From *Women of 1924*, edited by Ida C. Clark. p. 190-2. Women's News Service, 106 E. 19th Street, New York.

clopedia Britannica: "The grand practical problem therefore is to find a means of limiting the number of births." 1823: A small leaflet addressed to the married of both sexes, setting forth the economic burden of excessively large families, and describing with frank simplicity hygienic methods of preventing undesired pregnancy, is circulated in Manchester, England. This leaflet becomes known as *The Diabolical Handbill*, and is generally attributed to Francis Place. 1826: London: Richard Carlisle publishes *Every Woman's Book*. 1830: New York: Robert Dale Owen publishes *Moral Physiology*, advocating scientific and hygienic practice of contraception. 1831: Beginning of the decline of the birth rate in France, due to artificial contraception. 1833: Dr. Knowlton publishes in Boston, Massachusetts, his *Fruits of Philosophy*, describing contraceptive methods. This book became internationally important in popularizing family limitation. 1841: Inauguration of Oneida Community founded by John Humphreys Noyes at Putney, Vermont. 1842: France: Bishop Bouvier of Le Mans warns the Pope not to prohibit the practice of contraception if the Church would retain its power over the French. 1848: Oneida Community moves to Oneida, New York (1848-1881). Noyes writes in the first annual report, "We are not opposed to procreation. But we are opposed to involuntary procreation. We are opposed to excessive and, of course, oppressive procreation, which is almost universal. We are opposed to random procreation. . . . We are in favor of intelligent, well-ordered procreation." 1854: *The Elements of Social Science* by Dr. George Drysdale is published in London. The first complete presentation of contraception from the economic, philosophical and medical standpoint. This book did more than any other to awaken public interest in birth control in all countries.

1873: Through the efforts of the late Anthony Comstock, Congress enacts a statute prohibiting information

concerning contraception from the United States mails, and declaring such information illegal and obscene. Contrast this legislation with the words of Ralph Waldo Emerson: "If government knew how, I should like to see it check, not multiply the population." Robert G. Ingersoll wrote: "Why should men and women have children that they cannot take care of, children that are burdens and curses? Because they have more passion than intelligence, more passion than conscience, more passion than reason. You cannot reform these people with tracts and talk. Religion is helpless. There is but one hope. Ignorance, poverty and vice must stop populating the world. This cannot be done by moral suasion. This cannot be done by talk or example. To accomplish this there is but one way. Science must make woman the owner, the master of herself. Science, the only possible savior of mankind, must put it in the power of a woman to decide for herself whether she will or will not become a mother. This is the solution of the whole question. This frees woman. The babes that are born will then be welcome.

1876: Charles Bradlaugh and Annie Besant distribute one hundred and twenty-five thousand copies of Dr. Knowlton's *Fruits of Philosophy* (Boston, 1833) in England. 1877: Birth rate in England begins to decline. 1877: Trial and exoneration of Charles Bradlaugh and Annie Besant for circulating "indecent" literature. 1877: Beginning of practical education in England in methods of contraception. Organization of the Malthusian League. 1878: Imprisonment and fine of Edward Trulove, London publisher, for selling *Moral Physiology* by Robert Dale Owen, senator and United States Ambassador to France. 1878: First birth control clinic in the world is opened in Amsterdam, Holland, by Dr. Aletta Jacobs. 1879: First number of *The Malthusian* published in London. 1880: D. M. Bennett, founder and editor of the *Truthseeker* (New York) imprisoned

for sending through mails a pamphlet on the population problem. 1881: Dutch Nieuw-Malthusiaansche Bond begins active work among the poor of Holland. 1896: French League for Human Regeneration established in Paris by Paul Robin. 1900: First International Birth Control Conference held in Paris; organized by Paul Robin. 1905: Second International Birth Control and Neo-Malthusian Conference held at Liege. 1906: Chicago: Moses Harman, editor of *Lucifer*, condemned at the age of seventy-five to hard labor breaking stone in Leavenworth Prison for publishing a serious discussion of matrimonial relations. After release, he founded the *American Journal of Eugenics*. Other contemporary and later advocates of contraception in the United States: Dr. Alice B. Stockham, Dr. E. B. Foote, Dr. William J. Robinson, Dr. Abraham Jacobi and others. 1910: Third International Birth Control Conference held at The Hague. 1911: Fourth International Birth Control Conference held at Dresden on invitation from the German International Hygiene Exhibition. 1912: Sir James Barr, in presidential address to British Medical Association, endorses hygienic prevention of pregnancy. Dr. Abraham Jacobi, in presidential address to American Medical Association, endorses hygienic prevention of pregnancy. Margaret Sanger, as visiting nurse on East Side, is awakened to the imperative necessity of spreading education to poor mothers. 1913: Margaret Sanger lectures to mothers and poor women in New York and begins scientific study of practical method of birth control in France. 1914: January: Mrs. Sanger announces a public campaign for birth control based on grounds of economics and feminism. February: First issue of *The Woman Rebel* published and barred from the mail. April: "Birth control" is slogan coined to express purpose and aim of campaign. First American Birth Control League is formed. September: Margaret Sanger indicted and arrested for advocating birth control, under Section 211

of Federal statute. (See 1873). 1915: Arrest of William Sanger for giving out pamphlet on *Family Limitation* by Margaret Sanger. Sentenced to serve thirty days in workhouse. November: National Birth Control League is organized. Meeting called at Academy of Medicine by Drs. Jacobi and William J. Robinson arouses medical profession to importance of birth control movement. Letter by British writers sent to President Wilson protesting against Federal prosecution of Margaret Sanger. Protest signed by H. G. Wells, Arnold Bennett, William Archer, Lena Ashwell, Dr. Percy Ames, Edward Carpenter, Aylmer Maude, Marie C. Stopes. 1916: Federal case against Margaret Sanger is dropped. October 16: First American Birth Control Clinic opened in Brooklyn, N.Y. Arrest of Margaret Sanger, Ethel Byrne and Fania Mindell for opening clinic. Sentenced to Blackwell's Island, Mrs. Byrne begins hunger and thirst strike. Released by Governor Whitman at end of eleven days. Van Kleek Allison, Emma Goldman, Dr. Ben Reitman, Jessie Ashley and others, found guilty and sentenced to fines and imprisonment for distributing birth control literature. Birth control leagues organized in New York, Boston, Cleveland, Minneapolis, and San Francisco. 1917: February: *Birth Control Review* begins publication. April: Margaret Sanger imprisoned for twenty days for opening first American birth control clinic. Mrs. Sanger's photo play, *Birth Control*, prohibited in New York by Justice Greenbaum, and released by injunction from Justice Bijur of Supreme Court. 1919: Organization of Voluntary Parenthood League, aiming to repeal Federal laws against birth control. 1920: Japanese government sends officials to study birth control principles. 1921: Organization of Birth Control League in Tokyo. Mothers Clinic for Constructive Birth Control, 61 Marlborough Road, Holloway, London, established by Marie Stopes. Opening of birth control clinic under auspices of Malthusian League, London

—Walworth Birth Control Center. August 29-30: International conference on contraceptive devices in Amsterdam, Holland. The First American Birth Control Conference. November 11, 12 and 13. Hotel Plaza and Town Hall, New York City. Public meeting at Town Hall announced in connection with Conference stopped by police, Mrs. Sanger and Miss Mary Windsor arrested, and released. At hearing later, Mrs. Juliet Barrett Rublee arrested, and released. 1922: Mrs. Sanger makes a world tour for birth control. Organization of birth control leagues in Honolulu; Tokyo, Japan; Peking, China. Organization of Birth Regulation Society of India at Delhi. First Pennsylvania State Birth Conference held in Philadelphia. 1922: Society for Constructive Birth Control and Racial Progress organized in London. Organ: *The Birth Control News*. The New Generation League, with which the Neo-Malthusian League was affiliated, organized in London. President: Dr. C. V. Drysdale; organ: *The New Generation*, succeeding the old *Malthusian*. The Fifth International Birth Control Conference held in London, organized by Dr. and Mrs. C. V. Drysdale. November: Ohio Birth Control Conference held at Cincinnati. Leagues organized in Ohio and Indiana. December: Circulation of pamphlet, *Family Limitation*, by Margaret Sanger, stopped by police in London. Guy Aldren and Rose Witkop prosecuted.

1923: First Canadian branch of American Birth Control League formed in Vancouver, B.C., president, A. M. Stevens. Visit to Yucatan by Juliet Barrett Rublee and Anne Kennedy of the American Birth Control League, preceding the opening of two birth control clinics under State Board of Health. Applications made by Chicago group for license to conduct a birth control clinic. Middle Western States Conference held in Chicago under direction of American Birth Control League. Report by Dr. Dorothy Bocker in conjunction with Margaret Sanger of first clinical research work on birth control

done in America. Record and data of nine hundred women given.

NECESSITY OF POPULATION CONTROL¹

Of all the facts related to men's material well-being, these two are the most important: First, all life is dependent on the land, that is, upon the various substances of which the earth's crust is composed. Second, these substances are absolutely fixed both in quantity and in their elemental character; they have never been increased or diminished since the foundation of the globe nor can they ever be.

It follows that the total amount of life on the earth at any given time is limited by the total amount of these elemental substances. There can never be more life than there are cosmic materials to support it. The forms of life have changed and will change. The volume of life can never be increased beyond a fixed point.

All living creatures are equipped with a physiological capacity for multiplication and an inherent urge to multiply which in combination continually press them to increase at a rate much more rapid than natural conditions will permit. Consequently only the minutest fraction of the young brought into the world can possibly survive. The infant mortality rate in nature falls short of 100 per cent by only an infinitesimal fraction of a per cent. The total number of each species under natural conditions remains constant; there is no increase from generation to generation or from century to century.

On the lowest levels of organic existence we find that nature provides for the perpetuation of the species by an incredibly enormous birth rate, leaving the survival of the individual offspring to chance. A rate of reproduction of several million offspring each year from each

¹ By Professor Henry Pratt Fairchild, New York University. New York League of Women Voters. *Weekly News*. 3: 3-5. January 16, 1925.

female is by no means uncommon among species no lower in the scale of evolution than the oyster or the eel. On these low levels no care or protection over the offspring is extended by either parent.

As we ascend the scale of evolution we find a general tendency to substitute a certain degree of parental care—that is, a period of true infancy—for an excessive birth rate. Just as many young grow up to maturity from the small family started on its way by parental protection as from the innumerable family left to shift for itself, and there is a great economy in energy and death. There is no better test of evolutionary advancement than the birth rate, the period of infancy, and the amount of care expended by the father as well as the mother.

Man being primarily an animal is subject to the same general laws of increase as the rest of the organic creation. But up to the present time man has been able to escape the law of fixed population by spreading himself over the entire surface of the globe and by using his unique powers to establish a virtual monopoly over the life-maintaining substances of the earth. That is, he has managed to control natural forces in such a way that the total amount of life which can be supported shall be predominantly human life. All other forms of life, as civilization progresses, are either made contributory to human life or are eliminated. This is perhaps the truest sense in which man deserves to be considered the "Lord of Creation."

By these means man has succeeded thus far in maintaining a continuous increase in numbers. In fact, strange as it may seem, he added more to his total numbers during the nineteenth century alone than in the whole previous span of his existence. As a result he grew comfortably optimistic. He unreflectively assumed that what he had done in the past he could continue to do throughout an indefinite future. But the conditions of the past decade have caused many thoughtful persons

to stop and consider. The most superficial examination of the situation makes it perfectly clear that the possibilities of human increase are by no means infinite. On the contrary, there are positive and inescapable limits to the total amount of human life which can possibly be supported on this globe. Just what the maximum figure would be no one can say positively, but it takes only a very simple mathematical computation to show that at the rate at which we are going now we will reach the limit in an alarmingly small number of generations.

The earth can support only a certain number of humans, just as of oysters or codfish or rabbits or sparrows. When that limit is reached, some form of control will come into operation. It may be the control of a diminished birth rate or of an increased death rate. In fact, population has never been uncontrolled. Population control is a necessity. It lies with man himself to decide whether control shall be by rational processes adapted to promote human welfare and happiness or by the ruthless and cruel processes which nature inevitably imposes when other means fail. When man does not control, nature does.

It also lies with man to decide whether rational methods shall be adopted in time to forestall eventual catastrophes, or whether they shall be postponed until the extremity of distress compels their recognition.

NEO-MALTHUSIANISM ¹

Even in these enlightened days and in this so-called democratic age, he who ventures publicly to discuss with adults some of the most fundamental facts of life incurs a serious risk. He probably would meet with social ostracism and, at best, could expect a fate somewhat

¹ From article by Arthur W. Meyers, M.D., Professor of Anatomy, Stanford University, California. *Journal of Social Hygiene*. 9: 528-32. December, 1923.

worse than the cuckoo in June, for he likely would find himself neither heard nor regarded. And yet we proudly claim that the concern that it shows for human life and human destiny is a fair measure of a civilization. Judged by this criterion, contemporary civilization would seem to be far from perfection. We still stifle the voices of those crying in the wilderness and try to combat opinions by force, just as if shackling men could shackle the ideas they entertain. If it be true that everything human is divine, then surely a frank consideration of the control of human propagation needs no apology or explanation. What does need explanation is our silence upon this outstanding topic.

My title does an injustice to Malthus who regarded all contraceptive measures save late marriage, celibacy, and moral restraint as a curse. But Malthus being defenseless, I followed others in doing violence to his memory rather than to use a still more objectionable, although more current term. Nor am I using the term Neo-Malthusianism entirely according to present custom. For as far as I know, none but over-enthusiastic advocates or outspoken opponents of so-called birth control still hold to the view that regulation of fertilization can largely relieve us of poverty and crime, and that a high birth-rate alone is responsible for what we call over-population. Up to the present, individual and social incompetence probably has been the chief cause of poverty, and a reduction of the populations of China and India to one-half probably would not relieve these countries from recurring famine. Moreover, the question of over-population has been a regional or local, rather than a pan-terrestrial problem. Hence, at present it would seem to be unnecessary to regard it from the standpoint of possible future conditions, although it must be admitted that, in the last analysis, problems of over-population though admittedly complex, will become biological. I plainly am at a loss to understand a recent economic writer who de-

clared that over-population does not spring from biological sources. He evidently forgot to add at present, and alone.

It has been asserted by competent authority that the ceaseless increase of man is "the source of the major facts of history and the besetting condition of every social problem that can be named at this hour." Be that as it may, it is well to remember that until recently population still was increasing at the rate of nearly half a million annually in Great Britain, more than half a million in Austria Hungary, and three-quarters of a million in Germany. Indeed, although the population of England and Wales increased but 20 per cent between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries it nearly quadrupled in the nineteenth century. Such facts as these lend much point to the position of a prominent English health officer who recently declared: "I decline to see that a man should be accused of failing in his duty if he refused to have children merely for the sake of emigrating them to the antipodes."

In discussing the great movements of population in the past, Petrie pointed out that unrestrained expansion of barbarous races has devastated Europe since the dawn of history. Petrie regarded these migrations as "the most terrible tragedies of all humanity," bringing "the wreck of the whole system of civilization, protracted starvation, and wholesale massacre." Hence, he asked: "Can it be avoided? That is the question before all others to the statesman who looks beyond the present time." In commenting upon these fateful words, Ellis recently stated, although it is but ten years since Petrie uttered them, "We now realize that these expansions are not confined to the remote past but are at work and are producing the same awful results, even at the present hour." However we may regard these utterances, everyone must admit that population pressure is not wholly a thing of the past. Indeed, it has some very important contemporary international aspects.

Contraceptive measures have been in use since time immemorial. The Greeks are said to have had recourse to medicinal means for the control of conception, and likewise the Romans, according to Pliny. Soranus is said to have recommended the external use of various substances, and revolting drugs—mostly no doubt, wholly ineffective—have been taken internally for the same purpose for centuries. Magic and grosser mechanical means and even mutilating operative procedures also were resorted to in the past. Nor did the attempts of the ancients to evade unwelcome additions to the population stop with contraceptive measures. The laws of Lycurgus bade the Spartans destroy all weaklings, and Virgil proudly testifies that the old Romans by using the river test for the newborn, eliminated weaklings. Although the efficacy and wisdom of such procedures are open to question and although they were aimed more at quality than quantity of population, they inevitably reduced the numbers.

Various primitive peoples purposely exposed the newborn. The Chinese slew some of the female newborn; the Arabs buried them alive in the sands, and let it not be forgotten in this connection that destruction of the fruit of the womb is lamentably common even among our people today. No one knows just what this loss amounts to among us, but all are agreed that it is material, the estimates ranging from 10 to 30 per cent. If it be recalled that such interference with gestation often results in the serious injury and also permanent ill health of the mother, it is evident that the real or final loss of life due to these practices among our own people, far exceeds the direct loss. There is little doubt that the most conservative are justified in speaking of an abortion evil and menace among civilized peoples today.

It is generally assumed that all religions are firmly opposed to the use of contraceptive practices of any kind. Yet the Jews long have approved periodical abstinence

and this form of regulation of conception is said to have met with the approval of certain Catholic churchmen also. But in spite of such observances, and of the use of questionable devices, and the truly appalling loss of life from war, famine, and pestilence, the human family has been steadily increasing. Moreover, this increase in world population has occurred in spite of a falling birth-rate in all civilized countries during approximately the last half century. Nor have we much reason to believe that there will be a decrease in the population of the earth when what we now call the uncivilized have followed the good or ill example of the civilized peoples in this matter. Indeed, there really would seem to be little reason, at present, for fearing the extinction of mankind, for race suicide is not determined solely by a falling birth rate but by the ratio of the birth rate to the death rate. Our cause for concern would seem to lie in a rather different direction, for what confronts mankind at present is not merely a low birth rate among the more civilized and a high birth rate among the less civilized, but also a high birth rate in the lower and a low birth rate in the higher strata of society in all civilized countries. It is true that this, perhaps, is not an entirely new phenomenon in human history, for economic freedom seems to have been associated with a diminishing birth rate long ago. Juvenal in the sixth satire, for example, declared that "the wealthy dame is seldom brought to bed." Yet such things no one can ignore. Their import may be too fateful.

Even if we readily grant that all strata of society contain fit elements, a low birth rate among the higher and a high birth rate among the lower strata are very significant or even sinister, if the inevitable effects of such conditions are projected for a considerable period of time. This would seem to be especially true if we recall that the humanitarian instincts of civilized peoples have enhanced the significance of these untoward and

truly foreboding events, not only by preserving all the less fit, but by permitting, or even by encouraging their propagation. There has been much outcry against eugenists and perhaps properly so, but let no one be deceived into thinking that well-known fundamental biological laws demonstrated so abundantly and with such amazing results in the higher mammals, do not apply to man. In him, also, like begets like. There is no escape from this. Hence, it is well that civilized societies long have frowned upon, and that some enlightened governments have largely prevented the propagation of the least fit. Surely no one would desire to increase the burden of the unfit for whose existence society mainly is responsible. It is difficult to understand and impossible to sympathize with those who would charge the responsibility for the existence of the unfit and the monstrous wholly to the Lord; or to condone those who continue to bless unions which everyone knows will breed still more dependents and result in greater misery.

IMPENDING PROBLEMS OF EUGENICS¹

At present the world contains seventeen hundred million people and, according to Professor East, its population is increasing by about fifteen millions per annum. It is fast filling up the empty spaces of the globe. The rapid filling up of North America during the last century will surely be followed by the filling up of South America and Africa in the next century.

In a few generations as Thompson and East emphasize, the expansion in numbers must itself approach an end. Within the life time of many living there will, in all probability, come a realization such as at present scarcely exists of the profound truths set forth by Malthus at the beginning of the nineteenth century. We

¹ From article by Professor Irving Fisher, Yale University. *Scientific Monthly*. 13: 221-6. September, 1921.

must not be deceived by the exceptional conditions under which we have been living in the last two or three centuries. The opening up of America gave a new outlet for population and reduced and postponed the operation of Malthus' checks to population. Mechanical inventions, which increased physical productivity, had the same effect. But after the lands now empty are full and those now waste are reclaimed no increase of the food-producing area of the globe is conceivable. Nor is it likely that inventions which have made two blades of wheat grow where one grew before can go on at a geometrical progression and so keep pace with the biologically possible growth of population. And unless this be possible population must necessarily in a few generations come practically to a halt, either by the relentless check of an increased death rate or by the more preventive check of a decreased birth rate.

What will be the eugenic significance of this future limiting of population? This is one of the great questions for eugenic research. The answer will doubtless depend largely on which of the two checks will be put on population, whether it is to be the check from an increased death rate operating through lack of subsistence or the check from a decreased birth rate operating by volition of parents.

The former check shown by Malthus led Darwin to conceive his theory of natural selection, which in turn led Galton to suggest eugenics.

In so far as the future check on population is to be of this kind, even though an increased death rate involve much misery, the presumption is that, on the whole, it will be eugenic rather than dysgenic in its effects. Those should survive who are best fitted to earn a livelihood. But this is, as the critics of Malthus complained, a dismal outlook.

The operation of the other check is not so obvious. Today we have, in a way and to a degree of which Mal-

thus probably never dreamed, the exercise of this prudential check under the title of Neo-Malthusianism or birth control.

Until recently this subject was not discussed in the open, partly because the movement had not gained sufficient momentum, partly because of the conventional reticence on all matters of sex and partly because of the continual existence (in this country alone among the nations of the earth) of laws passed at the instigation, chiefly, of Anthony Comstock, forbidding the dissemination of information on birth control.

But the subject is one especially deserving eugenic research; for, of all human inventions, those relating to birth control probably have the most direct bearing on the birth rate and its selective possibilities.

It is startling to think that the sex impulse which hitherto has been the unerring reliance of nature to insure reproduction can no longer be relied upon. Some insects sacrifice their lives to reproduction. Nature relies on their blind instinct to reproduce regardless of any consequences to themselves. If we could suppose such an insect suddenly to be given an option in the matter so that it could satisfy its sex impulse without the consequences of offspring or of immediate death to itself, its instinct of self-preservation would presumably refuse to make the ancient sacrifice and the species would perish from off the earth.

In the case of the human species nature demands no such extreme sacrifice of the mother; if this were the case birth control would almost surely mean the ultimate extinction of the human race. But the human mother has nevertheless had to sacrifice personal comfort and both parents have had to sacrifice some economic well-being and some social ambitions to meet the obligations of parenthood. Hitherto the only effective ways to avoid this and still satisfy the sex instinct have been infanticide and abortion. Birth control offers another way, easier,

less objectionable and, therefore, destined to be far more widely practiced among civilized peoples.

This is largely a development of "feminism" in the interests of women. It opens up amazing possibilities of race extinction or, on the other hand, of race betterment.

If the birth control exercised by individual parents could itself be controlled by a eugenic committee it could undoubtedly become the surest and most supremely important means of improving the human race. We could breed out the unfit and breed in the fit. We could in a few generations and, to some extent even in the life time of us of today conquer degeneracy, dependency and delinquency, and develop a race far surpassing not only our own but the ancient Greeks.

Thus birth control is like an automobile. It can convey us rapidly in any direction. As now practiced which way is it carrying us? Where will birth control really take us? This is a matter for eugenic research to settle. There are three possibilities: (1) it may cause depopulation and ultimately bring about the extinction of the human race; (2) it may reduce the reproduction of the prudent and intelligent and the economically and socially ambitious, leaving the future race to be bred out of the imprudent, unintelligent and happy-go-lucky people, thus resulting in race degeneration; or (3) it may cut off the strain of the silly and selfish, the weak and inefficient who will dispense with children for the very good reason that they lack the physical stamina or the economic ability to support a large family.

The advocates of birth control maintain, with much show of reason, that it diminishes poverty, increases efficiency, prevents damage to the mother's health, and improves the health and education of the children.

What does history tell us so far? The best opinion seems to be that in Holland birth control has reduced infant mortality by making better intervals between successive children and by increasing their size and vigor as well as the per capita wealth of the country. In coun-

tries where birth control has been exercised only a short time the reduction in the total number of births has been accompanied by an almost equal reduction in the total number of deaths. There is a distinct correlation between the death rate and the birth rate so that a moderate amount of birth control need not reduce much, if at all, the rate of increase of population. In Russia, Roumania, Bulgaria and Serbia, presumably without birth control and where the birth rates are forty or fifty per thousand, there is an increase of population between fifteen and twenty per thousand, and in Australia and New Zealand, with birth control and where the birth rates are from twenty-five to thirty per thousand, there is substantially the same rate of increase. When birth control in these last named countries has been in use longer and more generally the same effects as in France may perhaps be expected. In France population was actually declining before the war, a situation realized in no other country, except in the time of the World War, when it was temporarily true of England, Serbia and some other countries.

It is worth noting here that if feminism is to have a depopulating effect the first element it will extinguish is the feminist element itself. So far as it elevates woman, feminism is to be commended. But friends of woman-kind should heed well the warning of some other movements which contained the seeds of their own destruction. "Shakerism" killed itself because it shunned marriage. Feminism may kill itself if it shuns children. A bragging feminist recently referred to the old child-bearing women as a type which has disappeared below the historical horizon. If it has, then the type which will not bear children will surely disappear in its turn just because it will have no children in its own image.

The world's experience with birth control thus far does seem to show that the average family which practices it does not practice it in the required moderation.

Dublin has shown that, under present conditions, it takes an average of about four children in the family for the upkeep of population. An average of three means a decrease of population and an average of five means increase of population.

But aside from the danger of depopulation as shown in France is the question of the kind of selective birth rate which birth control will bring about. Will this be a good or a bad selection? As birth control leaves births to human choice instead of to instinct, many jump to the conclusion that this is necessarily a step forward. But whether it is or not depends on how this human choice will actually operate.

Professor McDougall has given reason to believe that the present occupational stratification of society corresponds roughly to the stratification of intelligence; that the four classes, (1) professional men and business executives, (2) other business men, (3) skilled workmen and (4) unskilled workmen represent on the whole four classes of human beings graded as to innate mental ability. The college graduate means the professional man and business executive.

Cattell finds that the average Harvard graduate is the father of three-fourths of a son and the average Vassar graduate the mother of one-half of a daughter and that the average family of American men of science is only 2.22 as compared with an average of 4.66 for the country. Popenoe and Johnson give similar results summarizing many statistical studies of Yale, Harvard, and other educational institutions.

At present, then, our educational system seems to be destroying the very material on which it works! Colleges seem to be engines for the mental suicide of the human race! Are the colleges of today sterilizing our scholars as did the monasteries and nunneries of the middle ages? Such race suicide of scientific and educated men and of the well-to-do classes means that their places will speed-

ily be taken by the unintelligent, uneducated and inefficient.

Up to the present time, so far as I can see, birth control has done harm to the race, exactly in the same way as has the war.

But it is plain that the extension of birth control to all classes will tend to rectify this condition. At present it is practiced only in the upper one or two of the four strata which McDougall distinguishes in his statistics. Its extension is rapidly going on, thanks to the propaganda of Sanger, Drysdale and others and will inevitably include all classes eventually. It is, therefore, too early to condemn utterly birth control. It may still prove to be a great instrument for eugenic improvement.

It will probably require long years of research to determine what the ultimate effect will be. The hypothesis which now seems to be probable is that there will be three stages.

The first effect of birth control seems, as has been said, distinctly bad because it is first practised by the intelligent class and is, for that class, as Mr. Roosevelt said, "race suicide."

The second effect will be that where birth control is practised among all classes, as has almost been the case in France, an actual decline in population will occur which will seem alarming.

The third effect may then follow. It is a rapid repopulation from the small minority of the strongest, most efficient, and the most child-loving and altruistic persons of the population. We all know people who, though fully aware of the possibilities of birth control, nevertheless do not practise it or do not practise it to excess, but rear large old-fashioned families because they love children, can afford to have them, and have no physical or economic difficulties in bearing and raising them. These vigorous champions of humanity will doubtless possess not only physical strength but the intelligence necessary

to earn a sufficient livelihood to justify their choice of having large families.

Whenever civilizations have decayed, and many probably have done so from race suicide, their places have been taken by strong and fecund invaders. In the case of birth control the invasion need not come from outside. It may come from inside the decadent nation itself. It is said that, in this way, the Breton portion of the French population is replacing the other portions. Multiplying by geometrical progression, a tenth part of our population can in a few generations of large families fill up all the gaps made by birth control and make a stronger race than we ever have had. Should this rosy prospect actually work out in the twenty-first or twenty-second century, birth control would go down in human history, like the flood in the Bible, as a means first of wiping out the old world and then replacing it by a new, from the best seeds of the old.

At any rate, while there are undoubtedly grave possibilities of evil facing us in birth control, we must not be misled by averages. The *average* Harvard graduate may not reproduce his kind, but among thousands of college graduates there will almost certainly be found a *few* who do and by geometrical progression the few can become the majority.

An apparent objection to this forecast is that the most reckless will practice birth control the least and so will have the greatest number of children. But this objection may possibly be answered by the fact that such people will soon become public charges, as paupers for instance, and that we may then stop their reproduction by enforcing celibacy, segregating the sexes.

But the truth is that we cannot yet tell what will ultimately happen as the net result of birth control, whether race degeneracy, depopulation, or race improvement or, as I have suggested, all three in succession.

One of the claims of enthusiastic advocates of birth control is that it will help save us from further war be-

cause it will save us from that pressure of population which results in imperialistic ambitions. Huxley and others are quoted to support the view that pressure of population and the need of an outlet for surplus population lie behind emigration, colonization, conquest and war. It is inferred that the real remedy for the yellow peril or the "rising tide of color" must consist in the extension of birth control to the Orient. How much truth there is in this view is a matter for eugenic research to determine. The same argument for extending birth control to other nations applies as for extending it to other races within our own.

At present the white race is still increasing faster than the other races but it is easy to see that birth control will soon put an end to this unless birth control is extended from the white race to the colored. Birth control, war and immigration are certainly associated problems.

STATUTORY RESTRICTIONS ON BIRTH CONTROL¹

Clear and definite enactments with reference to contraception have been made by Congress,² the legislatures of nineteen states,³ Porto Rico,⁴ and the Commission of the Canal Zone.⁵ If "articles and instruments of im-

¹ By George E. Worthington, American Social Hygiene Association. *Journal of Social Hygiene*. 9: 458-65. November, 1923.

² 35 Statutes at Large 1129; 41 Statutes at Large 1060.

³ Arizona: Sec. 318 Penal Laws; California: Sec. 317 Penal Code; Colorado: Sec. 1910 Mills Statutes; Idaho: Sec. 8306 Comp. Stats. 1919; Wyoming: Secs. 7200-7201 R.S. 1920; Maine: Ch. 126 R.S. 1916; Ohio: Secs. 13033-13037 Code; Indiana: Sec. 2359-62 Burns Statutes 1914; Connecticut: Sec. 6202 Gen. Stats. 1918; Iowa: Sec. 8809 Code 1919; Kansas: Sec. 3676 Gen. Stats. 1915; New Jersey: Art. 3, Sec. 53 Comp. Stats.; Missouri: Sec. 3525 R.S. 1919; Minnesota: Secs. 8706-8707 Gen. Stats. 1913; Mississippi: Sec. 1026 Hemmingway's Code 1917; Montana: Sec. 11142 Rev. Codes 1921; Washington: Sec. 2460 Remington's Comp. Stats. 1922; Massachusetts: Ch. 212, Sec. 20, Revised Laws; New York: Secs. 1142, 43, and 45 Penal Law.

⁴ Porto Rico: Sec. 5710 Revised Stats. and Codes 1911.

⁵ Canal Zone: Sec. 213 Penal Code 1904. The District of Columbia, Alaska, Porto Rico, Hawaii, Philippines, Panama Canal Zone, Guam and Tutuila, as well as all Federal reservations, should properly be included in this list under the restrictions contained in Sec. 312 of the United States Penal Laws. Sec. 311 provides that the language of that section shall apply (except as otherwise expressly provided) to "any Territory or District, or . . . any place within the exclusive jurisdiction of the United States."

moral use or purpose" may be construed to include contraceptive articles and instruments, then further restrictions exist in the eight states of Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Nebraska, Nevada, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and North Dakota, and in the District of Columbia. The writer can find no decision of a higher court with reference thereto in any of these states except Illinois. In that state, the Court of Appeals, in the case of *People vs. Schuettler*, 209 Ill. App. 588, held that it is a question of fact for the jury to decide whether a moving-picture film which suggests and encourages the use of certain means of preventing conception is an article of indecent or immoral use. There is also a decision of the United States Circuit Court of Appeals (*Bours vs. United States*, 229 Fed. 960) from which it might be inferred that the court would hold, as a matter of law, that contraceptive articles were not intended by the words "articles of indecent or immoral use."

Similarly, if it can be construed that written matter relating to birth control is "obscene, vulgar and indecent," the following seventeen states must be added to those already enumerated: Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Michigan, Oregon, Rhode Island, Wisconsin, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia, and Oklahoma, and the territory of Hawaii. No decision can be found by the writer, construing the statutes with reference to birth control in any of these states. The four remaining states of Georgia, New Hampshire, New Mexico, and North Carolina are silent both on the subject of preventing conception and of obscene writings or instruments.

While the Federal statutes are intended to apply merely to the mails, and to interstate and foreign commerce, and not to regulate internal police matters in the respective states, they do have the effect of restrictions

on birth control. The language of the Federal statutes is as follows:

1. Sec. 211, Penal Laws.

Every obscene, . . . or other publication of an indecent character, and every article or thing designed, adapted, or intended for preventing conception or producing abortion, or for any indecent or immoral use; and every article, instrument, substance, drug, medicine, or thing which is advertised or described in a manner calculated to lead another to use or apply it for preventing conception or producing abortion, or for any indecent or immoral purpose; and every written or printed card, letter, circular, book, pamphlet, advertisement, or notice of any kind giving information directly or indirectly, where, or how, or from whom, or by what means any of the hereinbefore-mentioned matters, articles, or things may be obtained or made, or where or by whom any act or operation of any kind for the procuring or producing of abortion will be done or performed, or how or by what means conception may be prevented or abortion produced, whether sealed or unsealed; and every letter, packet or package, or other mail matter containing any filthy, vile, or indecent thing, device, or substance; and every paper, writing, advertisement, or representation that any article, instrument, substance, drug, medicine, or thing may, or can be, used or applied for preventing conception or producing abortion, or for any indecent or immoral purpose; and every description calculated to induce or incite a person to so use or apply any such article, instrument, substance, drug, medicine, or thing, is hereby declared to be non-mailable matter and shall not be conveyed in the mails or delivered from any post office or by any letter carrier. Whoever shall knowingly deposit, or cause to be deposited for mailing or delivery, anything declared by this section to be non-mailable, or shall knowingly take, or cause the same to be taken, from the mails for the purpose of circulating or disposing thereof, or of aiding in the circulation or disposition thereof, shall be fined not more than \$5000, or imprisoned not more than five years, or both. . . .

2. Sec. 245.

Act of June 5, 1920, Ch. 268, 41 Stat. L. 1060.

That Sec. 245 . . . approved March 4, 1909, is hereby amended to read as follows:

Sec. 245. Whoever shall bring or cause to be brought into the United States, or any place subject to the jurisdiction thereof, from any foreign country, or shall therein knowingly deposit or cause to be deposited with any express company or other common carrier, for carriage from one state, territory, or district of the United States or place non-contiguous to but

subject to the jurisdiction thereof, to any other state, territory, or district of the United States, or place non-contiguous to but subject to the jurisdiction thereof, or from any place in or subject to the jurisdiction of the United States, through a foreign country, to any place in or subject to the jurisdiction thereof, or from any place in or subject to the jurisdiction of the United States to a foreign country, any obscene, lewd, or lascivious, or any filthy book, pamphlet, picture, motion-picture film, paper, letter, writing, print, or other matter of indecent character, or any drug, medicine, article, or thing designed, adapted, or intended for preventing conception, or producing abortion, or any other indecent or immoral use; or any written or printed card, letter, circular, book, pamphlet, advertisement, or notice of any kind giving information, directly or indirectly, where, how, or of whom, or by what means any of the hereinbefore-mentioned articles, matters, or things may be obtained or made; or whoever shall knowingly take or cause to be taken from any such express company or other common carrier any matter or thing the depositing of which for carriage is herein made unlawful, shall be fined not more than \$5000, or imprisoned not more than five years, or both.

3. Sec. 311, Penal Laws U.S.

Except as otherwise provided, the offense defined in this chapter (Chapter 13) shall be punished as hereinafter provided, when committed within any territory or district, or within or upon any place within the exclusive jurisdiction of the United States.

Sec. 312.

Whoever shall sell, lend, give away, or in any manner exhibit or offer to sell, lend, give away, or in any manner exhibit, or shall otherwise publish or offer to publish in any manner, or shall have in his possession for any such purpose, . . . any article of an immoral nature or any drug or medicine, or any article whatever for the prevention of conception . . . or shall advertise the same for sale or shall write or print or cause to be written or printed any card, circular, book, pamphlet, advertisement, or notice of any kind stating when, where, how, or of whom, or by what means any of the articles above mentioned can be purchased or obtained, or shall manufacture, draw, or print, or in any wise make any of such articles shall be fined not more than \$2000, or imprisoned not more than five years, or both.

The Federal statute relating to the use of the mails is most sweeping. It forbids the mailing of:

1. Any information as to "how or by what means conception may be prevented."

2. "Every article or thing . . . adapted . . . for preventing conception."

3. "Every article . . . drug . . . or thing . . . which is described in a manner calculated to lead another to use it . . . for preventing conception."

4. Anything which gives "information . . . where, or how, or from whom, or by what means any of the hereinbefore-mentioned matters, articles or things may be obtained or made."

5. "Every paper, writing, etc., stating that any article, . . . drug . . . etc., may, or can be used or applied for preventing conception."

6. "Every description calculated to induce . . . a person to so use . . . any such articles . . . drug . . . etc."

The Federal statute relating to express companies and other carriers, prohibits:

1. Bringing into the United States or any place subject to its jurisdiction the things mentioned in (2) and (4) supra.

2. Knowingly depositing with any express company or common carrier, for carriage from one state, territory, district or place subject to the jurisdiction of the United States, to any other state, territory, etc., or from any such place through a foreign country to any place in the United States, etc., or from any place in the United States, etc., to any foreign country, of the things mentioned in the next preceding section.

3. Knowingly taking such things from any express company or common carrier. (It will be noted, that the sending of information that is general in character, with reference to contraception, by express, is not prohibited.)

The effect of the foregoing statutes is to limit the manufacture and sale of all contraceptive articles and drugs to the state in which they are produced. Every state must be self-sufficient in this respect.

Section 312 of the United States Penal Laws, which has already been referred to, prohibits the sale and manufacture of contraceptives, or the giving of written information as to when, where, or by whom, or by what means, any of such articles can be purchased or obtained. This statute is probably operative in all of the Federal territory set forth in note 5 on page 36.

In the states, where clear and definite statutes relating to birth control exist, we find the laws in a hodge-podge, enacted without any general or well-defined principle underlying them. The state of Connecticut is unique, in that it prohibits the use of "any drug, medicinal article, or instrument for the purpose of preventing conception." No exceptions are made in the law, and apparently the only alternative to having children is absolute continence.

The state of New York has a statute which is as broad and comprehensive as the Federal act relating to the mails, but excepts therefrom "an article or instrument, used or applied by physicians lawfully practicing, or by their direction or prescription, for the cure or prevention of disease." In construing this section, Justice Cropsey, in the case of *People, etc., vs. Byrne*, 99 Misc. 1, states: "Under it a physician would be justified in prescribing the prohibited articles or drugs if, in his opinion, the health or condition of the patient required it."

There is a marked similarity in the laws of Colorado, Indiana, Massachusetts, Missouri, Ohio, Wyoming, Kansas, and Iowa. These in general prohibit:

1. The giving, loan, exhibition, manufacture, or sale of any instrument, drug, or medicine for preventing conception.
2. The giving of information orally, or otherwise stating where, how, of whom, or by what means any of such articles may be obtained.
3. The depositing of any of such things in a post office or with a carrier for transportation within the state, or the acceptance of any such article for carriage.

The states of Colorado, Indiana, Ohio, Wyoming, and Iowa, except from the operation of these statutes: "druggists in their legitimate business" and "the practice of regular practitioners of medicine." These and the state of Missouri, except medical colleges and medical books, and Kansas excepts medical books only. The Massachusetts law contains no exceptions.

The language of the statutes of Arizona, California, Idaho, Montana, and Porto Rico is practically identical. These punish "every person who willfully writes, composes, or publishes any notice or advertisement of any medicine or means for the prevention of conception, or who offers his services by any such notice, advertisement, or otherwise, to assist in the accomplishment of such purpose."

Great similarity also exists in the laws of Mississippi, Minnesota, and Washington. These punish "every person who shall expose for sale, loan, or distribution, any instrument or article, or any drug or medicine for the prevention of conception, . . . or shall write, print, distribute or exhibit any card, circular, pamphlet, advertisement, or notice of any kind, stating when, where, how, or of whom such article or medicine can be obtained, . . . or purchased . . . or who manufactures . . . same." Minnesota, however, has a further statute, modifying this section, and providing that it "shall not be construed to apply to an article or instrument used by physicians lawfully practicing, or by their direction or prescription, for the cure or prevention of disease."

The New Jersey statute is unique in some respects. It penalizes every person who "*without just cause*, shall utter or expose to the view of another, or have in his possession with such intent, or to sell, . . . any instrument, medicine, or other thing designed or purporting to be designed for the prevention of conception. . . or shall in any wise advertise the same or in any manner by recommendation against its use or otherwise, give or cause to be given, or aid in giving any information, how or where any of the same may be had or seen or bought or sold." The Ohio law also has a provision similar to the last clause.

The Maine law prohibits only the publication, selling or distribution of any circular, pamphlet, or book con-

taining receipts or prescriptions for drops, pills, tinctures, or other compounds designed to prevent conception.

The argument has been advanced by conservative members of the medical profession that the control of conception, at least so far as any medical or artificial measures are concerned, should remain a matter of medical case work in that married women who should not for good reasons become pregnant should be guided therein by competent physicians. If this view is sound physicians might find themselves hampered in a few of the states. They would be free to advise and prescribe with reference to contraception in the states of Georgia, New Hampshire, New Mexico, North Carolina, Colorado, Indiana, Ohio, Wyoming, and Iowa. In New York and Minnesota they could advise and prescribe at least to the extent of curing or preventing disease. Even though they might not be prohibited from prescribing or giving information or making adjustments of prescribed articles in the states of Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Nebraska, Nevada, Maryland, Pennsylvania, North Dakota, Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Michigan, Oregon, Rhode Island, Wisconsin, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia, Oklahoma, and the District of Columbia and other Federal territories, there is some question that the obscenity laws may prevent such advice from becoming effective inasmuch as the sale of the articles or drugs prescribed might be held to be unlawful. The physician, if he observed the letter of the law, might find himself considerably hampered by the legal restrictions in Missouri, Kansas, Maine, Massachusetts, Arizona, California, Idaho, Montana, Minnesota, Mississippi, and Washington.

The restrictions contained in the Federal laws relating to the use of the mails and express, no doubt operate further to hamper physicians in making their advice effective because in order to comply strictly with the law

the drugs or instruments prescribed must be produced in the state in which the patient lives, and forwarded to him by other means than through the mails.

POPULATION PROBLEM¹

The problem of population is an extremely wide one. It, of course, rests directly on the question of human fecundity, and it is doubtful if the preliminary spadework given to the subject by James Matthews Duncan in 1866 has ever been even appreciably extended or deepened, and he did very little more than turn the soil over. Supposing, for example, certain fundamental questions are asked. Supposing parents desire to know if marrying early causes the natural cessation of childbearing to be brought on earlier or later or to be unaffected by early or late marrying. There is no evidence at all in existence to help the inquirer. Supposing parents ask such a simple question as this, "Will the same natural interval, between one child and another, be likely to be kept if we lead a natural life: may we assume that after the birth of the first child if it is naturally fed the interval is likely to be about two years?" No scientific reply can be given to this, but it can be said without fear of informed denial, that the widest natural differences occur in these intervals, though no medical man, even of the widest experience, knows the natural conditions under which these intervals do vary. Or once again, if it should be asked what bodily or physical qualities in men and women are associated with prolific and meagre reproductive tendencies, or what are the bodily signs by which a family prolific in one generation can be assumed to be only temporarily so or have an hereditarily prolific quality which is likely to last over many generations, or if even the actual *individual* conditions of *personal* fer-

¹ From article by J. Lionel Taylor. *Sociological Review*. 16: 153-6. April, 1924.

tility are inquired into by a husband or wife who ask a doctor "if they are likely to have any children and if so, many or few." The reply in each case has to be, if it is an honest reply, "Science can as yet give you no information whatever." Worse still, no medical man knows, and no scientific teaching exists to inform him, what are the environmental conditions of the fluctuations of parental desire, of sex attractiveness in the married, and of pleasure or distaste in intercourse. An honorable and well-informed doctor who has kept his mind open to scientific research, has to admit that on almost every matter that is connected with human fecundity he is abysmally ignorant. Now it may be answered that this ignorance of the personal aspect of fecundity is all too true and lamentable, but that for social inquiries certain general principles can be laid down. But such an answer is unwary and weak in the extreme. Let it be assumed for the sake of argument that it is known that in what is called the mid-Victorian period large families were the rule, then it must also be admitted that before 1838-40 there were few reliable figures at all, and the decline in the population today may be due to a fall in reproduction capacity and desire and that the presence of Neo-Malthusian contraceptive practices are more an effect of this fall than the real cause of diminished fertility. The real position is that, viewed either as an individual or collective problem, our lack of knowledge about fecundity is abysmal.

And when an attempt is made from these intellectual quicksands to view the surroundings of the question, one is faced with a total absence of *terra firma* in all directions. Is it or is it not unhealthy to lead a moral celibate life, and if it is not unhealthy what are the personal and civic gains and losses by doing so as compared with marital and parental living? Where shall we find a book or a short monograph which gives us even a peep into the question of the civic disabilities and civic re-

quirements of parentage in the present as compared with past times? Could any medical officer of health say what is really unhygienic and overpeopled in an area where the most modern skyscrapers were doubling or trebling the housing capacity of that area, *if these skyscrapers conformed to the most satisfactory sanitary requirements?* Is there any limit to intensive cultivation of food products, and if so, what? Is it really established that there are no *natural* limiting tendencies to check human overgrowths of populations, and must we, therefore, assume that the contraceptive one is the only hope? France has probably systematically practised these contraceptive methods longer than any other country, can we say that its sexual life is as healthy as in countries which still largely ignore such practices? How does such life affect the individual man and the individual woman who practice them, and what is the kind of moral atmosphere in the factories where these contraceptives are made and in shops where they are sold?

Last, but certainly not least in importance, there are the hereditary and eugenic problems of love and eugenic mating, of class and international rivalries and changes which must follow fluctuations in the distribution of the quantity and the quality of the human birth rate. The book that meets this abysmal ignorance on all or even on one of the above mentioned points has yet to be written but if men and women workers are wise they will keep this wide perspective before them in forming an estimate of the value of any book which appears on sex, parentage and population questions, and perhaps it is well also to remember that men fight, and women incite men to fight, more readily over sex than over food needs as do higher animals, and that the human species sinks to a moral degradation through sex excesses which no other animal approaches. This is a point not to be overlooked when the economic study of these matters is spoken of often as only a matter of food and housing satisfaction. The

sexual life has its economic aspects, it is a fuller, often more extravagant life under quite healthy and moral conditions than the non-sexual one, as every engaged couple discovers. The costly life of the libertine and the wanton are only exaggerations of demands which are quite normal ones.

BIRTH CONTROL ABROAD¹

French Republic. Under a law of 1920, heavy penalties are imposed on persons advocating the evasion of pregnancy, or helping to spread ideas inimical to the increase of the population, or selling or distributing in any way, any articles with this end in view.

Kingdom of Hungary. Family limitation by means of the control of conception, while condemned by both the Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches, is widely practised by the peasants and small-holders, and, to a less degree, by owners of larger properties. This is to be attributed to the desire to limit the sub-division of family holdings and estates. In some districts, peasant women who have large families, more especially those who give birth to twins, are treated with scorn by their neighbors, and the one-child family system (Hungarian *egyke*, a diminutive of 'one') has shown a marked tendency to grow in popularity during recent years.

Republic of Mexico. There has been opened at Merida, in the state of Yucatan, a public clinic for birth control (Clinica del Control de la Natalidad), largely as the result of the efforts of the American Birth Control League, United States.

Kingdom of the Netherlands. Private initiative in the Netherlands was responsible for the first birth control clinic in the world (1885), and there are now similar clinics in all the large towns. The clinics are main-

¹ *International Year Book of Child Care and Protection*. Longmans Green and Company. London. 1924.

tained by the Neo-Malthusian League (Nieuw-Malthusi-aansche Bond), which has also engaged in the training of large numbers of nurses to teach women the art of contraception, both at the clinics and elsewhere. The clinics are free to the very poor, while others pay according to their means. The league was granted a Royal Charter of Public Utility in 1895. *Pari passu* with this activity for the control of the birth rate, there has been not only a steady decline in the latter, but a much greater decline in the rate of infantile mortality. Moreover, there has been a corresponding reduction in the proportion of military conscripts of low physical grade, and a marked increase in the proportion of those of high grade, whereas, in 1884, the proportion of conscripts (aged eighteen over the height of five feet seven inches) was only 32.95 per cent, it had risen, by regular stages, to 51.59 per cent in 1918.

Russian Union. At the second conference of Russian Maternity and Child Welfare Associations, in 1923, the causes for abortion were fully discussed, and resolutions were passed to the effect that there should be propaganda as to the harmful effects to the mother and to the future generation. It was also maintained that advice on birth control should be given in cases where the woman's health demanded that she should not have children.

Kingdom of Sweden. It is an offense against the Penal Code to expose for sale or to distribute any objects having for their purpose the limitation of families.

SURPRISES IN AN INVESTIGATION OF BIRTH CONTROL¹

Decades of argument and volumes of propaganda have gone into the discussion of birth control but the residue of medical fact to support a sound social philoso-

¹ By Gertrude Minturn Pinchot. *Survey*. 53: 751-3. March 15, 1925.

phy is surprisingly slight. Realizing this lack, a group of men and women, mostly physicians who had long felt the necessity for a scientific study of the subject, came together early in 1923 and formed the Committee on Maternal Health in New York to investigate the matter of fertility and sterility from a medical point of view. It was agreed, of course, that all work with patients in New York should be within the interpretation of the law that sanctions control of conception "to cure or prevent disease."

Conferences with persons thoroughly familiar with the work of national medical and public health organizations and with a large number of men and women interested in public welfare revealed no existing organizations whose activities could readily be arranged to include promotion of this project at this time, either because their directors were unwilling to undertake this work or because they believed the fundamental scientific facts were not yet available. The conferences disclosed, however, a general sentiment that something ought to be undertaken in the way of proving what is practicable in the matter of contraception, what is needed and what is in full accord with the best interests of society and of family life.

The committee made its own program under two main divisions: to determine what may be scientific and effective in dealing with problems of fertility and sterility, with particular reference to prevention of conception for reasons of health; and to collect and examine case records bearing on these problems and to obtain data on the practical aspects of these subjects. This outline of their plan was submitted to the New York Obstetrical Society, the group of specialists most concerned in the matter. A questionnaire brought out a favorable vote and aid useful in this study. The Public Health Committee of the Academy of Medicine endorsed the plan, enlightened women provided the funds, and a scientific, investigation

was undertaken, under the direction of leading representatives of the various specialties. This involved a review of the literature; personal inspections of birth control clinics and their records; critical collection of foreign experiences and American practice; the gathering of opinions and evidence as to conditions under which the advice could properly be given; consideration of methods and their effects; collection and analysis of a large number of case histories; and securing actual studies in clinics and laboratories bearing on fertility and sterility, and finally, regular bulletins and other publications to keep the medical profession informed.

The report of the first year's work brought the cooperation of the American Gynecological Society, and elicited a favorable editorial from the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. The first surprise, then—in view of the impression that the medical profession refuses to interest itself in birth control and is officially antagonistic—was the ready acceptance by physicians of a reasonable plan of action.

The literature on birth control was abstracted. A library of propaganda and attack simmered down to a pamphlet of histories of cases confirmed and properly recorded. Medical text books and college lectures were found to avoid anything but the most casual references. Doctors, conscious that they would be criticized if they tendered advice, possessed few or no records, and could, naturally, offer no body of data on which to draw. Such statistics on birth control as existed—save for two imperfect series—were made by propagandists, and their value may be gaged by the fact that they classed and published as successes all cases which had not reported themselves as failures. The scant value of such claims may be further judged by the statements that two clinics lost sight of 20 or 50 per cent of their clientele respectively.

The second surprise, then, was the scanty amount of exact information on the subject.

A questionnaire had been sent out to the members of the Chicago Gynecological Society. The New York Obstetrical Society was stirred to like action. The results of the sixty-four answers were compared with—first, answers given by a thousand married, well educated American women, mostly college graduates, to the Bureau of Social Hygiene in its study of normal sex life; second, with the figures furnished by the three birth control clinics of London and New York either in their publications or to representatives of our committee; and, finally, with the results obtained by the committee's investigation in Holland, long quoted as the paradise of birth control. The uncertainty and disagreement found by this comparison will be the third surprise, for it confutes the argument constantly brought forward that any doctor can, if he is willing, advise or provide a generally applicable and guaranteed preventive.

For fifty years and more the French have systematically lowered their birthrate; for forty years the Dutch have been held up for emulation as showing how a really free people, if allowed to organize clinics, could successfully regulate their progeny. The committee set out to discover the facts. In France more than sixty interviews with those who should know most demonstrated that there the knowledge is underground, conflicting, indefinite and has never been gathered. In Holland none of the "fifty-two clinics" was found whether independent or located in "hospitals" nor any under sanction or control of "medical associations" nor was there knowledge of a sure method of contraception. A full report on Holland, England and the rest of the Continent will be made by the committee in the autumn.

One very important report was available. The Bureau of Social Hygiene had secured one thousand anonymous answers to questionnaires. Nearly three-fourths

approved of birth control and practiced it. The seven hundred and thirty women practicing birth control (the bulk of the group being thirty years old), averaged two and a half pregnancies each. Those who did not practice birth control averaged a little more than one and a half pregnancies apiece. The higher the education the greater the endorsement of the practice and the fewer the children. This may have been due to later marriages among the college graduates. As far as happiness in marriage went—87 per cent reported happy marriages—the presence or absence of birth control did not appear to affect this report either favorably or unfavorably.

This rather general use of preventives is no surprise, but it is surprising that these are our first trustworthy figures on the extent of the practice.

What should be done to get at the facts and place these facts before the medical profession for action? Deeming the first duty to be the organization of a series of impartial well-studied tests, and believing that these should be made in responsible institutions, an appropriation of \$300 was made by the committee to each of six outpatient departments in conspicuous hospitals in order to obtain a proper collection of records. These clinics are furnishing information concerning the need of contraception and of sterilization; the methods; the harm or harmlessness of various practices—in the meantime taking care, as far as possible, of the patients entitled to contraceptive advice.

In order to determine and define the conditions under which advice should be given opinions are being collected on the effect of pregnancy in all types of heart and kidney troubles, tuberculosis, insanity and epilepsy, nerve tire and exhaustion—gathered both in America and abroad from the men whose experience has been widest. The experience of central Europe and Scandinavia will be gathered in 1926 by a representative of the committee,

because of the value of the data obtained from Holland, England and France.

While tests are being made of the methods commonly in use; while the information thus far provided is made available to the profession through the medical press; and while lectures are being provided for medical colleges; the next section of the task is to take up consideration of the measures which hold out a hope that we might do away with some of the undesirable features of present methods of contraception. There were several interesting and promising results discovered by study of the fertilities and sterilities of animals which point toward better methods for what Professor Ross calls an "adaptive fecundity."

In this inquiry there has developed a striking difference between the results of a given method among a group of the intelligent and considerate, or the reckless and poverty stricken. Adaptation to individual conditions is required constantly. It becomes evident that the medical profession alone can determine many physical questions relating to structure, function and abnormal or diseased states. In addition to these strictly professional aspects the various mental and moral reactions which come chiefly to the knowledge of the doctor, as the father-confessor in matters of sex, should be studied from available records.

For fifty years the educated, the thrifty and the self-controlled have been increasing their precautions to limit their progeny, while there have been only four systematic attempts toward lessening indiscriminate breeding of the less fit and its world menace by giving preventives to the poor.

The Nieuw-Malthusian Band of Holland under Dr. Rutgers, has "trained" women, of the lower middle class for more than forty years by a few lessons and a reasonable pamphlet of instruction. The "Band's" printed list carries the names and addresses of three doctors, four

midwives, and forty-three "practitioners." These are under no supervision by health authorities or the "Band" and decline to make reports to the parent organization. The charge is four to eight guilders (\$1.60—\$3.20) for visit and supplies, but there are several thousand small-fee members, mostly of the working class, who receive a rebate. No records are kept. The propaganda is largely on the basis of the economic indication. Each Amsterdam mother receives a circular after delivery. The conservative and orthodox would appear to have been antagonized. The Protestant Queen, whose subjects are one-third Roman Catholic, is said by the opposition league to endorse the "Band" only automatically as one among other national societies. The open-minded Health Commissioner in Amsterdam stated that the government's attitude is officially neutral, but actually rather against it. There was no contraceptive instruction heard of in hospitals, dispensaries, clinics or in medical schools. Dr. Aletta Jacobs, on her recent visit, could give the committee no evidence of extant clinics in institutions. Of the seventeen specialists in diseases of women and obstetrics and among eight other doctors interviewed, none has observed anything like the results claimed for the Dutch methods. Holland's experience therefore is very disappointing in the way of definite information. Under the common understanding of the term clinic as connected with an institution, a hospital or dispensary, where an instructor teaches medical students in the presence of patients, or the more recent use—whereby a college or hospital group runs a free or pay clinic under medical direction—nothing was heard of in Holland that substantiates its claim to the title of clinic.

The Mother's Clinic, 61 Marlboro Road, London, was opened March 17, 1920, and reports about forty-seven hundred patients up to our investigator's visit in June, 1924. Entirely supported by Marie Stopes, her husband, and the large returns from her books, it is located in a

middle-class neighborhood among stores, occupying two tiny but pleasant rooms in a frame building. It is open five mornings, three afternoons, and one evening a week. Two midwives are on duty, but a woman physician attends once a week, and pathological cases are referred to her. Admission is free, but unmarried women are not accepted and women who have had no child are referred to physicians. For supplies a price list and pharmacists' addresses are furnished. The history calls for scant data and the records seen were not complete. Each patient is given a blank for report of results and about one-half fill in the record.

Marie Stopes, Ph.D., is an authority on coal. She is forceful, eager, critical and discursive. Her book covers the ground very completely but also with a definite bias. She stated to our observer that the records of the clinic had not been analyzed but affirmed that she knew of only twenty to thirty failures. This clinic's Research Council with names of some prominent surgeons and physicians has not published results of any research nor of confirmation of the clinic's claims, though our English interviews brought general commendation of the idea of a scientific investigation.

The Walworth Women's Welfare Center, 153-A East Street, Walworth, London, S.E. 17, supported by the New Generation League (formerly the Neo-Malthusian) was started six months later in a two-story, frame building in the slums. It is open three afternoons and one evening a week, and shows friendly, crisp, intelligent methods, under an upper class worker superintendent, with an efficient woman doctor, a nurse and a maid. Everything is scrupulously clean. The minimum charge for those able to pay charge is one shilling; nothing, if she cannot pay; five shillings if this can be afforded. Mail inquiries are answered by a pamphlet. The return visits comprise nearly half the attendance, the total about two hundred and twenty-five a month. The record blank

cards are excellent. There is said to be a new pay clinic, the Wallace Institute, an offshoot under two women doctors.

The "clinical research" that was conducted for two years up to January, 1925, by Dr. Dorothy Bocker had a room on the upper floor of a business building at 104 Fifth Avenue, New York city, among the offices of the Birth Control League, the organization which publishes *The Birth Control Review*, under the direction of Mrs. Margaret Sanger. Five visits were made by six members of our committee. There was a fair equipment, and attendance morning and afternoon five days a week—and nearly a thousand letters a week to answer on medical aid. Dr. Bocker is particularly well informed on matters of contraception and her report to the profession is a medical contribution of value. The history forms were full and well balanced but the entries often scant. For follow-up they depended on the return of patients for purchase of supplies. Twenty-one per cent failed to come back or to report. It is a matter of no regret that, with over \$25,000 expended, the promised research was not carried out with such study of results and inspection and consultant supervision as would have furnished dependable data on the efficacy and on the injury or freedom from harm of the various measures recommended. The Voluntary Parenthood League of 19 W. 44th Street, New York, started in 1919, does no case work but is concerned wholly with attempts to alter the Federal law, at present by advocacy of the Cummins-Vaile bill.

Special birth control clinics, widely heralded, may be required at present to furnish legitimate advice not otherwise procurable, and to gather clinical evidence. But they seem needlessly costly—in America, at nine dollars a patient—when ample obstetrical and gynecological outpatient services are able to tender this care at 75 cents to \$1 *per capita*. In attempting to determine what was

the size and character of the problem the Committee on Maternal Health opened an office, not for examination or treatment, but for reference and record, supposing that there would be considerable demand by patients for whom the diagnosis had been made—diagnoses which called for prevention of pregnancy—for reference to institutions of high standing for safe and effective professional advice. But it was found that an intermediary was little needed, inasmuch as most institutions could recognize proper cases and furnish advice, provided their trustees and staff were willing, their doctors informed on the subject and supplies available.

It has taken more than a year to induce a few leading institutions to agree to make the study and develop the means of giving contraceptive advice in legally suitable cases. The committee has worked with one nurse to visit settlements and institutions to make inquiries and to follow-up, and one stenographer with a short-time library worker; with a doctor (who was traveling) consenting to undertake our foreign study, while an unsalaried medical secretary gave odd times to getting reports together and summarized.

The Committee on Maternal Health, thus, has under way clinical, chemical and laboratory studies which in due time with proper supervision and adequate professional collaboration and sufficient funds, should obtain the medical facts. One can attempt, in clinical tests, to set apart the purely medical from the economic considerations involved in a consideration of birth control. This is our present thesis. But this segregation is feasible only in part. The problem of contraception forms but one section of a study that must be conducted by a well-balanced group with wide interests—a group that would take up the interlocking and overlapping problems of fertility and sterility and normal sex life, with the weighty bearing of these matters on individual character, and on family and community well-being. The

sociological and religious aspects must be held constantly in mind. The work of the various organizations that are in touch with these questions must be headed toward coordination.

PREVENTION OF RACIAL DETERIORATION AND DEGENERACY¹

The urgent necessity of restricting the procreation of certain classes of society is securing popular recognition. To this end various impotent or impractical methods have been proposed and even incorporated into the statutes of several states. Any person who deals with this important subject which in many ways is unpleasant and disagreeable, must do so very cautiously, as he may be easily misunderstood and opinion may be attributed to him which he does not hold.

We are rapidly approaching the day of preventive medicine and physicians must take the initiative in disseminating knowledge on the subject of racial deterioration and degeneracy, otherwise they will be rightfully accused of moral cowardice.

Degeneracy is a relative term only, and it would be presumptuous on my part to attempt the definition of it. However, I would include under the classification of degeneracy certain forms of insanity, imbecility, feeble-mindedness, idiocy, epilepsy, chronic inebriates, habitual criminals, congenital deaf and dumb, and the sexual perverts.

In every state there is relatively a large number of people who come under some one of the various headings. Many of them fortunately are segregated but many are outside of institutions, and even those who spend some time in institutional life have periods of liberty. A fairly large proportion of these are, or have

¹ From article by Charles H. Clark, M.D., Superintendent Lima State Hospital. *Ohio State Institution Journal*. 2: 5-19. April, 1920.

been married. Many of them are the parents of children and a certain proportion of these innocent and helpless offspring inherit defective nervous systems, which result in the swelling of the defective and delinquent classes.

The prevalence of degeneracy: We cannot do better in considering the prevalence of degeneracy than to study the statistical tables of the annual report of the Ohio Board of Administration for the year ending June 30, 1918. This report shows that 15,971 insane persons were under treatment in our state hospitals during the year; 1885 epileptics were enrolled in the Hospital for Epileptics; 2525 feebleminded children were at the Institution for Feebleminded, and 536 deaf mutes were in the State School at Columbus.

Turning to the criminal classes there were 3072 persons incarcerated in the Ohio Penitentiary; 2376 were enrolled in the Ohio State Reformatory; 2321 boys were enrolled in the Boys' Industrial School at Lancaster; 973 girls were enrolled in the Girls' Industrial School at Delaware, and 208 women in the Ohio Reformatory for Women.

During the year 18,519 persons have been arrested in the state and all have been incarcerated in jails for varying periods.

The large number of paupers in the state gives some clue as to the prevalence of the inefficient in brain and body. There was a daily average of 8456 inmates in our county infirmaries. A large number of them are tuberculous, a portion of them insane, but most of them are inefficient, intemperate, ne'er do wells, who either have no homes or cannot be tolerated by their relatives or society.

To recapitulate, the total number of individuals in our state hospitals, penal and reformatory institutions, jails and infirmaries, was 56,852 for the year. Or, in other words, one to every one hundred and ten of the popula-

tion of the state has received state care for the entire year, or a portion of it.

These figures do not take into consideration the large number of insane confined in private sanatoriums throughout the state, the many cases who come under the classification under consideration in the general hospitals and a great many cases who are maintained at their homes.

The latest census of the United States gives data relative to the dependents and defectives in institutions. The numbers not in institutions can only be guessed at, but from the available sources we can gain an approximate conception of the numbers in our country today as follows: Insane and feeble-minded, at least two hundred thousand; blind, one hundred thousand; deaf, and deaf and dumb, one hundred thousand; paupers in institutions, eighty thousand, two-thirds of these have children who are also physically or mentally deficient, and to say that one-half of the whole number of paupers are in institutions is to give a ridiculously low estimate; prisoners, one hundred thousand, and several hundred thousand more that should be prisoners; juvenile delinquents, twenty-three thousand in institutions; the number cared for by hospitals, dispensaries and homes of various kinds in the year 1904 was in excess of two million. From these figures we get a rough total of nearly three million. Must we define a civilized and enlightened nation as one in which one person in every thirty can be classed as defective or dependent?

England's defective classes during the twenty-two years between 1874 and 1896 increased from 5.4 to 11.6 per thousand of the total; that is, it more than doubled in that brief period, and the officially certified insane, which is far less than the actual number, increased from one to three hundred and nineteen of the total population, and to one to two hundred and eighty-five in the nine years preceding 1905. In Ireland, comparison of the years

1851 and 1896, a period of forty-five years intervening, shows an increase in the corresponding ratio of from one to six hundred and fifty-seven to one to one hundred and seventy-eight.

The census of 1901 showed in Great Britain 484,507 mental defectives of all kinds; this is one to eighty-five of the total population, and if the whole truth were known the ratio would approximate one to fifty.

The Scottish Commission reports an increase in insane of 190 per cent since 1858, the total population increasing meanwhile by only 52 per cent.

The worst side of these British statistics follows: In 1901, of the sixty thousand and more, idiots, imbeciles, and feebleminded, nearly nineteen thousand roughly, one-third—were married and free to multiply; and as for that matter, a great many of those unmarried are known to have been prolific. In 1901, of the one hundred and seventeen thousand insane, nearly forty-seven thousand—considerably more than one-third—were married—sixty-six thousand imbeciles and insane legally multiplying their kind, and worse!

The rate of increase of insanity in England since 1858 has been 250 per cent and the increase in population only 81 per cent.

In our own native state the increase in the population from 1900 to 1910 was 38 per cent and the increase in insanity 108 per cent. In the state of New York the population during the past twenty years has increased 47 per cent, while the number of insane has increased 103 per cent.

These figures are but a finger-post pointing thoughtful minds to a ghastly future.

A word as to the economic aspect of the problem. One has only to consider the expenditures in connection with state hospitals, penitentiaries; reformatories, jails and similar institutions to realize the importance of this matter from the economic standpoint.

Take the one item of insane and feeble-minded. Dr. C. L. Dana makes the statement that there are now in the United States about one hundred and forty-five thousand insane and one hundred and twenty thousand feeble-minded, and this number is increasing annually at the rate of 4 per cent. Counting the cost of an adequate plant for caring for the insane and feeble-minded, and calculating the annual interest on this amount, it is found that it comes to some \$60,000,000 per year. Add to this the loss of the work which would be done by the men among this number were they healthy, their earnings would amount to \$28,000,000 per year. Dr. Dana asserts, therefore, that the insane and feeble-minded of this country cost over \$85,000,000 annually, and that this amount is increasing absolutely at the rate of 4 per cent yearly. These figures refer to lunacy and feeble-mindedness alone and do not include the cost of criminals, paupers and other defectives and delinquents.

It cost the State of Ohio to maintain her hospitals, penal and reformatory institutions \$5,031,887.72 for the year 1918. The state has invested in these institutions, land and buildings \$22,000,000. The total cost for all purposes for the institutions above mentioned to the state for the past twenty years has been approximately \$60,000,000.

These figures I have put before you give some idea of the number of the manifestly undesirable in the community in which we live and the enormous expenditure incurred in their maintenance.

The Causes of Deterioration and Degeneracy: When we contemplate this subject seriously, one of the first thoughts that occur to us is, what is the origin of this dreadful burden of degeneracy which is imposed upon the state and the nation?

It is my opinion, after a careful study of racial deterioration and degeneracy, that there are two main sets of influences at work; first, those of environment and

second, those of heredity. I believe that it is true that environmental influences have received the most consideration, both by the medical profession and the laity.

It has been hoped by changing the circumstances and surroundings in which people live to better their state, and lessen the liability of those, who, in the struggle of life, have a tendency to become insane, criminal, etc.

Our state has been very liberal with appropriations for her institutions and it has been hoped by the better care of its insane, epileptics, feebleminded, juvenile offenders, criminals, etc., that many of these persons might be reclaimed and restored to health and become efficient members of society.

A great deal has been accomplished in the past by improving our institutions, perfecting our methods of treatment and bettering the external conditions, but there remains still more to be done.

The interest in the movement against child labor, the improvement of factory and shop conditions, the campaign against the use and abuse of alcohol, the improvement in the condition of the poor, the education of the people regarding the dangers of infection, the instruction in personal and social hygiene, the better treatment of the insane and the criminal are accomplishing much and will do still more, but we must acknowledge that, with all these improvements to better the environmental condition of man, insanity, criminality, inebriety, feeblemindedness, epilepsy and prostitution have not diminished, but on the other hand, there has been a slow and gradual increase in all of these classes.

This fact is fully borne out by a study of our state institutions. They are crowded to their fullest extent, and many superintendents are requesting appropriations for the erection of new buildings to accommodate the increasing population.

That crime is on the increase out of proportion to the population is indicated in many ways, but for the

country as a whole, the United States census is the most reliable guide. Let us look at it by decades. In the year 1850 there were 6,737 prisoners, or one to 3,442 of the population; 1860, 19,086—one to 1,647; 1870, 32,901—one to 1,171; 1880, 58,609—one to 855; 1890, 82,329—one to 757; 1904, 100,000.

What is true of insanity and criminality is equally true of the other classes of defectives in regard to being on the increase.

During the last century in France, many parts of Germany and in Spain, the increase in criminality was terrifying. In the United States the number of murders and homicides per million of the entire population has nearly trebled in fifteen years. The average for the five years from 1885 to 1889, inclusive, was 38.5 per million, and for the five years from 1902 to 1906, inclusive, it became 110 per million.

To improve the conditions of society we must attack this problem at its very root. The fact is that members of this class to which I am referring are for the most part destined from birth to inefficiency or disease, because they are born with nervous systems which are abnormal. Too little attention is paid to the important matter of parenthood. Most people drift together into marriage without any thought of the supreme function of marriage, or of their fitness for participation in this function. Public opinion has not been properly informed as yet in this matter. Society must be brought to the point where it realizes that it is its duty to protect itself against the propagation of a degenerate stock.

We recognize in several varieties of insanity that heredity is the most potent pre-disposing cause of the disease. The source of this pre-disposition may not be merely mental alienation in the ancestry, but related diseases, neuroses, alcoholism, certain diatheses, consanguinity, etc. The forms of insanity that come under the degenerative and hereditary classes are paranoia and

paranoid states, the dementia praecox group, manic-depressive insanity, imbecility and idiocy—and they furnish about 45 per cent of the admissions to our state hospitals.

Kraepelin figures that at least 70 per cent of the praecox cases show the presence of hereditary factors, and Wolfsohn, in a study of six hundred and forty-seven cases of dementia praecox, obtained a history of hereditary in 90 per cent of the cases. Pilcg has given a careful study of two thousand cases, in which it would appear that in the ascendants of dementia praecox cases abnormal characters appear in very strikingly high percentage.

In the manic-depressive group we obtain a history of heredity in at least 60 per cent of the cases.

The number of feebleminded individuals in this country is one to three hundred of the population, and 65 per cent of these cases have a positive hereditary history. It is a well recognized fact that the offspring of feebleminded or imbecilic parents are always defective.

My own observation of well authenticated cases of dementia praecox, which I have been able to follow for several years, and whose parents have been well known to me, has shown that three elements have been most emphatic in the ancestry: dementia praecox itself, alcohol and abnormal personality.

The tenets of criminology, according to Lydson, in brief are these: (1) The criminal and vice classes are the product of certain influences of heredity, congenital and acquired diseases, unfavorable surroundings involving pernicious teaching and example, physical necessities and other social maladies. (2) These influences result in a class of persons of low grade of development, physically and mentally, with a defective understanding of their true relation to social system in which they live.

Such persons have no conception of that variable thing called morality, and in the case of the criminal no

respect whatever for the rights of others, save in so far as he may be compelled by fear of punishment. Some become criminals, some paupers and still other inebriates or insane.

These subjects are characterized, upon the average, by certain anomalies of development that constitute the so-called stigmata, or mark of degeneracy. In them, vice, crime and disease go hand in hand.

To a large extent a child is moulded before he is born. There is no invariable fatalism in the influences that work before birth, but it does make a great difference whether a man is well born and starts happily, or whether he is heavily handicapped at the onset of the race of life—in a word, whether he is born free from the vice of nature, or whether the contrary is the fact.

There is much evidence to show how greatly the welfare of the child depends on the general physical and emotional health of the parents. It is undoubtedly true that the whole human race gets a fresh start at least thrice every hundred years, and the character of the race in existence in any period depends on the quality of the children born, and the influence to which they are exposed after birth.

The quality of the children born depends on the elements inherent in the germ cells of the parent and on the environment of those germ cells before their union and also after their fusion to form a new being. If there exists pathological factors in either parent circulating in the blood, such as we find in constitutional diseases, then the elements, good, bad and indifferent, inherent in his or her germ cells are likely to be transmitted and make the offspring the victim of some form of degeneracy.

This is more especially true if during the period of gestation the mother suffers from constitutional disease or receives some strong emotional or physical shock during this period. The long period of intruterine gesta-

tion, two hundred and eighty-three days, subjects the developing being to many accidents and influences, which not infrequently result disastrously to normal development.

The begetting of children is the highest of all human functions and if the quality of human beings depends on the inherent qualities of the germ cells of the parents and their environment before and after fusion, may it not be possible by education to cultivate public opinion that will lead families to show as much pride in making provisions for health, energy, etc., in their posterity as some of them now evince in their ancestry?

May not family sentiment be developed in the direction of suppressing parenthood in the unworthy and encourage fatherhood and motherhood in those who are able to transmit to their offspring qualities unhampered by glaring defect?

If, in the study of individuals suffering from insanity, epilepsy and feeble-mindedness, we find that they are likely to propagate their kind and that in chronic inebriates, habitual criminals and prostitutes, they are likely to transmit to their offspring defective nervous systems, then it would be desirable to so educate public opinion as to bring about legislative prohibition of parenthood for the individuals of this class.

An exhaustive study of crime, disease and heredity has been made of the progeny of an early settler in the state of New York by R. Dungdale. The ancestor of his family was born in 1720. He was a hunter and fisher, a hard drinker, jolly and companionable, averse to steady toil and worked by "fits and starts." He lived to an old age, when he became blind and dying left an enormous more or less illegitimate progeny.

Two of his sons married two out of five more or less illegitimate sisters. These sisters were the Jukes. The descendents of these five sisters have been carefully traced through five subsequent generations, the number

of individuals thus traced being seven hundred and nine. The aggregate of their progeny is probably twelve hundred. This family, while it has included a few honest workers, has been on the whole a family of criminals, prostitutes, vagabonds and paupers. About twenty of the men were skilled workers, and of these ten learned their trades in prison, while one hundred and twenty-nine received outdoor relief to the extent of an aggregate of eight hundred years. Of the seven hundred and nine there were seventy-six criminals; of the females more than half were prostitutes (52.2 per cent), the normal being estimated 1.66 per cent, and it is estimated that the Juke family cost the state \$1,250,000, to say nothing of the awful legacy of crime and criminals which they also left behind them.

Professor Poellman, of the University of Bonn, in his investigation of the descendants of a confirmed female drunkard who died early in the nineteenth century, further confirms the question of hereditary degeneracy. The fifth and sixth generations of her posterity numbered eight hundred and thirty-four persons.

Of these the records of seven hundred and nine have been ascertained and of them one hundred and seven were of illegitimate birth, one hundred and sixty-two were professional beggars, sixty-four were inmates of almshouses, one hundred and eighty-one were prostitutes, seventy-six were convicted of serious crime and seven were condemned for murder.

The total cost to the state in caring for this woman's pauper offspring and punishing her criminal progeny, together with the amount privately given in alms and loss through theft, was reckoned at \$1,206,000, or more than \$1,200 a year.

This expense has been continued and increased in almost geometrical progression, even unto this day, for the fecundity of the irresponsible is notorious—perhaps because of their irresponsibility. To them children ap-

pear to be rather an asset than a liability, if indeed they ever give this subject a thought.

Dr. Goddard, Director of the Ohio Bureau of Juvenile Research, reported the following interesting history of a young woman, which he obtained during the time he was connected with the New Jersey Feeble-minded institution. This woman was a handsome, feeble-minded girl, apparently having inherited some refinement from her mother, although her father was a feeble-minded alcoholic. Somewhere about the age of seventeen or eighteen she went out to do housework in a family in one of the towns in her native state. She soon became the mother of an illegitimate child. It was born in an almshouse, to which she fled after she had been discharged from where she had been at work. After that, charitably disposed people tried to do what they could for her, giving her a home for herself and her child in return for the work she could do. However, she soon appeared in the same condition. An effort was then made to discover the father of the second child, and when he was found to be a drunken, feeble-minded epileptic living in the neighborhood, in order to save the legitimacy of the child, her friends saw to it that a marriage ceremony took place. Later, another feeble-minded child was born to them. Then the whole family secured a home with an unmarried farmer in the neighborhood. They lived together until another child was forthcoming, which the husband refused to own. When, finally, the farmer acknowledged this child to be his, the same good friends interfered, went into court and procured a divorce from the husband and had the woman married to the father of the expected fourth child. This child also proved to be feeble-minded, and they have had four more feeble-minded children, making eight in all born of this woman. She has two brothers and two sisters that are feeble-minded. These are all married and have children. The older of the two sisters had a child by her own father

when she was thirteen years old. This child died at about six years of age. This woman has since married. The two brothers have each at least one child, of whose mental condition nothing is known. The other sister married a feebleminded man and had three children. Two of them are feebleminded and the other died in infancy. The paternal ancestry of this unfortunate woman is hardly less interesting. All told, their family history, as far as it is known, includes fifty-nine persons; The mental condition of twelve of them is unknown. Ten died in infancy or before their characteristics were known; of the remaining thirty-seven, thirty were feebleminded.

A similar research has been made into the history of the famous Edwards family of New England. Jonathan Edwards was born in Connecticut in 1703. Thirteen hundred and ninety-four of his decedents were identified in 1900, of whom two hundred and ninety-four were college graduates, thirteen were presidents of our greatest colleges, sixty-five were professors in colleges, sixty were physicians, many of whom were eminent, one hundred were clergymen, missionaries or theological professors, sixty were officers in the army or navy, sixty were prominent authors and writers, by whom one hundred and thirty-five books of merit were written and published and eighteen important periodicals edited. Thirty-three American states and several foreign countries and ninety-two American cities have profited by the beneficent influence of this eminent activity. One hundred were lawyers, thirty were judges, eighty held public office, of whom one was vice-president of the United States, three were United States senators, several were governors, members of Congress, mayors of cities and ministers to foreign ports; and one was president of the Pacific Mail Steamship Company. Fifteen railroads, many banks, insurance companies and large individual enterprises have been indebted to their management.

Almost, every if not every department of social progress and of the public weal, has felt the impulse of this healthy and long-lived family. It is not known that any one of them was ever convicted of crime.

In an eloquent address on "The Coming Field of the Medical Profession in the Scientific Treatment of Crime and Criminals," that distinguished criminologist and alienist, Dr. Austin Flint, said to the New York State Medical Association that in the future the wise and beneficent solution of the problem of crime and criminals must rest with the medical profession, and therein he predicted and even recommended the sterilization of criminals.

The lawyer is confronted with the history of crime and relative rights of the individual and the state, and the problem of what is best for society, while the doctor is confronted by the physical and mental condition of the criminal, and the problem of what is best for the individual.

If then it has been shown that heredity is the most potent source of crime, insanity, feeble-mindedness, epilepsy, etc., and that society should protect itself by preventing the further breeding of this class of people, how may society accomplish this end?

THE COMPANIONATE AND THE FAMILY¹

THE UNOBSERVED DIVISION OF AN HISTORICAL INSTITUTION

For the purpose of this brief discussion, we may call the state of lawful wedlock, entered into solely for companionship, and not contributing children to society, the "companionate," using the term "family" in its true historical sense, as the institution for regulating reproduc-

¹ From article by M. M. Knight, Ph.D., Barnard College, Columbia University. Reprinted from the *Journal of Social Hygiene*. Vol. X. No. 5. May, 1924. Copyright, 1924. The American Social Hygiene Association, Inc., 370 Seventh Ave., New York, N.Y. Publication No. 457.

tion, early education, property inheritance, and some other things. These limitations are observed in order to make it clear that an actual and general condition is being dealt with, not a vague theory of what may be or ought to be. The companionate is one of our commonest institutions. We have been dealing with it as though it were a family, which it is not.

Because the social conservatives and liberals have been inclined to regard the companionate as a family, the common radical assertion that it is no affair of the state's if people wish to live together without children has gone practically undebated. It seems to the writer to be not only debatable, but to bear all the earmarks of sophistry. These people have picked upon a few obviously absurd laws and customs applied to the companionate merely because of its historical descent from the family, and immediately jumped to the rash conclusion that all thoroughgoing regulations must be bad because these are. Of all the people in the world to take such a laissez-faire attitude toward a vital institution founded upon the same instinct which must be depended upon for reproduction—that is, for group survival—one would expect the socialists to be the last. Presumably they will soon see this themselves, as some already do. One remarked to the writer recently that the socialists would cross this bridge when they came to it—that for the present, the main thing is to get rid of the unsuitable regulations, thus making way for some suitable ones.

As parenthood becomes more strictly voluntary, it seems obvious that the state will have to take a more direct interest in its supply of raw recruits. It is already observable that the greatest sterility appears among the most successful strains, where the environment should be most advantageous for the young, and presumably the biological inheritance is better also. This is the slow social suicide commonly known as racial decay. Its possible cure lies partially within the realm of eugen-

ics, but not altogether. Our puerile and anachronistic treatment of both the companionate and celibacy is also responsible in part. It amounts to subsidizing voluntary sterility.

For example, in the United States we exempt a man from taxation on part of his income simply because he has a woman companion. The exemption in New York state is equally large. This is on the assumption that such a partnership is directly advantageous to the state, or to society at large, which it is not unless turned into a family. On the contrary, the shrewd and self-seeking individual who avoids children has often merely done society the disservice of withdrawing a perfectly healthy woman from production. Instead of remitting taxes, we, the people, might well impose a special fine—a sort of luxury tax. If this turned out to be remunerative to the state, perhaps the taxes of the actual families could be lowered in proportion.

This favoring of the family as compared with the companionate, which the nature of the two institutions and of our economic and social order demands, obviously should not be so designed as to put companionship mating at a disadvantage with respect to celibacy. There is little reason to doubt that the social health and morale of a mated population are far better than those of a largely unmated one. The sex instinct is too powerful to be completely repressed without objectionable effects upon the personality, from the standpoint of the health and happiness of the individual on the one hand, and his social reactions upon the group on the other. Moreover, since reproduction is sexual in the human species, any group which does not attempt to regulate sex relations invites destruction. The ideal situation to be kept in view must be the fewest possible individuals unmated and the greatest possible encouragement to turn the superior companionates into moderate-sized families—say with three or four children. While this paper is not

about eugenics as such, it is not out of place to make the side remark that every attempt to turn the family into a reasonably efficient social institution must regard negative eugenics as an essential goal.

What, then, is the obvious first step to take, the moment we can get general recognition of the fact that the companionate is an actual institution, needing regulation? If we agree that a celibacy which has always been more or less of a fiction in practice, and is rapidly becoming a farce since the spread of birth control information, is socially bad, the first desideratum must be to find and remove the obstacles which keep normal people from institutional mating. For those who are anarchistic and unsocial by nature, not from economic or other necessity, restraints will doubtless have to be found—on the same general principle that we make motorists keep to a particular side of the road and sometimes forbid unauthorized persons to bear arms. It seems patent that the main thing which keeps people out of the companionate now is a senselessly rigid lot of inherited laws and customs appropriate only for the family, and not entirely so for it in its modern form. A mere enumeration of some of the most important is about all that can be undertaken in the space available here. The laws are mere generalizations arising from the customs, attempting to apply them at essential points where moral suasion might fail.

First, there is the decreasingly successful attempt on the part of the state to preserve such a state of ignorance that the companionate may become a family, as in more primitive societies, even when the members do not wish it and cannot afford it. This is a terrific deterrent to open, lawful mating, and a mother of such spawn as social decay and prostitution. It is a species of public chicanery whereby the poor or ignorant individual is tricked by means of his instincts into making an unwilling contribution, at his own expense, to the social group. The well-informed and fortunate classes see through

the hoax, and get off very lightly, at the expense of a society which thus sterilizes much of its best stock.

Then there is a group of abuses, perhaps even more important, growing out of the economic order. At the heart of the matter is the assumption that a woman should cease to be an earner and become a pensioner when she becomes a man's companion; that even though a family is studiously avoided, there should be the paraphernalia of a "home"—at his expense. There are a great many men, particularly in towns and cities, who can support themselves in comfort, and perhaps even nourish ambitions, but whose earnings are insufficient for two—to say nothing about a family. Many of them—I will be conservative and not say most of them—live in a state of mock celibacy, when they would be better off in every way if it were possible to enter a real give-and-take companionate. Many of the women they play with are also self-supporting. Some of these actually mate legally, in spite of a state of social opinion which makes it a dangerous move. How dangerous? From the woman's point of view, it means pressure to give up her position and live on a fraction of his earnings, which often represents a cut in his previous standard of living. Whether he is conscious or unconscious of this cut, it is not a particularly good omen for the success of the partnership. From the man's angle, it means making two live on what one lived on before. It actually means the accumulation of an establishment with a lot of overhead expense, which probably removes any freedom of movement which he may have enjoyed. Moreover, he is tied hard and fast by law to the new set of pecuniary obligations. Society and the law regard this companionate as a family. The assumption is that he owes this woman support, no matter how able she may be to support herself. If at all inclined to think, he knows there is a large chance that the partnership will break up—divorce statistics are convincing on that point. If it

should prove unworkable, society and the law are going to assume that he owes her alimony, even if she goes back to her salary, quite uninjured as a producer by an institutional failure which may have been as much her fault as his, or more. It may prove costly even for him verbally to suggest a legal companionate if it should not materialize. She may sue him and collect a considerable sum, merely on the implied theory that he has obligated himself to support her, though she has suffered no damage of any kind and he has received no imaginable *quid pro quo*.

To put one aspect of the problem a little more positively, why should not the two members of a companionate be taxed by the state exactly as though the partnership did not exist? Why should it be considered a pecuniary institution? It might be left open to either or both parties to prove that their earning capacity had been necessarily lowered—for instance, in case one has been obliged to move to a different city at a lower salary in order that they may live together. The fact that people do become fond of each other in a complex emotional way, incorporating the strong factor of the satisfaction of natural desires, should be a sufficient incentive if only the absurd handicaps inherited from the family could be eliminated. There is no use in sneering at or belittling the sobering but unnecessary truth that mating at present commonly means a cut in the standard of living of both parties. Harking back to the illustrative case of taxation, there is no question but that the able-bodied and childless should bear a much larger share of the burden of the state than they do now. This is only another way of saying that children are a social rather than a personal asset in the present economic order, and those who do not make this contribution should bear a substantial equivalent at some other point. The tax on celibacy which has been so much discussed looks all right as far as it goes, but it does not meet the whole difficulty. Why

not make it simply a tax on childlessness, partially remitted up to the number which scientific study suggests as normal, treating celibates and members of companionates exactly alike in his respect?

While this paper is not at all exhaustive, it is perhaps sufficient to carry the main idea. Through all the sense and nonsense which is being published about the family the fact is patent that something is wrong. So much scientific and technical progress has been made during the past two centuries that our social institutions have dropped out of the convoy and are wandering around in the swamps of ignorance and prejudice. The sickness of the family is only a symptom of a general maladjustment, due to the fact that we have created a new material environment so quickly that we cannot find our places in it. Never was human society riper for general change, and yet there are poor reactionaries who want to live in the void we have just moved out of, instead of settling down in the potentially more habitable world we have created. We cannot reestablish the old family, founded on involuntary parenthood, any more than we can set the years back or turn bullfrogs into tadpoles. The family has definitely split into two parts, neither of which is like their common predecessor. They are related, they are both important, and they require regulation. The companionate is the more difficult to deal with for the moment, because more remote from anything we have experienced before. It can be regulated. It will have to be regulated. The first step is obviously to recognize its existence and attempt to get a good square look at it.

HUMAN LOVE ¹

We often hear nowadays of the very small value people attach to life. What can be the meaning of this? It means that life might comprise things of high value,

¹ From article by H. Pissareff. *Theosophist*. 40: 111-19. May, 1919.

if different conditions had not depreciated it and rendered it uninteresting and unattractive, calling forth a complete indifference to it, a desire to part with it. Hence—the epidemical suicides that are causing a general terror in our days. Among other reasons, which I am not going to touch on for the present, this loss of the value of life proceeds from the fact that in the past century we have got into the habit of considering life exclusively from its physical point of view. And this habit has left such deep traces in the consciousness of the modern educated classes, that the consideration of life in all its complexity has been entirely abandoned.

Besides the physical standpoint—certainly the most visible and comprehensible for the average mind—life still contains great depths and heights entirely ignored from the materialistic standpoint. Materialism either terms the least sign of superphysical consciousness “mystical” or dismisses it to the realm of pathology, declaring proudly that the only objects it admits are those which can be precisely measured. But surely there is nothing therein to pride oneself upon? Quite the contrary. Owing to the fact that the attention of people has so long been exclusively fixed upon the lower plane of life, modern consciousness is closed to the sense of the higher life, becoming so intensely simplified and flat, that people of a finer sensibility become subject to a terrible sadness, even a disgust of life itself.

In close connection with this state of consciousness stands the degradation of the whole level of man’s creative capacity, so painfully expressed in everything: in public activity, in literature and art, and most of all—it being the crowning of the psychical side of humanity—in love. I mean love in its widest sense, in all its aspects and manifestations; but today I particularly wish to dwell upon the love between man and woman.

A consistent materialist can admit no other principle at the foundation of the world’s order except the me-

chanical principle; consequently all human ethics are from his standpoint *only the natural product of gradual development*; hence the simplified and merely physical consideration of sexual love, which I consider to be one of the indirect causes of the epidemical increase of suicides among young people.

If the life of the universe is not ruled by moral principle, then, in truth, *all* is justifiable—down to depravity. And we are witnessing how the most beautiful, the most luminous of all human feelings, the longing to give oneself, one's strength and all the tenderness of one's heart to the loved one, is being transformed into the "sexual question," the poetry of life changed into a simple problem of physiology.

One of Vladimir Salavieff's articles has an interesting definition of love. I am quoting his words from memory, but I do not think I am mistaking the sense of his interpretation. He says that the solitude of man, his aloofness from all the rest of the world, is but temporary. I may add: in order to help him to acquire *self-knowledge* and *self-definition*. This solitude, maintained by man's selfishness, by the vivid sensation of his being the center of all which is *not* himself, is that which builds up a strong wall between himself and the rest of the world. The breaking down of this wall is a difficult thing; much strength is needed to break even an opening in it. But the great power, the great flame which can burn down this wall, separating us from the rest of the world, is the love between man and woman.

Those who have loved with a true love know of the deep change thus effected in the very depths of the human heart, as this solitude is done away with and another life flows into ours in a mighty life-giving flood. Man's heart, till then closed, joyfully expands, its chords exquisitely vibrating in a glad response, as his best abilities, till then unknown to himself, attain to their full bloom. Whosoever has loved, has gone through this

great experience; and to him the testimony of those who know cannot sound as vain words, when they say that as selfishness is thus abolished and the solitary life blends with that of the universe, a great illumination and a great happiness flood the human heart.

This experience is precisely that *superphysical side of love* which is left unperceived by the consciousness that only recognizes two dimensions, as this can only grasp the physiological side of love—and yet that is but a part of an immense whole. Beyond that part there is a whole world of sensations, subtle experiences, pure joys, deep inspirations of the soul, a luminous awakening into the higher worlds. What we vaguely call heaven, paradise, is nothing else but the blending of the separate life with the limitless life of the universe, the fusion of the limited consciousness with the limitless consciousness of God or the Great All. Human love consists of this blending—through the loved one—with the Great All, joined to the physical passion. Nowhere does the complexity of the human being—in the two struggling sides of his nature—show itself as vividly as in human love. And nowhere does the hidden aim of this complexity express itself as clearly: the raising of the animal up to the human, the transfiguring of the human into the divine.

All those who have witnessed the drama of the human soul in its upward trend through the different stages of development, know that the higher a man rises, the dimmer grows his lower pole, as his divine principle, his hidden being, shines forth in vivid beauty. Only in times of decline and barbarous morality can such stress be laid upon man's animal side, giving it the cynical exposure we are witnessing at present. But our higher principles, those that are divine, cannot accept this, and that is why we see such disgust, anxiety, loss of self-respect and of the value of life. We have outgrown the elemental innocence of the animal and can no more with impunity stoop to its level. In the eyes of materialists

the only aim and justification of love is the necessity for the continuation of the race, but this does not by any means comprise all the manifestations of love. There is something else, something which does not proceed on the physical plane, which forms the most precious side of human love: the inner spiritual interchange which takes place on the higher planes between the two lovers.

A young Russian writer, Ouspensky, has a most interesting page concerning this subject in his new book *Tertium Organum*. He says:

Art can see further than the average human sight, and therefore it alone has the right to speak of some sides of life, among which is the question of love. Art alone knows how to approach love, art alone knows how to speak about it.

Love has always been, and is, the chief subject of art. This is quite comprehensible; for here all the currents of human life and all its emotions meet. Through love man comes into touch with the future, with eternity, with the race to which he belongs, as well as with all the past of humanity and all its future fate. In the contact of the sexes, in their attraction towards each other, lies the great mystery of life, *the mystery of creation*. The relation between the *hidden* side of life and its *visible* one, i.e., the manifestation of *real* life in our *seeming* one, stands out particularly clearly in this eternally treated, analysed and discussed—and as eternally misunderstood question—the relation between the sexes. Usually the relation between men and women is considered as a necessity, called forth by the necessity of the continuation of mankind upon earth. Birth is the *raison d'être* of love from the religious, moral and scientific standpoint. But in reality creation does not exclusively consist in the continuing of life, but first of all and most of all in *the creation of ideas*. Love is an immense power which produces ideas, awakening the creative capacity in man. When the two powers contained in love shall meet—the power of life and the power of idea—then will humanity *consciously* move “towards its higher destinies.” For the present, art alone is able to sense this. All realistic discussion concerning love always sounds coarse and flat. Nowhere is this difference between the deep “occult” understanding of life and the superficial “positive” one as vividly expressed, as in the question of love.

In another part of *Tertium Organum* its author says that love from the occult standpoint is exactly the same as from that of art, i.e., a *psychological phenomenon*,

which sets the finest strings of the soul into motion and sound, manifesting as in a focus the higher powers of human nature. At the same time it is just through *this* side of his life that man comes into contact with something *vast* and of which he himself is a part.

For two-dimensioned beings who live on a flat surface and only move along two directions—*production* and *consummation*, there exists the terrible "question of the sexes"; for human beings there exists the question of love.

Love is the individualisation of a feeling directed towards a definite object, towards *one* woman or *one* man. No other can replace the loved one.

The "sexual feeling" is an unindividualised feeling; here every man at all suitable, or every woman more or less young, will do. Love is an instrument of *learning*, it brings people closer together, disclosing the soul of one to the other and giving them thereby the possibility of looking into the soul of Nature, of sensing the influence of cosmic powers.

Love is the sign of *race*.

It is a means of perfecting the race. As in one generation after another people *love*, i.e., as they seek for beauty, feeling, reciprocity, they elaborate a type that seeks love and is *able to love*, an evolving type, one that is ascending. When generation upon generation of people come together at haphazard, without love, without beauty, without feeling, without reciprocity, out of motives *alien to love*, out of personal interest, or pecuniary advantages, in the interests of "business," or "household questions"—they lose both the instinct of love and the instinct of selection. Instead of love they elaborate the "sexual feeling," and uniformity does not serve selection or protect and improve the kind, but on the contrary ruins it. The type decreases, degenerates, both physically and morally.

Love is the instrument of *selection*.

The sexual feeling is the instrument of *degeneration*.

Analysing the bearing of modern consciousness toward the question of love, Ouspensky observes that science, which declares that the only aim of love consists in the preservation of the human species, at the same time gives no explanation concerning the reason why the powers put into humanity for the attraction of one sex toward the other, are given to it in such an immeasurably greater quantity than is needed for the given purpose. But a small fraction of all the love put into humanity is utilized for the continuation of the race. Where, then,

does the chief quantity of this power go to? We know that nothing can be lost. Now if this energy *exists*, it must *pass* into something. "Into a productivity *in all directions*," answers the writer; and he asserts that *all creative ideas* are the result of the energy springing out of the emotion of love.

History confirms this daring conclusion. We know that at times of the greatest prosperity of art and its loftiest creations, what we may call the collateral power of love, *i.e.*, the great superfluous power which attracts the two sexes toward each other, to which the above-named author refers, always so gave a full expression of high emotions, effervescence, new ideas and daring dreams, which became the source of inspiration to human activity.

While on the other hand, in times of the decline of morals, when the emotions of love grow paler, causing a decrease of the motion of life and its attractiveness, the source of spiritual creation languishes, art decreases, literature degenerates. We are witnessing all these symptoms at present. They are being ascribed to outward causes. But this is a wrong idea. In free and well-fed Australia we see the same phenomenon.

Here we once more come to the fundamental question concerning the mode of contemplating the world: *Materialism* or *Idealism*?

The privilege of materialism, according to the opinion of the majority, consists in the *precision* of its knowledge. But even if this were so, it still remains to be seen whether the positive side of this precision is able to remove its negative side? It may be observed that the result of this precision is all the splendid culture of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. But the aim of culture is not splendor, but the *happiness* of people. And who shall dare to assert that it has brought this happiness to people?

If we let our consciousness pass through the narrow

section of exclusively materialistic interests, we shall see that positivism has in fact made our consciousness very precise; but at the same time a vast space of the universe, whence the human soul draws its inspiration, has been hidden from us; and without this inspiration the soul is doomed to death and cannot live. But that is not all; in limiting thus our consciousness, in its very precision, positivism has, at the same time, made it *incorrect*; for when the world's events are considered through a section, all proper dimensions and correlations are lost and the attention is involuntarily and exclusively directed to that small section through which man, his own *self*, his personal emotions and tastes, becomes the center of the universe. Selfishness grows, personal experiences acquire a morbid acuteness and an exaggerated significance, self love and personal sensibility attain to immeasurable dimensions, while at the same time the capacity to realize *what others feel* is atrophied. Owing to this, the living strings of mutual sympathy and trust break, the right understanding of another soul vanishes, and in their stead we see *pessimism and moral solitude*.

The surest means of contest with this mood of degeneracy—unfortunately widespread among our young people—is the *development and strengthening of the emotion of love*.

Why does a person in love grow handsomer? Because the light of Divine Love is shining through him, and in this light lies the mystery of all beauty, both earthly and heavenly. It is the same light that shines in the righteous and the saints, only that their flame burns more vividly and does not vanish as it does in the case of those who are not perfect. We need but remember Francis of Assisi, John of Damascus, and Father Zossima (in one of Dostoievsky's works). Artistic writers, who can see further than most people, describe these saints as luminous and ever lovingly open to everybody and everything. Saints are like lovers, only that they are in love with God and the beauty of His creation.

These are but different stages of love, and the higher and more disinterested it is, the more enduring and fuller is the happiness of the lover. The name of "blessed" has not been established in vain. The soul of the nation, which creates its language, recognizes the great mysteries and alludes to them in analogies.

Moralists do not at all grasp this law of inheritance from the highest source in human love. Confounding animal attraction with human love, they put a slander upon man, for as soon as he rises above the animal state *he can no longer sin against the law of his soul without a feeling of shame and heavy discontent with himself.*

DECLINE OF THE BIRTHRATE¹

In order to solve, or, at least, to understand, a problem which in many countries is becoming acute, it will be necessary to obtain the true views of women on the question.

It is claimed by those most competent to judge that, where there is a simultaneous outbreak of a particular disease, in widely separated districts, the cause will most probably be found a common one.

In regard to the question of a declining birthrate it is well known that the uneasiness caused thereby is not confined to England alone, but is giving anxiety to statesmen in nearly all the most advanced and enlightened countries.

Here, in Australia, it has long been a matter of concern. In the state of New South Wales the falling off of births assumed such serious proportions that Mr. Carruthers, when Premier in the late Parliament, thought it necessary some three years ago to appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into the causes.

One would suppose that a problem that has manifested itself in countries so widely separated as Europe,

¹ By J. Fizzelle. *Westminster Review*. 170: 268-73. September, 1908.

America, Australia, and New Zealand, would induce observers to ask whether what is regarded as an evil, and one so widely spread, might not have, like some diseases, a common origin.

In the report of the Royal Commission already referred to, and in the public discussion that followed in the daily press, many trivial, ridiculous, and unjust reasons, were advanced for the failure of Australian women to produce offspring. But the true reasons were, in the opinion of women who have studied the question, not even remotely touched upon. This is not difficult to understand when we consider the nature of the question, and that all the members of the commission were men. This decline in birthrate began in Australia, roughly speaking, twenty-five years ago or more, and has steadily continued ever since. Within the same period education, especially of women, has made enormous strides; medical publications have greatly increased, and within the same period sick nursing has been taken up by educated and go-ahead women, most of whom are the pick of their sex. Women of all ages and almost all classes have long taken an active share in the work of those various societies that labor for philanthropy and the promotion of social morality.

Questions and aspects of life are now known and freely discussed by old and young women, which thirty years ago would have been shunned as unfit for the ears and eyes of grandmothers. These various influences have combined to open the eyes of women to life as it is. The spread of education and the eager interest of women in politics has led them to the study of the questions affecting the welfare of women and children, and to those laws bearing upon them.

The knowledge thus gained from these different sources has resulted in an evolution of woman which is neither appreciated nor understood. As a proof I may point to this decline of birth rate in all the most advanced countries of the west, politically and educationally.

There has grown up in the minds of women a deep and bitter sense of injustice from the fact that they have come to realize that one-half humanity has been held in physical and mental subjection by the other half, and that freedom, the birthright of every human being, has been withheld from them by the accident of sex.

Nature intended woman to be the complement of man; man has outraged nature by making her an appendage.

Women are now fairly acquainted with those legal enactments drawn up by men without the consent or knowledge of women, by which they have been legally subject to him, and not in any sense his equal.

He has constituted himself the legal guardian of their children, while she, the mother, has no claim whatever, and he may, if he choose, rob her of them even at the tenderest age. He has, too, set up a certain standard of morality for men, another for women. This last requires that female children shall be kept pure and innocent, that at a marriageable age they may be handed over to husbands who, nine times out of ten, have lived more or less vicious lives, and whose blood in many cases is tainted with the worst of all diseases, which they transmit to their offspring to develop in them, under those various forms known to medical science. Hence one of the chief reasons why nations are taxed to support hospitals, gaols, and asylums.

This same standard requires that after marriage the wife shall remain faithful and virtuous, while the husband may, if he choose, riot in every form of immorality without loss to his dignity, blame from his fellows, or deprivation of parental rights.

On the contrary, should the wife or daughter commit one of the least of the sins of the husband or brother, this very standard would decree *her* a social outcast, a pariah. Women now have more knowledge of the diseases peculiar to both sexes, their causes, and their effects.

A daughter, or sister, or some other female, is, perhaps, a hospital nurse, and in this new thirst for knowledge women learn much from her that even medical books do not teach. This knowledge is at the disposal of less favorably situated relatives and friends and so has spread, until mothers now consider it their duty to acquaint their daughters with facts which before were learned after marriage, or not at all.

More women now go out into the world as breadwinners, or assistant breadwinners: this has brought them into contact with all sorts and conditions of men. Their wits have grown sharper, their observation keener, and they learn more of the lives lived by men outside their homes. These and other causes have led women to regard men with less respect than formerly, and their good opinion, which it was once thought should be the aim of every woman to possess, is no longer so generally sought or valued, but is regarded with indifference, if not with contempt. The institution of marriage has come to be looked upon as a one-sided bargain. Some assert that women shirk motherhood because it deprives them of pleasures and the means to obtain them. This is, no doubt, true in a few instances, but these are too infrequent to be taken into account.

Almost the whole question hinges on the fact that there is, the world over, one standard of morality for men, another for women, by which they and their children become the helpless sufferers. I trust it will not be assumed that I am demanding for women a similar license, it cannot be called liberty, to that which public opinion and social complaisance accords to men. Women neither ask nor desire it; and well for humanity that it is so, for then there would be, not a decline in the birth rate of a nation, but its speedy annihilation.

When a woman marries she not only loses her identity in that of her husband, but gives her body and mind to his service, takes upon herself the pains and cares of

maternity, remains faithful by choice, no less than by social custom, swears to love and *obey* an imperfect human being like herself, who may be a libertine, a tyrant, or fool, or all three together. From the husband nothing is required but that he shall give her his name, and shall not permit her or his children to starve, if he can help it.

No matter what her abilities may be he can sink her into a mere household drudge, a mere breeder of children, with whose training and career she may have little to do; or he may batter or bruise her when the impulse seizes him.

He may keep her without money, and need not pay for her services with decent clothing even; he can deprive her of any money or property she may have acquired by her or someone else's labor (our Australian laws, in this respect, are more equitable than those of England), he can, as I have said before, rob her of her children; he may render her a physical wreck, and often does; and he can share his marital attentions with others of her sex, and suffer in no way, either public or private. If his cruelties should compel her to leave him he generally takes care that she shall not have the means to contest his right to the custody of their children; so, for the sake of these helpless creatures, she continues to live on in a bondage no better, and sometimes worse, than that of a slave.

Ignorant, untutored woman accepted the part laid down for her, not by the will of a Creator, or by the voice of her own sex, but by the power of man alone, and the result has been ages of subjection, never designed by nature, of abominable cruelties, of silent, unrecorded martyrdoms.

Women's life and honor are held to be of so mean a value that even in this progressive age a husband who batters or kills his wife, or a wretch who defiles the body and blasts the soul of a little child, receives a less punishment than he who steals his master's gold.

The church and society have thought it their duty to preach to man temperance in the use of every organ of his body but one, and that on the use or abuse of which the whole fabric of society depends, the progress and welfare of humanity. I refer to the organs of generation. Females are taught from their infancy to hide and restrain the sexual instinct until temperance in this respect becomes hereditary.

Man, on the contrary, has been taught that purity in man is unmanly and unnatural, and that chastity is but another name for effeminacy. Hence, to gratify the sexual instinct, a man will sacrifice the honor of all belonging to him, his liberty, or even life itself.

With the spread of education came the enlargement of female intelligence, and women began to question the right of one-half the world to keep the other half in subjection, and to ask themselves whether the Creator designed that the use of particular organs should forever make one human being the prey of the other, and cause nine-tenths of the misery, poverty, and crime of the world. The answer was "No." However, there appeared no remedy for an evil grown hoary with age. It was obviously useless to try to stem the tide of an appetite grown terrible by ages of unbounded license, still more useless to appeal to the consideration of husbands, or to their parental love. For did not religion itself teach female subjection, though such should mean in many cases nothing more than legalized prostitution, and did it not teach also that to bring numerous children into the world was the noblest work a woman could perform, even though she suckled them on a half-starved breast, reared them in poverty and misery, and watched them graduate in crime? Men, then, had not only the sanction of society for unbounded license abroad, but that of the church for equal license at home, and were even taught that to practice temperance in the use of the generative organs was to commit a crime not only against

humanity, but against the Divine Will, and that to consider the health of a wife, or the mental and physical welfare of unborn children, was to limit necessary population, and so make millionaires impossible. In proportion as the esteem of women for men lessened, as the result of their true conception of life, so their love and consideration for children increased, until today more attention is bestowed on the well-being of children than ever before probably in the history of the world. To this cause also, paradoxical as it may seem, may be attributed the decline in the birth rate, for women will no longer bring large families into the world to drag out a stunted and wretched existence, any more than they will continue to submit to social customs which condemn them to bear unnatural and intolerable burdens. In the midst of a long-growing discontent with things as they were, women turned eagerly to the perusal of a publication, the joint authors of which were Mrs. Annie Besant and the late Charles Bradlaugh. Here, they imagined they had discovered a means whereby those unequal burdens, under which they had for ages labored, might be made lighter. They perceived they could appeal to the self-interest of men without seeming to interfere with that which custom and religion decreed was but right and necessary, but which their awakened intelligence and roused conscience told them would become the foundation of the greater portion of the misery and criminality of the world.

Children who should have been their pride and their blessing were too often made their yoke and their curse. Women soon began to act on the advice given in the publication referred to, but not alone those classes for whose benefit it was especially given; and from then till now the birth rate of the west has slowly declined. And from such a seemingly simple source was begun a vast movement that threatens to spread from one end of the earth to the other: an evolution that may eventually

make marriage what nature undoubtedly designed it to be, the pure and perfect union of man and woman for the propagation from age to age of a more and more perfect human being. Give to the millions of the east fifty years of western education and enlightenment, and the same problem would begin to manifest itself—a decline in the birth rate. It is merely a question of time and education. As a nation's greatness does not depend on mere numbers, but on the character, intelligence, and stamina of its people, so it is to be hoped education supported by public opinion may in every country have more regard to the *kind* of offspring that women bring into the world rather than to numbers.

Little improvement in the race can be looked for while law and custom hold woman the body-slave of man, and the more enlightened the woman the lower the birth rate.

We in Australia, who have won a measure of freedom, have the power to truly elevate and sanctify the relations of men and women by demanding that education and public opinion shall teach the wisdom and necessity of equal purity, equal faithfulness, equal rights; and this not in the selfish interests of women alone, but for the happiness and progress of humanity everywhere. The future may see in every civilized country a decrease in the numbers of each family, a decrease brought about not by the use of immoral and harmful preventives, but by the equal purity of the sexes and by a wise and humane curtailment of family, which would be compensated for in a greater perfection of body and a vastly increased power of mind.

IS RACE SUICIDE POSSIBLE ?

One of the most interesting of the questions of to-day relates to the powerful influence exerted upon populations by what we might almost call negative selection—

¹ By Alexander Graham Bell, Washington, D.C. *Journal of Heredity*, 11: 339-41. November, 1920.

a selection that produces the very opposite of that expected.

For example, no inheritable peculiarity associated with lack of offspring can be made to grow and flourish in a community. In spite of all efforts it will languish, and promote the growth of its very opposite. History is full of illustrations.

After the fall of the Roman Empire there was a great religious revival among the nations. The Middle Ages saw Europe filled with monasteries and nunneries, where enormous numbers of people took the vows of celibacy, and renounced all home and family ties. Even outside of the religious houses the celibate life was everywhere held up as the ideal one to be followed by the best and purest elements of the population.

Instead of helping the church this produced the very opposite effect, and actually paved the way for the Reformation! Large masses of the people who were most attached to the church led celibate lives, and left no descendants, whereas the independently minded who were not so devoted to the church were not limited in their reproduction.

As to the more general effects it may be safely said that the worship of celibacy during several hundreds of years in the past has not tended to the improvement of humanity but the very reverse; for, where the best and noblest led celibate lives, they left no descendants behind them to inherit their virtues, whereas the worst elements of the population continued to multiply without restriction.

It is now felt that the interests of the race demanded that the best should marry and have large families; and that any restrictions upon reproduction should apply to the worst rather than to the best.

It is, of course, useless to expect that the worst would take vows of celibacy or keep them; and the realization of this has led to all sorts of impracticable

schemes to prevent or restrict their reproduction by compulsory means.

The great trouble about all these schemes, apart from their impracticability, is that they aim simply to prevent degeneration. They aim to prevent the race from going backward, but do not help it to move forward. The only hope of producing higher and better types of men and women lies in the multiplication of the better elements of the population.

There is one very promising feature about the present situation and that is that the best are readily attracted by high ideals. Give them a new ideal, and many will follow it, especially if they believe that duty points in the same direction. Convince them that the interests of the race demand that the best should increase and multiply; convince them that it is, therefore, their duty to marry, rather than lead celibate lives. Depose "celibacy" from the high and commanding position she has occupied for so many hundred years, and put "marriage" there instead as the ideal to be held up before the best and noblest of the race. Marriage, with marriage vows as sacred as the former vows of celibacy. Nature demands this in the interests of the race. For the extreme helplessness of the human infant necessitates parental care for very long periods of time—in fact from infancy to the beginning of adult life—and this involves the permanency of the marital tie on the part of the parents, especially where a number of children are produced.

At the present time considerable alarm has been expressed at the apparently growing disinclination of American women to bear children, and a cry has been raised against what people call "race suicide." Whatever the cause—it is undoubtedly the fact that in America the children of foreign-born parents are increasing at a much greater rate than the children of native-born parents—and the position is sufficiently grave for serious consideration.

The desire to avoid maternity is a characteristic associated with lack of offspring, and cannot, therefore, go on increasing indefinitely in a community. Its natural tendency is to die out through lack of offspring to inherit it, leaving the more fertile part of the community alone to propagate the race.

Reflection, therefore, leads to the somewhat startling conclusion that even wholesale abstention from children, so far from lessening the fertility of the community as a whole will eventually increase it instead. Actual race suicide will not result from such a course alone, so long as the race is left to itself to work out its own destiny.

Just consider the case of a race of people in which the women show a disinclination for motherhood, surrounded by prolific immigrant races ready to take its place, then, of course, there would be serious danger of the native race being displaced by the immigrants. The immigrants might absorb the native race instead of the native race absorbing the immigrants; but such a result would be due to the presence of the competing races and not due directly to the operation of natural causes within the race itself.

In order to appreciate this, imagine our native race to be placed upon an island protected by suitable immigration laws from competition with other races. Then it becomes obvious that the sentiment in favor of avoiding the production of offspring must necessarily diminish in process of time on account of the lack of offspring to inherit it; and that the opposite sentiment of a desire to have children will grow, and ultimately become predominant, because each succeeding generation will be composed exclusively of the descendants of the people who had children. If the desire for offspring is an inheritable characteristic, *and it certainly is*, then, of course, the next generation will inherit it from their parents to a certain extent; whereas there will be no descendants at all to inherit the characteristics of those who abstained from offspring.

We have placed the people upon an island, and protected them from interference from other races, so as to leave them to carry on their lives in their own way, as they desire.

Some of these people love little children, and desire to have children of their own. Others look upon children as nuisances, perhaps necessary evils for the continuance of the race—but why should they be bothered with them when they don't want them? Let others have them if they want them, but leave *them* alone. Well—let them have their desires.

Now does it not become at once evident that so long as any of the people desire offspring and have them, complete race suicide is impossible? Some offspring will be produced and a second generation will appear.

Suppose for example the boom against maternity reaches such proportions that 99 per cent of the population decide to have no children—and surely this is an extreme case—will the race die out? No—not immediately at all events. There will be another generation composed exclusively of the descendents of the 1 per cent who desire to have children. The whole of the next generation will be composed of their children; and there will be no descendents at all of the other 99 per cent.

This is the critical time for our islanders. Only 1 per cent of the population will have had children, and, of course, the numbers in the next generation will be so seriously reduced that immigration from outside would speedily swamp them—but we have agreed to protect them from this competition with other races, and leave them alone to work out their own destiny.

Well, let us revisit the island after the original population has passed away. We find the population now only a fraction of what it was before; and the question naturally arises: will the population continue to diminish at each successive generation until actual race suicide results?

It is not to be supposed that the sentiment against maternity will disappear in one generation. The second generation will therefore undoubtedly continue to be divided upon the question of maternity; some wishing to have children, others not; but the *proportion* desiring children will necessarily be greater, on account of heredity, than in the original population; for the whole of this second generation are descended from the 1 per cent who desired offspring, whereas the 99 per cent who did not desire them left no descendent.

There seems to be no escape from the conclusion that in this second generation more than 1 per cent of the people will desire children, and less than 99 per cent will abstain from their production. Therefore, the proportion of the second generation who will have children will be greater than in the first, and the proportion opposed to maternity will be less.

Thus in each succeeding generation the proportion who desire children and have them will increase, and the proportion avoiding maternity diminish, with the net result that each succeeding generation will be more fertile than the last. The desire to avoid maternity will die out to a great extent on account of the lack of offspring to inherit it. *The spirit of race suicide will itself commit suicide, and leave a more fertile race than before.*

The only thing that could prevent such a result would be: the admission of immigrants during the period of declining birth rate.

This indeed is the critical period in the history not only of our hypothetical islanders, but of every nation similarly situated. When, therefore, a nation reaches a stage where it finds its own birth rate declining, and immigrants with a much larger birth rate flocking into the country, the time has come for very serious consideration as to the means to be taken for self-preservation.

The United States is today in this critical position. The birth rate of America is declining; the spirit of

avoiding maternity is on the increase; and the immigrant races are increasing at a much greater rate than our own. The only hope for a truly American race lies in the restriction of immigration.

KNOWLTON PAMPHLET¹

That which no force could compel me to do, which I refused to threats of fine and prison, to separation from my children, to social ostracism, and to insults and ignominy worse to bear than death, I surrendered freely when all the struggle was over, and a great part of society and of public opinion had adopted the view that cost Mr. Bradlaugh and myself so dear. . . . I gave up Neo-Malthusianism in April, 1891, its renunciation being part of the outcome of two years instruction from Mme. H. P. Blavatsky, who showed me that however justifiable Neo-Malthusianism might be while man was regarded only as the most perfect outcome of physical evolution, it was wholly incompatible with the view of man as a spiritual being, whose material form and environment were the results of his own mental activity. Why and how I embraced Theosophy, and accepted H. P. Blavatsky as teacher, will soon be told in its proper place. Here I am concerned only with the why and how of my renunciation of the Neo-Malthusian teaching, for which I had fought so hard and suffered so much.

When I built my life on the basis of materialism I judged all actions by their effect on human happiness in this world now and in future generations, regarding man as an organism that lived on earth and there perished, with activities confined to earth and limited by physical laws. The object of life was the ultimate building-up of a physically, mentally, morally perfect man by the cumu-

¹ By Dr. Annie Besant, President, The Theosophical Society. From chapter IX, *The Knowlton Pamphlet*, in her *Autobiography*, p. 237-44. T. Fisher Unwin, Ltd. London. 1917. Copyright. Reprinted by permission.

lative effects of heredity—mental and moral tendencies being regarded as the outcome of material conditions, to be slowly but surely evolved by rational selection and the transmission to offspring of qualities carefully acquired by, and developed in, parents. The most characteristic note of this serious and lofty materialism had been struck by Professor W. K. Clifford in his noble article on the "Ethics of Belief."

Taking this view of human duty in regard to the rational cooperation with nature in the evolution of the human race, it became of the first importance to rescue the control of the generation of offspring from mere blind brute passion, and to transfer it to the reason and to the intelligence; to impress on parents the sacredness of the parental office, the tremendous responsibility of the exercise of the creative function. And since, further, one of the most pressing problems for solution in the older countries is that of poverty, the horrible slums and dens into which are crowded and in which are festering families of eight and ten children, whose parents are earning an uncertain 10s., 12s., 15s., and 20s. a week; since an immediate palliative is wanted, if popular risings impelled by starvation are to be avoided; since the lives of men and women of the poorer classes, and of the worst paid professional classes, are one long, heart-breaking struggle "to make both ends meet and keep respectable;" since in the middle class marriage is often avoided, or delayed till late in life, from the dread of the large family, and late marriage is followed by its shadow, the prevalence of vice and the moral and social ruin of thousands of women; for these, and many other reasons, the teaching of the duty of limiting the family within the means of subsistence is the logical outcome of materialism linked with the scientific view of evolution, and with a knowledge of the physical law, by which evolution is accelerated or retarded. Seeking to improve the physical type, scientific materialism, it seemed to me, must

forbid parentage to any but healthy married couples; it must restrict childbearing within the limits consistent with the thorough health and physical well-being of the mother; it must impose it as a duty never to bring children into the world unless the conditions for their fair nurture and development are present. Regarding it as hopeless, as well as mischievous, to preach asceticism, and looking on the conjunction of nominal celibacy with widespread prostitution as inevitable, from the constitution of human nature, scientific materialism—quite rationally and logically—advises deliberate restriction of the production of offspring, while sanctioning the exercise of the sexual instinct within the limits imposed by temperance, the highest physical and mental efficiency, the good order and dignity of society, and the self-respect of the individual.

In all this there is nothing which for one moment implies approval of licentiousness, profligacy, unbridled self-indulgence. On the contrary, it is a well-considered and intellectually-defensible scheme of human evolution, regarding all natural instincts as matters for regulation, not for destruction, and seeking to develop the perfectly healthy and well-balanced physical body as the necessary basis for the healthy and well-balanced mind. If the premises of materialism be true, there is no answer to the Neo-Malthusian conclusions; for even those socialists who have bitterly opposed the promulgation of Neo-Malthusianism—regarding it as a “red herring intended to draw the attention of the proletariat away from the real cause of poverty, the monopoly of land and capital by a class”—admit that when society is built on the foundation of common property in all that is necessary for the production of wealth, the time will come for the consideration of the population question. Nor do I now see, any more than I saw then, how any materialist can rationally avoid the Neo-Malthusian position. For if man be the outcome of purely physical causes, it is with these that we must deal in guiding his future evolution.

If he be related but to terrestrial existence, he is but the loftiest organism of earth; and, failing to see his past and his future, how should my eyes not have been then blinded to the deep-lying causes of his present woe? I brought a material cure to a disease which appeared to me to be of material origin; but how when the evil came from a subtler source, and its causes lay not on the material plane? How if the remedy only set up new causes for a future evil, and, while immediately a palliative, strengthened the disease itself, and ensured its reappearance in the future? This was the view of the problem set before me by H. P. Blavatsky when she unrolled the story of man, told of his origin and his destiny, showed me the forces that went to the making of man, and the true relation between his past, his present, and his future.

For what is man in the light of Theosophy? He is a spiritual intelligence, eternal and uncreate, treading a vast cycle of human experience, born and reborn on earth millenium after millenium, evolving slowly into the ideal man. He is not the product of matter, and the forms of matter with which he clothes himself are of his own making. For the intelligence and will of man are creative forces—not creative *ex nihilo*, but creative as is the brain of the painter—and these forces are exercised by man in every act of thought. Thus he is ever creating round him thought forms, moulding subtlest matter into shape by these energies, forms which persist as tangible realities when the body of the thinker has long gone back to earth and air and water. When the time for rebirth into this earth-life comes for the soul these thought-forms, its own progeny, help to form the tenuous model into which the molecules of physical matter are builded for the making of the body, and matter is thus moulded for the new body in which the soul is to dwell, on the lines laid down by the intelligent and volitional life of the previous, or of many previous, incarnations. So does each man create for himself in verity the form

wherein he functions, and what he is in his present is the inevitable outcome of his own creative energies in his past. Applying this to the Neo-Malthusian theory, we see in sexual love not only a passion which man has in common with the brute, and which forms, at the present stage of evolution, a necessary part of human nature, but an animal passion that may be trained and purified into a human emotion, which may be used as one of the levers in human progress, one of the factors in human growth. But, instead of this, man in the past has made his intellect the servant of his passions; the abnormal development of the sexual instinct in man—in whom it is far greater and more continuous than in any brute—is due to the mingling with it of the intellectual element, all sexual thoughts, desires, and imaginations having created thought-forms, which have been wrought into the human race, giving rise to a continual demand, far beyond nature, and in marked contrast with the temperance of normal animal life. Hence it has become one of the most fruitful sources of human misery and human degradation, and the satisfaction of its imperious cravings in civilized countries lies at the root of our worst social evils. This excessive development has to be fought against, and the instinct reduced within natural limits, and this will certainly never be done by easy-going self-indulgence within the marital relation any more than by self-indulgence outside it. By none other road than that of self-control and self-denial can men and women now set going the causes which will build for them brains and bodies of a higher type for their future return to earth-life. They have to hold this instinct in complete control, to transmute it from passion into tender and self-denying affection, to develop the intellectual at the expense of the animal, and thus to raise the whole man to the human stage, in which every intellectual and physical capacity shall subserve the purposes of the soul. From all this it follows that Theos-

ophists should sound the note of self-restraint within marriage, and the gradual—for with the mass it cannot be sudden—restriction of the sexual relation to the perpetuation of the race.

Such was the bearing of the Theosophical teaching on Neo-Malthusianism, as laid before me by H. P. Blavatsky, and when I urged, out of my bitter knowledge of the miseries endured by the poor, that it surely might, for a time at least, be recommended as a palliative, as a defense in the hands of a woman against intolerable oppression and enforced suffering, she bade me look beyond the moment, and see how the suffering must come back and back with every generation, unless we sought to remove the roots of wrong. "I do not judge a woman," she said, "who has resort to such means of defense in the midst of circumstances so evil, and whose ignorance of the real causes of all this misery is her excuse for snatching at any relief. But it is not for you, an Occultist, to continue to teach a method which you know must tend to the perpetuation of the sorrow." I felt that she was right, and though I shrank from the decision—for my heart somewhat failed me at withdrawing from the knowledge of the poor, so far as I could, a temporary palliative of evils which too often wreck their lives and bring many to an early grave, worn old before even middle age has touched them—yet the decision was made. I refused to reprint the *Law of Population*, or to sell the copyright, giving pain, as I sadly knew, to all the brave and loyal friends who had so generously stood by me in that long and bitter struggle, and who saw the results of victory thrown away on grounds to them inadequate and mistaken. Will it always be, I wonder, in man's climbing upward, that every step must be set on his own heart, and on the hearts of those he loves?

ASPECTS OF BIRTH CONTROL¹

The demand that has been made of late from certain quarters that the teaching of methods of preventing conception commonly spoken of as birth control, shall be carried out at publicly supported institutions is now the subject of much controversial discussion, and this discussion unhappily tends to become very bitter. This is largely because the controversy has only recently come into the open and has only done so now very imperfectly; with the unfortunate result that enthusiasts on one side and the other, who are usually extremely well-meaning people who have been brought into sharp contact with the question on one of its many sides—political, industrial, social, religious, or medical—are insufficiently informed of the reactions which are probable in other directions than those in which they have expert knowledge. Since there is no matter which will so powerfully affect the future well-being of the nation, it is high time that we should at least know what we are doing when we ask the state to interfere in one direction or another—to promote or oppose this teaching.

This article is an attempt to state the points at issue and the arguments on both sides, but it is necessarily very slight. The writer has no convictions either way, in spite of twenty years' study: on one point only—a medical one, chiefly—has she reached anything like certainty. It is that women do pay a heavy price, in health and well being, for the artificial limitation of families. But there are, undoubtedly, considerations on the other side, and whether these advantages to themselves, to their husbands, or to the children, may not be worth that price is a question that to this writer remains a question.

It is obvious to everyone that much hardship and

¹ By Ethel Bentham. *Socialist Review*. 24: 101-8. October, 1924.

even disease arises from overlarge families where there is insufficient means for their support. That where housing is cramped and no conveniences exist, and a woman's life is one unbroken round of toil in sordid surroundings, that her children, and especially the later ones, tend to be of poor physique. That where the conditions of her life are such that she cannot nurse her children, as in times of unemployment, like the present, the pregnancies will often follow one another too rapidly to allow of their being healthy. And that when a woman has two children, one of a month and one fifteen months, for instance, she is a very capable person indeed if she can give both adequate tendance. It is also clear that where there is a growing family before any come to a working age there is often a time of great hardship to parents and children alike and that it needs very good parents not to lose control, with deplorable results, which come to light in hospitals, police courts, and asylums. One may grant all this and much more and yet be uncertain whether, in escaping this Scylla, one may not run upon a Charybdis equally dangerous. There are few short cuts to Paradise.

The one effect of this teaching of which we can make certain is a progressive lowering of the birth rate. Two probable results will be a higher average age of parents when their first child is born, and a proportionately larger increase in the less well situated part of the population. The lessened birth rate will, unless immigration prevents it, in time mean a declining population.

This is the end expressly desired by one section of the advocates of birth control. This section holds that the country is over-crowded and cannot produce its own food supply; that we cannot expect to be able indefinitely to buy our food in return for our manufactures, since the same process of increase is going on all over the world, and that, therefore, in default of due pre-

cautions, the necessary thinning down of the population will be affected by war, pestilence or famine.

Their opponents say that productivity must diminish, *pari passu* (or nearly so), with the diminution of population; that the possibilities of the world food production are nowhere near an end; that even in England better organization, elimination of waste, and the utilization of resources in a scientific manner could produce incalculably more; that the main cause of the great war was the nervousness of a decadent nation with a falling population face to face with a vigorous and increasing one; that the need for production in a falling population will always encourage the immigration of aliens, not only of comparatively like races as Scandinavians, Swiss or Germans, here and in France before the war, but quite certainly of colored races with different standards of life and all the problems that must then arise. That, therefore, we should devote ourselves to securing reorganization and redistribution, education, and a higher standard of life nationally and internationally.

On the one hand it is pointed out that unemployment and social hardship coincide with a high birth rate and over-population; the other side questions the connection between these two facts, and states that unemployment comes to all industrial communities in cycles and will continue to do so (whatever the density of population) so long as the control of means of production is artificially restricted to a few hands, and points out that the worst periods of unemployment have been after wars when a large reduction of population had taken place.

It is said that unemployment is unknown in France and the deduction is made that the falling population is the reason. The opponents say that this is only relatively true, and suggest that a better explanation, in so far as it is true, is the fact that France is an

agricultural country with a land-owning peasantry and exploits more completely than we do its national resources. The arguments on both sides are only indicated, but it cannot be pretended that either set of opponents have conclusively proved their case.

Another set of people support birth control on the ground that it would produce a fitter race. They claim that the children born will reach a higher standard if restriction is practised and people become parents only after due thought and preparation and the accumulation of sufficient means to give such children as they have greater advantages in life. They point out, what is indeed obvious, that too frequent pregnancies in poor circumstances usually mean delicate children, that women's lives are thereby rendered very difficult, that great damages often done by provoked abortions (which is the method of limitation most commonly practised by the poor), that syphilitic and defective children are costly to the state in every way, and that it is desirable to discourage the propagation of such stocks. They believe that prostitution will be lessened and venereal disease will become less prevalent by reason of the earlier marriages which will take place when full knowledge of preventive measures enables young people to marry in the security that there will be no family till they want one, and older men, in the same assurance, have less temptation to indulge outside marriage. They claim that the well-to-do woman has knowledge that safeguards her health and that it is an injustice that the poor woman, to whom it is even more important, should not have it also.

This is the view that, I believe, most young doctors—especially women—take in their earlier years when the terrible facts of life first confront them. Restriction seems such a simple way out. But later experience raises doubts, and the road is not so straight as it seemed.

The better race is the one important thing to secure, and if it could be established that the influence of restriction would be in its direction, all other considerations and objections must give way and means would have to be found not only of teaching the means, but of enforcing the practice of limitation. But many thoughtful observers ask, Is it so certain that a fitter people will result and that we shall have quality instead of quantity? These think that the purely personal and individual results are not likely to be advantageous, and they claim some experience to back that opinion, though statistical evidence is not easy to give.

A much larger indulgence in sexual matters, both in and out of marriage, is almost certain when the restraint of possible consequences is removed. However much, in theory, clinics may restrict teaching to "suitable married women," in fact the knowledge is already widespread. Much of the ill-health and exhaustion of women is due to this excess, possibly, they claim, as much as to pregnancies. Men also suffer from this cause. Early marriage, even though it might conceivably lessen promiscuous intercourse and venereal disease, has disadvantages. Certainly the children of young and immature persons are not "well-born," and even if children are deferred, youthful marriages are often ill-assorted, and in any case tend to age the partners unduly early. Also early marriage, whether advantageous or not, is less likely to take place when there is comparative safety from the embarrassing consequences of premature indulgence. And, in or out of marriage, those who have indulged too early do not make the best parents.

It has been remarked by some doctors that in cases where prevention has been tried for any length of time, sterility appears to result. Clearly, reliable evidence on this point would be extremely difficult to obtain, but there is a strong impression to this effect on many

minds. For many years past it has been supposed by some that there was a connection between nervous irritability and instability in women and the practice of contraception. This has been especially noticeable since the war, and it is an illustration of the great difficulties of this inquiry. Is the nervousness due to contraception or is it the nervous and unstable who practice it? And if the former, why and how? It is suggested that the use of these methods involves much anxiety and worry to a woman, since no method is invariably successful and all are troublesome, and, therefore, her mind is concentrated too much on the matter. It is also suggested that the necessary frequent manipulation may set up an irritable condition of the organs and be conducive to malignant disease. This is a possibility, but again there is at present no exact evidence on the point.

It is also said by many that far too much stress is laid on the disastrous effects of repeated pregnancies and far too little on the influence of the circumstances in which they occur. If, for instance, a woman lives in a dark, ill-ventilated tenement, exposed to fumes from leaky gas fittings and poisonous dustbins, with the continual care of even one child from one twenty-four hour day to another, she is likely to age early, pregnancies or no pregnancies.

Nor, many think, would there be much diminution in the number of births of tubercular, syphilitic or deficient children. Conscientious parents who are aware of these taints do not have many children. Reckless ones would be reckless still. So though this knowledge might be in a proportion of cases a defence to a wife who knew, the net result would be small.

For these reasons many people do not think it probable that the standard of mental or physical health of parents would be improved, and, therefore, there would be no reason to expect better children to be born. Whether the political and industrial consequences of a

sparser population would enable them to be better brought up is, as we have said, an entirely different aspect of the question on which there is also great divergence of authorities.

Authorities differ, too, as to the effects upon the prevalence of venereal disease. Many hold that the general loosening of restraint would conterbalance any gain that might ensue from possible earlier marriage, while earlier marriage would increase divorce and render family life less, rather than more, stable.

Two other considerations are also urged. One is that there is no evidence that large families born and reared in good circumstances are of less good physique or mentality than children of restricted or small families; on the contrary they are often markedly healthy and successful in life, probably because they have to learn the useful quality of give-and-take early. It is also said that the earliest children are rarely the best of a family, but rather those born when the parents are more mature and more experienced in management. Nor does a large family necessarily exhaust the mother. Everyone can call to mind examples of hale and hearty old ladies with six or eight sons and daughters looking half in pity and half in contempt on the one ewe lamb which is all that their feebler daughters-in-law can achieve.

The other is that these methods leave the whole responsibility and burden upon the wife and may and do expose her to a veritable white slavery. This is not always appreciated by the happily married.

Many more arguments and opinions upon either side could be given, but enough has been said to show that there is hardly an aspect of our social structure which this question does not affect vitally and no one of these aspects as to which probable consequences have been really worked out scientifically. It is usually the case that a change is in progress for half a century and then

a royal commission is appointed to decide what shall be done about it.

There is one practical difficulty in the path of those who ask for state or municipal support to the teaching of contraceptive measures. In the present state of doubt and uncertainty, while the medical profession is deeply divided on the question and at least one-half of them believe the practice to be harmful and dangerous, no municipality is in a position to make it a test question in the appointment of medical officers of health and medical officers of maternity clinics. Any attempt to do so would produce on health and maternity committees of the local authorities an embittered controversy compared to which that on religious teaching in the schools would be child's play.

That does not mean that any hindrances need be put in the way of privately but responsibly conducted institutions for the purpose of teaching and research. It is easy to see that great evils and abuses might and indeed do arise from unrestricted individual private enterprise in this connection, but where the teaching is conducted under the control of a reputable committee who are willing to publish their names and methods and derive no private benefit therefrom, it would seem to be the best hope of elucidating one important aspect of the matter, namely, the effects of systematic contraception on individual health of women and of their children. The effect on *national* health would need to be enquired into by other methods in addition, but it would be well to have some exact knowledge even on one phase of this many-sided problem. It is the method by which practically all advances have been made in England. Voluntary enthusiasts pay for their experiments, and only when a reasonable certainty has been achieved is it desirable or indeed possible for them to receive public recognition and support.

The questions, then, to which a definite answer

is required are first: Do we or do we not wish to work for a reduction of population in the British Isles?

If we do, to what extent?

Who shall fix it, employers or employed?

Can we limit the fall to this desirable point wherever it may be fixed?

If these questions on the economic and industrial side are answered in the affirmative, there remain the social and eugenist ones, though all are so interlocked that it is impossible to consider them apart.

Will the method of systematic contraception better or worsen the mental, moral and physical standards of the remaining population? Will it give us an enlightened carefully-bred community of supermen and women, bringing forth their families of one or two young gods and goddesses? Or will there be a diminishing few of these high well-born ones, struggling in a savage flood of degenerates from strata that no control methods can influence or reach? In the moral sphere, will a lesser need for foresight and self-control elevate or brutalize mankind?

Nobody knows. Or if one knows, he has not published convincing data.

This has been written in the future or conditional mood. The present indicative represents the facts better.

The limitation of families has long been practised in England, is being increasingly practised by all classes except the very poor. To them it is not the knowledge that is lacking but want of the time, money and privacy necessary to carry it out.

If one may venture a prophecy, it will continue to be practised until either the prospect of a failure of the stock brings about a reaction against it, as has now begun in France, or until the nation has so increased in wisdom and knowledge that married life can be lived in such freedom from material anxiety and such self-

restraint and comradeship as shall make it unnecessary to depart from natural laws.

FAMILY LIMITATION¹

Today, existing vice conditions are but the logical outcome of the demoniacal lie of man's necessity for the exercise of his physical creative functions. The crystallized end-products of this lie are everywhere about us, as are seen in all those hideous conditions of mankind that call for city, county, or state control: such as insanity, imbecility, truancy, criminality, arrested mental development, inefficiency and every degree of parasitism and chronic invalidism.

These classes are increasing out of all proportion to the normal classes. Moreover, twenty-five hundred children under one year of age die annually in New York state, due to causes which can be helped through family limitation. Not more than one out of one thousand of stock are expected to die before maturity, while an average of twenty-nine to one thousand of human infants die. These deaths are among the defective, the deformed, the crippled, the diseased. It is the mothers of those children who have submitted to the uncontrolled passions of the drunken, diseased, or licentious husband, who claims his superior lordship over his wife's body and soul, and is too far below the animal to give the slightest thought to his probable offspring; or, perhaps both parents are of the same type. In the former case, the wife should be protected against possible conception; in the second case, both parties should be sterilized as the only sane and economic means of preventing the propagation of their kind.

Of normal parents, the average number of children is

¹ From pamphlet by Elizabeth Hamilton-Muncie, M.D., Ph.M., Brooklyn, N. Y., physician and surgeon, author, lecturer, national lecturer World's Purity Federation, lecturer on sex hygiene New York State Board of Health, 1911 to 1913. 7p. Surgical and Gynecological Society, 1915.

four; in degenerate parents, 7.3; 80 per cent of truants, 46 per cent to 89 per cent of reformatory inmates are feeble-minded and at least two-thirds of the feeble-minded have inherited their weakness. Of this class we have at least one in every five hundred of the population. To improve the character is of first importance, but there must be soil capable of improvement and this cannot be found in diseased or imbecile brain tissue. We must, therefore, reach to the substrata and remove the causes of those conditions which make for insanity and imbecility.

Other essential considerations bearing upon birth control are the single and higher standard of morals, the education of our youth in the ethics of sex, certificate of health before marriage license, sterilization of the unfit. Such enactment would soon make birth control quite unnecessary. Birth control, however, is of paramount importance in handling the tremendous social and economic questions of the day. The law that makes it unlawful to control human conception, that makes it a penitentiary offense for a physician to tell parents how to limit the family, even though both parties are reeking with foul disease, is as illogical as to say that we should not interfere with a falling object because it is acting in accord with the common law of gravity.

The practical working of the law is that where conditions are vilest, human breeding shall be most prolific; that those least fit shall stagger under repeated pregnancies; that the race shall be replenished by ignorance and accident; that the diseased, the weak-minded, the incompetent shall fill the world with horror; that men and women shall pay for it in that travesty of human waste, a high infant mortality, in the multiplication of the unfit, in the production of hordes of unwanted souls, in the lost health of woman, in the neglect of children, in the burden of destitution, in late marriages, in the wide spread practice of abortion, in illegitimate births, in desertions and adulteries, in the thwarting and robbing

of defenseless children (most fiendish and pitiful of all), in hospitals, insane asylums and prisons.

The conclusion of the New York Committee of Fourteen, all of whom at the beginning of their splendid work were not convinced in their own minds of the possibility or advisability of equal standard of morality, at the close of their nine years' campaign in studying vice conditions, was that "so long as the erroneous belief in masculine necessity continues, progress will be slow." The report further points to the encouraging fact, that a large majority of the highest authority among medical and high class scientific organizations, and the laity in large numbers are coming to believe that chastity is equally binding upon man as upon woman.

Dr. Exner, in his excellent book, *The Physician's Answer*, gives the names of over four hundred and fifty well known physicians who assert that sexual indulgence is not necessary for man.

Dr. Prince E. Morrow, the founder of the Sanitary and Moral Prophylaxis Society of New York, says, "The experience of specialists shows that it is not the strongly sexed and most virile men who are most given to licentiousness, but those, whose sexual organs have been rendered weak and irritable by exercise, in whom, the habit of sexual indulgence has been set up, and in whom self-control has not been developed. These sexual weaklings yield to sensual impulses which the normally strong feel but repress." Controlled sex life for the control of conception is the ideal. To reach this ideal it becomes necessary to consider the child before his conception. To do this a normal parentage is required. To produce a normal parentage the abnormal must be eliminated. To eliminate the abnormal, birth control is of fundamental concern.

Birth control is of fundamental concern, because the nation is what its children are, the human family is the nation's foundation, the quality of human births is of

supreme concern, and every child has a right to be well-born. Hereditary influences propagate epilepsy, idiocy, feeble-mindedness, mental and moral deficiency, imbecility, criminality, inefficiency. We need to preserve the sturdy, stoic type of people who built up this nation. The criminal and dependent classes are increasing out of all proportion to the normal classes. A woman should be the conservator of her own body and have the right to say when she is ready to be a mother. The future generation should be better than the present. Prevention of conception is better than starvation and murder. By actual result in England, the birth rate has increased, the death rate decreased (the death rate falling from twenty-three to the thousand to fourteen to the thousand). In Holland while the government sanctioned the propaganda for control of birth, the birth rate fell from thirty-seven in a thousand to twenty-nine in a thousand; the death rate from twenty-six to twelve in a thousand. Children had better not be born than be born to illegitimacy. In England in 1876 before contraceptives were known, there were born fourteen illegitimate children to every thousand unmarried women. In 1909 there were eight to every thousand, a difference of seven to each thousand, meaning about fourteen million less babies to be thrust into this world by illegitimate parents. But I hear someone say, "Fear of results is necessary for maidenly chastity." Away with this hypocrisy. A virtue born of fear is not virtue. Such virtue is of ignorance and of prudery, and prudery is the servant of lust.

The argument is often raised that women will not have children if they need not. Every normal man and woman want a home of their own, a companion, children. Right sex teaching leads to normal emotions and desires; witness Sparta, where every couple had as many children as could be produced in health and properly trained. In our own country there is a most prosperous community which it has been my pleasure to visit. This community for years has believed and practiced conservation of

creative fluids except for procreation. In a period of seventy years there has not been a divorce, an illegitimate child, an epileptic, an imbecile, an insane one or a criminal. Here I found the happiest fellowship between husband and wife, between children and parents. I found also in the homes an average of six children. My doctor friend whom it was my privilege to visit, said, "I have very little to do in my professional work because there is so little sickness among our people. When asked if the five splendid children in her home were all planned for, she replied, "Oh yes, and we are planning for two more, close together after little Jack is four years old." And little Jack was a worth-while darling of nine months.

Controlled sexuality is not only power for efficiency and business success, but also power for human happiness and joy. In this, more than in any other self-control, comes a sense of self-mastery which gives spring to the step, fire to the eye, grip to the will and joy of life. It is the question of sexuality controlled and spiritualized, or uncontrolled and sensualized. It is furthermore a woman question. As she comes into the full realization of her emancipation that was begun nineteen hundred years ago, when asked, "Where are those, thine accusers?" and "Go and tell," she will demand purity for purity and in so doing will carry the word of life to her brothers. They will then give her just what she demands, for they do not mean to be unjust, and with her they will come to see and enjoy the better things.

CONSTRUCTIVE ASPECT OF BIRTH CONTROL ¹

For one great section of the population we need birth control and for the other birth release. Massachusetts is

¹ From article by Robert J. Sprague, Professor of Economics and Sociology, Massachusetts Agricultural College, Amherst, Mass. Read in New York City at the thirteenth annual meeting of the American Genetic Association, December 27, 1916. *Journal of Heredity*. 8: 58-62. February, 1917.

the only state that has for many decades taken birth statistics on a basis of nativity and these show that the birth rate of her foreign-born population is about three times the birth rate of her native, mostly Anglo-Saxon, people; the birth rate being fourteen per thousand and the death rate eighteen per thousand in the same native group. There are many reasons to believe that practically the same situation holds in other states among the people of the same class. Merely to sustain the population and not to increase it every married woman capable of bearing children must, as an average, bring to maturity at least three children. Of the graduates of our women's colleges only one-half ever marry and the average number of children per graduate is less than one.

Birth control among the poor is needed for themselves but birth release among the upper classes is a greater necessity, both for their own welfare and the salvation of the nation. Excessive birth control by those well able to have families sufficient for the nation's growth weakens the nation at every point, necessitates the importation of indigestible foreign elements, good people in themselves but poorly adapted to American life, weakens patriotism and brings about a mixture of races which makes confusion of morals, dearth of art and literature and conflicts between classes.

Birth control among the poor is a problem, but race suicide among the middle classes is a racial menace which threatens by its influence to defeat the highest ideals of the nation.

There ought to be reasonable birth control by all classes based upon high ideals for the nation and family, responsibility for offspring, and refinement of soul and character of the parents. The free indulgence of sexual passions, coupled with the prevention of conception by mechanical contrivances, is possibly better than no control whatever, but it deals with the matter on a low basis

of animal appetite and gross physical force. It is not control of the highest and best kind, it throws all the burden and dangers upon the wife. But there is a control possible to people of high standards which is the result of forethought, character and mutual sincerity and which gives none of the dangers and secures the noblest end of spiritual union by means of physical function.

Birth control must not stand by itself and be preached and judged as an unrelated thing: it is only one important factor in the great program of the nation's problem of population and race vitality. How is the population of America to increase in the future? The middle classes of the industrial regions are not maintaining their numbers by natural process. The birth control advocates would have the poor people restrict their families to the limits of their income and would show them how to do it. Where then shall we get the next hundred million which we are sure to have and which the nation needs and can easily provide for? Evidently from the poverty-stricken classes of the Russians, Italians, Syrians, Portuguese, Mexicans, Negroes, etc., because the western Europeans may have few emigrants to send us for years to come.

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, from the point of view of national welfare, let the increase come 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 practiced 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. These people may be themselves as good as any of us, but forever mixed together from the ends of the world, they cannot

make a nation. Nations composed of mixed races are weak in most of the things that make for national strength and progress. Lacking the unity of traditions, idealism and national spirit they are liable to have excessive individualism and turn to materialistic goals.

If in America we are to develop a national unity, a great American art and literature, a full realization of American genius for all classes and races already with us, and a respectable position of influence in the world's progress and affairs, we must have a birth rate among all classes sufficient to maintain, increase, and unify the people of the United States into one great social national body.

This nation must set up a goal of the normal American family and racial independence. It must idealize the family instead of the individual and work for its success by all forms of legal, social and economic readjustments that are necessary for the accomplishment of these ends.

If we are ever to ripen and perfect our civilization we must not depend upon the pauperized villages of Europe, the deserts of Asia and the jungles of Africa for our population. We must determine to rear our own population from our own best stock, and so organize and utilize the resources of the country that all classes may bring their families up to the high standards that are possible to us.

America was founded on great principles which the world needs to have preserved, but without a sufficient birth rate the old population will pass away and her mission to the world will not be fulfilled.

Let us have birth control, but let it be preached as a part of the nation's larger program for racial independence and high standards of life.

Nearly all great social problems spring from some fundamental weakness or non-adjustment at the base of the social system. No one of these evils can be cured

entirely without purifying the soil from which they spring, and thus affecting them all. Crime, prostitution, drunkenness, and the evils of too many and too frequent births among the poor are largely the results of ignorance and poverty. Any program which raises the intellectual and social standards of the classes affected will cure them all to a large degree.

We have three great problems on which we must work out solutions. (a) The unequal distribution of property, which I will not attempt to discuss here; (b) our system of government, which must be purified and redirected toward the interests of all the people; (c) our educational system, which has been inadequate to giving all of our young people the proper start toward earning power which they ought to have.

Raise the standards of the poor through education and economic betterment and birth control problems will practically disappear. But then we must face the larger question of sufficient race enthusiasm to maintain the normal family in all classes at high standards. Here is where I wish to offer a few suggestions as a program for encouraging and sustaining the family.

This program calls for three lines of action:

- I. Conservation of human resources already available.
 - a. Prevention of sickness by health associations and insurance.
 - b. A broad program of sanitary engineering and prevention by control of disease.
 - c. Abolition of child labor.
 - d. Gradual extermination of urban and rural slums.
 - e. Birth control.
- II. Use of government and other organized agencies for encouraging and protecting the family and enabling people of high standards to maintain such.
 - a. Control of building sites and districting of

- cities in the interest of homes and family welfare.
- b. Ownership or control of local public service utilities, water, gas, lights, etc., so that the family will not be burdened with the highest possible rates while other consumers get lower ones; and so that these utilities may be managed generally to encourage home building.
 - c. Capitalize building programs and control types of construction so that good homes are provided and the individual may not be compelled to settle for life because he needs a good house.
 - d. Plan cities, towns, and country side for the health and happiness of the family in the matter of streets, parks, playgrounds, pools, etc.
 - e. Control food distribution where it is necessary, and provide market systems.
 - f. Government ownership of railroads, which would enable us to have:
 1. Family tickets.
 2. Week-end family excursion rates.
 3. Workmen's trains.
 4. Cheaper restaurant facilities.
 5. Higher age limit for free passage of children with parents.
 - g. Tax reform.
 1. Tax the minimum home at lower rates than other property.
 2. Reduce income taxes as family increases to normal size.
 3. Reduce taxes on occasion of extraordinary necessary expenses of children.
 - h. More free vocational and useful education for boys and domestic education for girls, including dressmaking, cooking, nursing, child rearing, etc.

- i. Free medical attendance at child birth and free medical advice by district nurses.
- j. Encouragement of mothers to teach school.
- k. Social insurance with its aim to unite and encourage the family rather than the individual.

III. Eugenics, negative and constructive.

- a. Birth control to prevent the preponderance of births among the poorer classes and to raise the average quality of human life by proper protection of the mother and proper intervals between children.
- b. The sterilization of some proved degenerates and the segregation of others.
- c. The teaching of the principles of breeding and eugenics in the higher institutions of learning and the organization of eugenic societies for the study of the subject among the people.
- d. The study of genealogy and knowledge of one's ancestors and family traits. The more the normal man becomes interested in his ancestors the more likely he is to want descendants of the right kind.
- e. Instruction in parenthood, its adjustments, obligations and practical necessities.

DECLINING BIRTH RATE¹

It may or may not be a good thing that fewer children have been born to occupy vacant places, so that each has more elbow room. It may or may not be true that the quality of human life has improved *pari passu* with the decline in quantity. But, subterfuges aside, we have to recognize that the birth rate has declined and is still declining. Whether the decline has gained such momentum that it cannot be overtaken is another and

¹ By James Marchant, in his preface to *Report of National Council of Public Morals*. May, 1916. Chapman and Hall. London, 1917.

a most opportune question; but a decline which has been steady and almost persistent for thirty-seven years disposes one to the opinion that a further fall is inevitable. . . .

Some questions and suggested explanations were made. . . .

Is there a general decline in fertility among western civilized nations? Is the declining birth rate an index of physical deterioration? Or why are our families smaller than they were? The marriage rate has scarcely varied during the period under survey; the marriagable age has remained fairly constant, although later marriages are becoming the rule, especially among the professional classes, and the population increases, yet our birth rate declines. All manner of explanations of this singular phenomena come to mind—the high standard of living and greater love of pleasure, and the consequent shirking of parental responsibility; the higher education of women and their wider entrance into industrial and professional pursuits; even fear of the pains of parturition have been pressed into the argument; our alleged moral degeneration has been frequently upon the lips of preachers, while the view that the most worthy desire to give the fewer children born a better chance than the many had, in earlier days, is quoted with applause. Some biologists have come to the rescue with the statement that a lower birth rate is a sign of our advance in the scale of civilization while “over-populationists” triumphantly argue that a lower birth rate actually increases the productive capacity of the nation. Indeed the catalog of explanations is limited only by the ingenuity of the makers. But when it is finally exhausted, the one question the answer to which all must dread comes uppermost: not whether the birth rate is falling, but whether the fertility of our people is failing.”

AFFIRMATIVE DISCUSSION

WORLD CRISIS OF POPULATION ¹

Without being aware of it, civilized mankind is in a most critical situation. Its most precious contemporary achievement—the diffusion of decency of life, and comfort throughout all classes in society—is in danger of being swept away by a new deluge—this time, not of water but of babies. For at present mankind is increasing in number as in no previous period for which we have record. The watchful lookouts who pace the walls of Zion, instead of taking their ease in her courts and streets, see the approaching peril to humanity's future so near and visible that they should be pardoned if they cry the alarm with strident voices.

The number of members of the human family is supposed to be one billion seven hundred million, which is twice what it was estimated to be ninety-two years ago. Last year one of my students died at the age of ninety-two. When she was born the world had but half as many inhabitants as it has today. Think what it means, that within a single lifetime humanity has gained as many members as in all the previous thousands of centuries!

The Divine command, "Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth," was uttered to eight people who were all that remained of mankind after the flood. There are now two hundred and fifty million times as many people as there were then. How much longer is this emergency mandate to be considered as still in force?

In the five year period, 1906-1911—the growth of human numbers has been calculated to be 1 1/6 per cent

¹ By Edward Alsworth Ross, Professor of Sociology, University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wis. *Birth Control Review*. 8: 281. October, 1924.

per year, which must be many times greater than anything of the kind which has occurred hitherto in the history of our race. Had this rate of expansion prevailed steadily through previous centuries, all the human beings on the globe could have been produced from a single pair in seventeen hundred and ninety-one years, *i.e.*, Adam and Eve could have set up housekeeping as lately as the days of the Roman Emperor, Marcus Aurelius. If you take, not the contemporary rate of increase, but the rate which prevailed between 1804 and 1914, about twenty-four hundred years would suffice to produce the present population of the globe from an Adam and Eve living at the time of the Battle of Marathon.

One thing is beyond all dispute, *viz.*, that the contemporary expansion of humanity, which is due, in part to the amazing success of medical science and public hygiene in fighting off disease, and in part to the rapid agricultural exploitation of new and fertile lands in the temperate zone, cannot continue much longer. There are no more Mississippi valleys, Australias, Canadas, and Argentinas to bring under the plow; so if mankind insists on continuing the present rate of propagation, life, within the experience of individuals now living, will become so ill-nourished, harrassed, and difficult that the death rate will quickly rise in spite of the best that doctors and health officers can do.

The human family has doubled in number in ninety-two years; but at its present rate of expansion it will have doubled again within sixty years, that is, by 1983. In a hundred years, the same rate would have expanded the population of the world to three and one-sixteenth times the present population; and this is all the human beings which, according to the calculations of food and agricultural experts, could possibly be fed if every available acre on the globe were tilled and producing as much as it is capable of contributing. In two hundred years, there would be ten times the present population of the

globe, and then, even if mankind were fed by a fall of heavenly manna, they would be so crowded and would poison one another so terribly that life would hardly be worth living.

The population of England and Wales at the opening of the nineteenth century was about nine million, but by the opening of the twentieth century, it had increased to thirty-two million five hundred thousand, *i.e.*, multiplied three and one-half times in one hundred years. "Had our forefathers since the days of William the Conqueror," says Mr. Bland, "been in a position to achieve a birth rate and a death rate similar to those of England and Wales in the nineteenth century, the present population of this tight little island—without allowing for any contribution from Scotland—would be somewhere in the neighborhood of one hundred and fifty million. In line with this, is the statement made by Dean Inge before the British Birthrate Commission. "In the Middle Ages . . . the birth rate was about forty-five, and the death rate about the same. Within the last century, the death rate has been reduced from the medieval rate to fourteen; and, if the birth rate were maintained at anything like its natural level, about forty, all over the world, the population of the globe, which is now one billion seven hundred million, would in one hundred and twenty years have reached twenty-seven billion, or about ten times as great a number as the earth could probably support."

Europe is supposed to have had eighty million of inhabitants in 1700. In one hundred years this was more than doubled and in the last fifty years Europe's rate of increase has been unprecedented in history. Austin has calculated that from 1772 to 1872 the increase was at the rate of 16 per cent for each twenty year period. Since that time it has been much more rapid; practically 20 per cent in the period 1872 to 1892, and 26 per cent in the period 1892 to 1912.

Calculations made from the census statistics col-

lected by the Registrar General of England show that, in 1916, Europe had four hundred and sixty-five million people. In addition, great streams of emigrants had flowed away from Europe since 1800, and it has been computed that the descendants of these in the Americas, Africa, and Australasia number one hundred and eighty-five million. Thus it appears that Europe and its offspring outside have more than trebled in number since 1816.

Again, there has been an enormous increase in the native population of the lands to which Europeans have gone. Although, having reached the saturation point, the population of North America, Egypt and India was formerly at a standstill, the arrival of European civilization and European governments with their irrigation and public health measures have caused population to start forward at an amazing rate. The most outstanding example of the stimulating effect of European contact upon the increase of the native population is witnessed in the case of Java. In the words of Professor Willcox: "This island increased its population, the great mass of whom have no trace of European blood, from about four million in 1800 to about thirty million in 1905. It is less than one-third as large as California, contains not one great city, and yet has nearly thirteen times as many inhabitants as this state, or about one-third as many as the whole United States. This single case of increase in the aboriginal population of Java, under the influence of Europe, is enough to outweigh all known decreases in all other parts of the world several times over."

Or mark what has happened in Porto Rico. In the twenty years following the American occupation of Porto Rico its population has increased a quarter of a million, or 36 per cent, owing to the commercial expansion and industrial development following the American occupation. Governor Yaeger of Porto Rico states that the greatly enlarged opportunities for employment, instead of

raising the standard of living and increasing wages, resulted chiefly in increasing the numbers of the laborers.

Likewise there has been an extraordinary increase among independent peoples who have adopted the white man's civilization on its material side. The population of Japan, which had been nearly stationary for two hundred years, grew from thirty-three million in 1871 to fifty-four million in 1914. Japan is increasing at the rate of three-quarters of a million annually, and at her present rate, in another forty years she will be attempting to maintain a population equal to the continental United States.

On the other hand, where European civilization has not yet been deeply felt, as in China and Central Africa, or inner Arabia, or Persia, population has been stationery or has even decreased.

The recent fall in the crude birth rate of the more advanced peoples has inspired a vast deal of denunciation and jeremiad. Every thoughtful person has heard of it, but few outside statisticians and public health officers have noticed the extraordinary lowering of the death rate which has been brought about in the last forty years. Yet, in most countries, it quite neutralizes that shortage of the baby crop which has inspired so many gloomy prophecies.

Compare the fourteen European countries with worthwhile vital statistics, in respect to their records for the half-decade 1881-1885, and for the last half-decade before the war, *vis.*, 1906-1916 period, you will find that in *nine* of them, the death rate fell further than the birth rate; so that in 1910 their natural increase was *greater* than it had been a quarter of a century earlier, before forethought had given much evidence of its presence among the masses. If only the public could be made to realize that in the last quarter-century for which we have complete statistics (1881-1885 to 1906-1910) the death rate of Finland, Norway, Sweden, and Scotland

declined about a *fifth*; that of Austria, Belgium, Denmark, England and Wales, Hungary, Italy, Spain, and Switzerland, a *fourth*; that of Australia, Bulgaria and Holland, about a *third*. In 1900 the death rate in our "registration area" was 17.6 per thousand of the population. In 1921 the rate was 11.7 a reduction of third in twenty-one years.

Save our ingenuity in devising contrivances for blotting out human life, nothing in our time is so sensational as our success in vanquishing certain diseases. For example, a few years ago the deaths per hundred thousand population from the fevers, including typhoid, typhus, and malaria, were only one-seventy-third as common as the deaths from these fevers in India. There is no climatic or geographical reason for their prevalence in India and these same diseases played havoc in this country a century ago. They scourge us so little today because public authority has applied the discoveries of preventive medicine.

It is this agency that has chased from us those grizzly servitors of Azrael, bubonic plague, cholera, yellow fever and small-pox. Moreover, another four of his reapers, *viz.*, typhoid, diphtheria and croup, tuberculosis and pneumonia have had their sickles dulled.

The progress of child saving alone suffices to offset a large part of the fall of the birth rate. Peeps into the infant mortality of the less advanced peoples suggest that, right down through history, from a third to two-thirds of those born have perished in the cradle. A decade ago, a quarter of the babies born in Hungary and Russia failed to live a year. In Chile, in 1913, I found the loss to be a third, in some cities 47 per cent. Before the war, Moscow parents were losing half their infants within a twelve-month. In 1910, in the innermost province of China, an American medical missionary, with twenty years of practise, gave me his opinion that from 75 to 85 per cent of the children born in his district die before the end of the second year.

On the other hand, thanks to modern hygiene and medicine, we are saving infants with a success that our forefathers would have attributed to magic. Already there are more than a dozen peoples that lose less than a tenth of their children in the first year of life. Our country is not high up in this class but, nevertheless, there are twenty-five American cities which save nineteen babies out of twenty. In New Zealand there are good-sized cities that lose in the first year only one infant in twenty-seven.

That human life should be preserved with such success is an utterly new thing in the experience of humanity. In all the life of our race, extending over a thousand centuries and more, the like of this has never been known. It behooves us to adapt our behavior to it as we adapt our behavior to artificial light or power machinery or the automobile. If people are to die only a third or fourth as fast as they used to die, it is plain that it will never do for them to be born as fast as ever, so we have before us an endless vista of restriction of the size of families. We must leave unused an increasing portion of that fertility which became established in our species long ago, in order to meet a rate of wastage which no longer presents itself in civilized life. The more advanced peoples really do not dare use more than half their natural fertility and we shall soon see the time where they will not dare use more than a third of it.

As it is, we are headed straight for a world saturation which will make toil, poverty, anxiety, and low expectation of life the portion of the masses in all countries. It was some job during the war for the allies to feed a portion of the Belgians. Well as things are now, food for two new Belgiums must be found every year. In the words of Professor East, "The tillers of the soil must prepare, plant, cultivate and harvest each year nearly forty million acres more than they did the year before." The end of rapid expansion is in sight. Within

a life time, we shall arrive at a nearly stationary state of population. Shall the equilibrium between births and deaths be struck by adjusting the birth rate to the death rate of ten per thousand per annum, which we may look for before very long; or shall it be struck by allowing the growth of crowding, over-work, and under-feeding to raise the mortality to twenty-four per thousand per annum, which is the present birth rate? The answer to this depends on whether we shall strike the stationary state about the time we have a population of one hundred and fifty million or about the time forty years later when we shall have two hundred million.

I doubt very much if Americans generally, will ever consent to endure the wretched life which the Chinese masses have brought upon themselves by over-multiplication. Before descending into such a vale of wretchedness, curtailment of the size of the family will certainly become a general practise, but shall such curtailment be postponed until the pressure of numbers shall have wiped out much of the ease and comfort which the exploitation of a virgin continent has spread among us, or shall it be adopted in time to prevent a decline in the American standard of life?

The arrival of family limitation and the unchecked dissemination of knowledge of the means of such limitation are as certain to come as anything in the world. If eventually, why not now?

POPULATION RESTRICTIONS DEMANDED¹

There can be but one conclusion. The preservation of all that modern life holds most dear demands the restriction of the population. To some, the control of instinct which this involves will seem unmoral; but have not our great moral teachers always told us

¹ From *Minnesota Alumni Weekly*.

that license to instinct uncontrolled is degrading to the moral life of man? Did not someone say, "He that ruleth himself is greater than he that taketh a city?" How is human happiness to be secured? Is it attained in comfortable, well-established homes, or in homes where father, mother, and children are forced by the competition of the birth rate into the grinding wheels of industry? Does civilization advance when childhood is free to laugh and play and learn, or when children are so many and so cheap that economic necessity forces them into the factories and mills? Is right, true motherhood the bringing forth of a few children to whom life can be a blessing, or the machinelike production of a dozen human souls which make her motherhood a slavery? Which is immoral? The untrammelled production of millions to whom life can have no meaning, or a merciful determination that the highest power of man shall not be used to this result?

Plato said of his ideal state that it would reckon what its number should be, and keep within the number. The nations of tomorrow, if progress is to come, must do the same. Let nations examine their resources and their industries, to see how much of life their organization will support, not the undernourished life of human scrubs, but life that can be enjoyed abundantly and to the full. Then let them distribute the knowledge of population control to those who need it—to the poor, whose motherhood is slavery, whose life a brutal mockery—and not confine it by law to those whose use of it can only destroy the intelligence so sadly needed by society.

Man is like a sower, and the earth, a field. Let man not imitate the untaught sower, who sowed too much seed upon his field, and when the harvest came, found each stalk choked and stunted. Let him rather be the intelligent sower, who sows for no greater crop than nature can yield, and whose intelligence and faith

find their reward in the reaping of a full, rich crop of ripe and healthy grain.

CASE FOR BIRTH CONTROL¹

Everywhere we look, we see poverty and large families going hand in hand. We see hordes of children whose parents cannot feed, clothe or educate them, even one-half of the number born to them. We see sick, harassed, broken mothers whose health and nerves cannot bear the strain of further child-bearing. We see fathers growing despondent and desperate, because their labor cannot bring the necessary wage to keep their growing families. We see that those parents who are least fit to reproduce the race are having the largest number of children; while people of wealth, leisure and education are having small families.

It is generally conceded by sociologists and scientists that a nation cannot go on indefinitely multiplying without eventually reaching the point where population presses upon means of subsistence. While in this country there is perhaps no need for immediate alarm on this account, there are many other reasons for demanding birth control. At present, for the poor mother, there is only one alternative for the necessity of bearing children year after year, regardless of her health, of the welfare of the children she already has, and of the income of the family. This alternative is abortion, which is so common as to be almost universal, especially where there are rigid laws against imparting information for the prevention of conception. It has been estimated that there are about one million abortions in the United States each year.

To force poor mothers to resort to this dangerous and health-destroying method of curtailing their families

¹ By Margaret Sanger, president of the American Birth Control League. *Woman Citizen*, n.s. 8: 17. February 23, 1924.

is cruel, wicked and heartless, and it is often the mothers who care most about the welfare of their children, who are willing to undergo any pain or risk to prevent the coming of infants for whom they cannot properly care.

There are definite reasons when and why parents should not have children, which will be conceded by most thoughtful people.

First.—Children should not be born when either parent has an inheritable disease, such as insanity, feeble-mindedness, epilepsy or syphilis.

Second.—When the mother is suffering from tuberculosis, kidney disease, heart disease or pelvic deformity.

Third.—When either parent has gonorrhoea. This disease in the mother is the cause of 90 per cent of blindness in newborn babies.

Fourth.—When children already born are not normal, even though both parents are in good physical and mental condition.

Fifth.—Not until the woman is twenty-three years old and the man twenty-five.

Sixth.—Not until the previous baby is at least three years old. This gives a year to recover from the physical ordeal of the birth of the baby, a year to rest, be normal and enjoy her motherhood, and another year to prepare for the coming of the next.

We want mothers to be fit. We want them to conceive in joy and gladness. We want them to carry their babies during the nine months in a sound and healthy body and with a happy, joyous, hopeful mind. It is almost impossible to imagine the suffering caused to women, the mental agony they endure, when their days and nights are haunted by the fear of undesired pregnancy.

Seventh.—Children should not be born to parents

whose economic circumstances do not guarantee enough to provide the children with the necessities of life.

A couple who can take care of two children and bring them up decently in health and comfort, give them an education and start them fairly in life, do more for their country and mankind than the couple who recklessly reproduce ten or twelve children, some of them to die in infancy, others to survive but to enter the mill or factory at an early age, and all to sink to that level of degradation where charity, either state or private, is necessary to keep them alive. The man who cannot support three children should not have ten, notwithstanding all the pleas of the militarists for numbers.

Eighth.—A woman should not bear children when exhausted from labor. This applies especially to women who marry after spending several years in the industrial or commercial life. Conception should not take place until she is in good health and has overcome her fatigue.

Ninth.—Not for two years after marriage should a couple undertake the great responsibility of becoming parents. Thousands of young people enter marriage without the faintest idea of what marriage involves. They do not know its spiritual responsibilities. If children are born quickly and plentifully, people consider that the marriage is justified. I claim that this is barbaric and wrong. It is wrong for the wife, for the man, for the children.

It is impossible for two young people to really know each other until they have lived together in marriage. After the closeness and intimacy of that relation there often comes to the woman a rude awakening; the devoted lover becomes careless and dissatisfied. If she becomes pregnant immediately she becomes physically disturbed, nervous and irritable. The girl has changed, and the boy who knew her as a happy smiling sweetheart finds her disagreeable and disgruntled.

Of course, thousands of people learn to adjust themselves. Nevertheless, I maintain that young people should marry early and wait at least two years to adjust their own lives, to play and read together and to build up a cultural and spiritual friendship. Then will come the intense desire to call into being a little child to share their love and happiness. When children are conceived in love and born into an atmosphere of happiness, then will parenthood be a glorious privilege, and the children will grow to resemble gods. This can only be obtained through the knowledge and practice of birth control.

BIRTH CONTROL: ITS INCALCULABLE BENEFITS¹

1. WHAT IS BIRTH CONTROL? In one brief sentence, birth control means controlling the size of the family. It means regulating the number of children and the time of their arrival by preventing undesirable conception. It means conscious, deliberate and desired instead of accidental, haphazard and undesired parenthood. It does not presume to prescribe the number of children. It does not say one, two, or three, it simply gives the parents the desired knowledge, believing that they are the best judges of how many children they will have and when they will have them. What is there terrible in this proposition?

It most emphatically does not mean abortion. The most eminent birth control advocates, as for instance the Drysdales, Havelock Ellis, Professor Grotjahn—and the writer, are emphatically opposed to abortion. We recognize that abortion is occasionally justifiable, as in cases

¹ By Dr. William J. Robinson, New York. From address delivered before the Hartford, Conn., Get-Together Club, on December 18, 1916, in debate with Rev. Richard H. Tierney, editor of *America*, the National Catholic Weekly. In Drysdale, C. V. and others. *Small or Large Families*. p. 97-157. Critic and Guide Company. New York. 1917. Copyright. Reprinted by permission.

of rape, or in the unmarried. But as a general thing we consider abortion a great evil, an evil to be avoided and to be discouraged.

But, we are told, birth control means race suicide. We are accused of desiring to empty the cradles, of eventually leading the race to decay and destruction. Nothing is further from the truth. Birth control and race suicide are not synonymous terms, as our opponents would make you believe—they are, if anything, antonyms. There is not a birth control advocate who advises no children. All birth control advocates advise at least two or three children and most of the birth control advocates that I know personally are parents of two, three, four or more children. We are decidedly in favor of a slow and gradual increase in the population, but what we are opposed to is a rapid increase, for we have shown that a rapid increase in the population is pernicious to both the individual family and the race as a whole. France has been using birth control methods longer than any other nation in the world, namely, from the time of the French Revolution—one hundred and twenty-eight years now. And in spite of the horrible Napoleonic and other wars, which have done the French nation irreparable damage, France is very far from being a dying or decaying nation, as she has abundantly proven during the present cataclysm. In spite of the most intensive birth control methods, the population of France has not been diminishing in numbers, but has been gradually and slowly increasing. Does this mean race suicide? Holland has been using birth control measures freely and officially for thirty-five years. The result is that the Dutch nation has increased in numbers, has improved wonderfully in physique and in material prosperity. The same is true of Australia. No, once for all, birth control does not spell race suicide, and it is the nations that are using rational birth control that are materially and spiritually above the nations that are given to reckless and unlimited rabbiting.

2. The second objection raised by our opponents is that birth control is immoral. To discuss this point now would befog the issue from its very start, for we must first reach an agreement as to what is moral and what is immoral. What you consider immoral may be highly moral to us, and vice versa. And I can only discuss this point if we reach a substantial agreement as to the meanings of these two words. In my opinion everything that contributes to the physical, mental and psychic development of the individual and to the progress, freedom and enlightenment of the race is moral. Everything that has the contrary effect, everything that stunts the physical, mental and psychic growth of the individual, hinders the development of the race, everything that causes individual and racial unhappiness, everything that causes unnecessary suffering, illness and death, is immoral. If you agree with these definitions, then we need discuss this point no further, because by the time I am through you will inevitably have reached the conclusion that birth control is one of the most moral movements of modern times, that those who advocate birth control are actuated by the highest moral motives, while those who oppose birth control are in the highest degree immoral, whether they know it or not, and are the bitterest enemies of the human race.

3. The third objection is that birth control is injurious, that the means of prevention of conception injure the man and woman, particularly the woman. Here I believe I can speak with authority, authority exceeded by none, and equalled by few. Putting for the moment false modesty aside, I will say that for many years I have been in touch directly or indirectly with thousands of families who have been using the modern means of prevention of conception, and that not in a single solitary instance have I known of a case of injury, however so slight, traceable to their use. Quite the contrary. I have seen many women suffering from cervical catarrh,

leucorrhœa, vaginitis, etc., who were incidentally cured of these affections through the use of contraceptives. So that not only did their general health improve, due to the respite from pregnancy and lactation, but their local condition was relieved also. Any physician who is familiar with the modern methods of contraception will admit, if he is honest, that no injury ever *can* result from their use. I have for many years challenged our general practitioners, obstetricians, and gynecologists to point out a single authenticated case in which injury resulted from the use of proper contraceptive measures—but nobody has yet come forward. And nobody will, because there are no such cases. I, therefore, say with all the emphasis of which I am capable, that the statement that birth control is injurious is false and without any foundation whatever.

The use of contraceptives is also highly beneficial in preventing marital venereal disease, in preventing infection of the wife; but this is a point on which I will touch later on.

How did the idea about the injuriousness of contraceptives arise? Whence the fulminations and the attempts to frighten the people by the spectres of injury by such men as Bergeret, Gardner, Beale, etc.? Leaving aside the deliberate desire to mislead, for those people were fanatical on the subject of a diminished birth rate and believed that the end justified the means, the terrors of birth control, pictured by our opponents of half a century or quarter of a century ago, find an explanation in the fact that they were not aware of our modern means of prevention, that they confused abortion with contraception, and that the method of contraception which they fulminated against is the very method to which we are opposed most emphatically. And I wish to emphasize once for all that if anybody, doctor or layman, speaks to you of the *injuriousness* of contraceptive measures, you may tell him that he is either

deliberately making misstatements, or that he does not know what he is talking about.

But even if it were true that contraceptives prove injurious in isolated instances, the injury is so infinitely less than the injury caused by too frequent childbearing and nursing, that it is not worth considering.

4. The fourth objection is that the use of contraceptive measures leads to sterility, that people who have used contraceptive measures for several years find that when they do want a child they are unable to have one. This statement is just as false as is the statement about the injuriousness of contraception. And it also arises from the deplorable confusion which has existed and still exists among people who should know better, the lamentable error of confounding birth control with abortion. It is perfectly true that women who have had a number of abortions performed upon themselves may become sterile. This sterility is caused by the slight inflammation and the adhesions which even the skilfully performed abortions are apt to leave behind them. But *abortion has nothing whatever to do with the prevention of conception*, and we know of hundreds of women who are constantly using preventive measures, and who when they want to have a child discontinue their use, and they then become promptly pregnant. I do not know of a single case in which the use of modern contraceptives has led to sterility. On the contrary, by relieving congestion, by keeping the genital tract clean and healthy, it favors fertility. And it is for this reason that users of contraceptives usually become so promptly impregnated on their discontinuance.

5. IT IS UNNATURAL. The people who make this objection have only a vague idea what they mean by it, but as far as we can make out they mean that in employing birth control measures we are doing something that is against nature, something that the animals don't do and that the savages don't do. But, My Friends, our

entire civilization is unnatural. And if we all were perfectly natural we would still be hanging down from tree tops or skulking in terror in subterranean caves. When man instead of walking on all fours stood upright and looked at the firmament he threw the first challenge at nature. It was an unnatural thing to do. And he has been defying nature and doing unnatural things ever since. And it is the degree of our victorious defiance of nature that measures the extent of our progress. The savages of Africa and Australasia are nearer to nature and do fewer unnatural things than we do. Would you like to change with them? Every advance of man signifies a victory over nature. And the level of any civilization is measured by our ability to fight, to go against, to conquer and to control nature.

I venture to say that this evening you have committed a dozen unnatural acts. From the moment we get up until we go to bed we are doing unnatural things. In cooking your food you are going against nature—you are doing something unnatural. Because nature does not have cooked food and the animals do not cook their food. In using a toothbrush you are doing something unnatural. And in wearing clothes you are going against nature. When you cut out a cancer, you are doing something unnatural.

6. IT WOULD LEAD TO IMMORALITY. This is considered by our opponents one of the most formidable arguments against birth control. Of course, by immorality is meant sexual immorality, for the words moral and immoral have lost their real meaning and are used now almost exclusively in the sexual sense. He or she who leads a chaste or celibate life, even though worthless in every other respect, is considered moral. While he or she who indulges in illicit sex relations, even though rendering most valuable services to society, is considered immoral.

Our opponents are afraid that the spread of contraceptive information would result in a fearful increase of sexual immorality. They believe that all women, or the greater part of them, remain chaste only for fear of preg-

nancy, and that with contraceptive knowledge common property they would rush into an orgy of debauchery. In my reply to this objection I could limit myself to the statement that such a view is a slander on womanhood, or I could say with good Oliver Goldsmith that virtue that constantly needs watching is scarcely worth the sentinel. But the physician who has a large experience with sexual disorders and venereal diseases has a more valid answer than that. Unfortunately this subject cannot be discussed with full freedom before a mixed audience or in print. You will, therefore, just have to take my word for it that this objection is worthless. Those women who have thrown off the shackles of religious training and conventional morality indulge even without contraceptives, only they indulge in perverse practices, which makes pregnancy unlikely or impossible. While those women who do get caught have to pay tribute to the professional abortionist. The only difference would be that with the spread of contraceptive knowledge some women would exchange their perverse practices for normal sex relations, which in the eyes of every hygienist and every true moralist would be a gain and not a loss.

7. IT WOULD LEAD TO EXCESS IN MARITAL LIFE. This is another one of the fears of the opponents of birth control. This fear has been expressed over and over again. A certain Dr. Walsh of New York likes to repeat that birth control reminds him of the gluttony of the Romans, who after they had filled their stomachs would take an emetic so that they might repeat the process of stuffing themselves. This analogy is a very unfortunate one, because quite the contrary is true. Those who use birth control measures are bound to be careful and moderate in their relations. The use of contraceptive measures always involves some care, some little trouble and expense. It is the man who impregnates his wife every year or two who can indulge excessively, for *after impregnation has taken place there is no further fear of consequences*, and so there is generally immoderate indulgence both during pregnancy and during lactation.

8. **THE WAGES OBJECTION.** Some fear that birth control would diminish wages. They reason that the standard of wages is determined by the lowest amount the workingman can get along with, and if the man without children can live on less than the man with children, the tendency will be to a reduction of standard of wages. Quite the contrary is true. It is the man who has many children to support who cannot afford to be particular, and accepts whatever he gets. It is from the single people and the fathers of few children that the self-respecting, class-conscious workingmen are recruited.

9. **LEADS TO DIVORCE.** The opponents of birth control claim that lack of children is a frequent cause of divorce. It is true that where there are no children divorce becomes a simpler matter, and that children often act as a bond between the parents. But a good many more divorces are the direct result of too *many* children, with their resultant irritation, quarrels and economic misery, than are the result of lack of children. Many desertions among the poor are due directly to too many children. It is too difficult to feed them all, and the weak-kneed fathers lose courage and run away. Also the lack of proper contraceptive knowledge leads to the use of improper methods or to abstinence, which as known are apt to lead to neurasthenia, which in its turn is a frequent cause of divorce.

10. Another objection, one which I do not like to touch, but which for completeness sake I must, is that birth control is opposed to religion and the Bible. I do not presume to pose as an authority on dogmatic religion and the Bible. I yield this position to my opponent, but I do know that there is absolutely nothing, either in the Old or the New Testament, against the use of contraceptive measures, and I challenge my opponent to prove that I am wrong by citing any passage condemning limitation of offspring.¹

¹ My opponent was unable to do so.

Yes, the Bible tells us to multiply and replenish the earth. But it does not say that we should multiply to such an extent that there be no standing room. We have followed this injunction pretty faithfully. While some places, like the Desert of Sahara, are not quite full of people, other places are overfull. One brilliant opponent of contraception says that the passage, "Suffer little children to come unto Me," is an argument against contraception. I love little children to come unto me. But the New Testament does not state the number of children—it does not say ten or twelve or seventeen children to a family. It seems to me that two or three or four fulfils the injunction. But another proof that there is nothing in the Bible opposed to contraception is the fact that so many ministers—and their number is constantly growing—are so openly and publicly in favor of birth control. They certainly could not do it if there were anything in the Bible distinctly opposed to it.

11. We now come to a very important point in our discussion. A statement is now being circulated that birth control is *anti-eugenic*! This unique objection is of rather recent origin. The opponents of birth control are in desperate straits. They know that the eugenic value of birth control is an argument that appeals to the largest number of people. People whom you cannot touch by economic appeals respond when you prove to them that unrestricted breeding has a terribly dysgenic influence on the race, and is responsible for many weaklings, imbeciles, etc. Now, in order to counteract the eugenic plea, the opponents of birth control are endeavoring to prove that the limitation of offspring would have an anti-eugenic or dysgenic influence and would result in a deterioration of the human stock. How do they manœuvre this thing? They do it this way. They try to prove that the first children are inferior to the later children. They say that older parents are physically and

mentally superior to younger parents, and that consequently the later children, born of older parents, inherit the physique and mentality of these older parents, and are superior to the children which were first born, when the parents were not yet fully developed physically and mentally.

In my opinion this is all drivel, without any foundation in fact. It is sufficient to state that some investigators claim just the contrary, that the best and greatest children are derived from young parents. For instance, Dr. Vaerting of Berlin has written a little volume on the subject, in which he proves or thinks he proves, and he gives a long list of names to substantiate his contention, that geniuses are the children of young parents, and he would put the highest limit on fathers of forty-three years. This to me is also bosh. It is easy to prove anything by taking a few examples and disregarding the rest. But assuming even that the contention of the birth control opponents that the first children are inferior to the later ones is true, it isn't that the first children, *per se*, are inferior, it is because the parents are too young. And this can be easily remedied by just the means that we advocate, namely, let young couples by the use of contraceptives abstain from having children and let them only have them at that period of life which is considered the most propitious for yielding children of the best physique and the best mentality. It isn't true, as some half-baked opponents claim, that under birth control the young couples will have one, two or three children immediately after marriage and then stop. On the contrary, it is immediately after marriage, when the couples are not yet established economically, when their financial condition is at its worst, that they want to avoid having children. And it is when they have reached the age of thirty, thirty-two or thirty-five, that most couples are anxious to become parents. So that argument falls to pieces.

But let us look a little closer into the first-child-bugaboo. It so happens that in all the families I know person-

ally, the first children are the superior ones. But let us cast a glance over some historical personages, over some people that were undeniably great, so great that their genius is acceded universally. Let us take a few examples.

For instance, one of the world's greatest poets, Goethe, the author of *Faust*, was a first child. One of Germany's sweetest singers, Friedrich von Schiller, was a first child. John Keats was a first child. Lord Byron, Alexander Dumas, both father and son, Robert Louis Stevenson the beloved, were first children. Emile Zola, one of the world's greatest writers, whose remains, in spite of the opposition of the stupid and ignorant, rest now in the Pantheon, was a first child. Francis Bacon, whom some accuse of having been the author of everything written by one William Shakspeare, but who is great enough even without Shakspeare's works, was a first child. Robert Burns was a first child. Heinrich Heine was the oldest of four children, the other three amounting to nothing. Thomas Carlyle, who needs no introduction to any audience, was a first child, the oldest of nine children, the other eight not amounting to much. Herbert Spencer was a first child. Spinoza and Immanuel Kant, men whose philosophy still influences us today, were first children. Another of the world's great philosophers, Schopenhauer, was a first child. Samuel Johnson was a first child. Edward Gibbon, one of the world's greatest historians, was a first child, the oldest of seven children, the other six not having amounted to much. Cardinal Newman was a first child, the oldest of six children, the other five not having been heard of. Petrarch was a first child. John Ruskin was a first child. Boccaccio, whose *Dekameron* you have probably all enjoyed secretly, was a first child, and an illegitimate one at that.

Leonardo da Vinci, one of the most many-sided geniuses that have ever lived, who had few equals either as a painter, sculptor, or anatomist, was a first child

Henrik Ibsen, one of the world's greatest dramatists, was a first child. Jean Racine, one of the greatest of French dramatists, was a first child.

Johannes Kepler, one of the world's greatest astronomers, was a first child. Karl von Linné, absolutely the world's greatest botanist, was a first child. Galileo, with whom, in spite of the obscurantists and the opponents of birth control, we believe that the world does move, was a first child. Isaac Newton, universally acknowledged as a genius of the very first magnitude, was a first child, and so was Karl Friedrich Gauss, a wonderful genius, known as the prince of mathematicians. The discoverer of the circulation of the blood, with whom even a non-medical audience is undoubtedly familiar, William Harvey, was a first child. Adam Smith and John Stuart Mill, two of the world's greatest political economists, were first children. Leon Gambetta, one of the world's greatest statesmen, was a first child. Martin Luther, the great religious reformer, as a first child. William the Silent was a first child. I do not consider kings and warriors great men, otherwise I would mention that Charlemagne, one of history's outstanding figures, was a first child.

And so I could go on and on. But what is the use? I believe I have proved my point. One name, however, I must not omit. I refer to the man who as a boy could not tell a lie and who for that reason became the father of his country. Yes, George Washington was his mother's first child.

But as there is no birth control advocate who would limit the number of children to one, as we all advise at least two children, we have a right to look into history for some of the great men who were second children. In honor to my opponent, who is a Catholic, I will mention the fact that Pope Leo XIII was a second child. Albrecht Dürer, one of the world's greatest painters, was a second child. And by the way, he was the second of eighteen children, the other seventeen not amounting

to anything. Balzac, the great French novelist, was a second child. Jean Jacques Rousseau was a second child. Ralph Waldo Emerson was a second child. Mozart, the prince of all musicians, was a second child. Johann Sebastian Bach was a second child. Ernest Renan, one of the greatest of French writers, was a second child. Leo Tolstoy, by far the greatest novelist that has ever lived, whose novel *War and Peace* stands by itself without any rivals, was a second child. Charles Dickens was a second child. Our grey big-hearted, democratic poet, Walt Whitman, was a second child. Edwin Booth, the actor, was a second child. Camille Cavour, the Bismarck of Italy, was a second child. Abraham Lincoln was a second child. Frederick the Great was a second child. Alexander von Humboldt was a second child. Bismarck was a second son. William Pitt was a second child. And many more.

Another argument made by those who oppose birth control on allegedly eugenic grounds is that only children are inferior to the children in large families. They are pampered and usually egotistic, irritable, unable to get along in the world, etc. This argument does not touch us at all. Because no advocate of birth control advises any couple to limit themselves to one child—two or three is the usual number advised. But we make no iron-clad rules for everybody. Some couples ought not to have any children at all, for some—one is sufficient, while on the other hand, those who have a good heredity, and are financially able to properly bring up and educate many children, should have as many as they want to. The race would be grateful to them if they had six or eight children.

As to an only child being pampered, that is the fault of the parents, and rational parents can bring up one child just as rationally and just as sanely as they can bring up several children. And history is not devoid of examples of great men who were only children. Lord Byron was an only child. Burne-Jones, the great painter, was an

only child. George Bentham, one of the great botanists of the nineteenth century, who at the age of six could speak fluently French, German, Russian and Swedish, was an only child. John Ruskin was an only child, and his parents, by the way, like the parents of one of the greatest men in history, Charles Darwin, were first cousins. John Stuart Mill and Immanuel Kant were only children. The same is true of Spinoza, Emile Zola, Robert Louis Stevenson, and a long list of others.

But here comes the masterstroke of those who claim that birth control is anti-eugenic and would deprive humanity of great men. On ransacking biographical dictionaries they find that some second or third-rate men were the tenth or fifteenth or twentieth in their families. Confucius and Loyola, we are told, were each the last of eleven children. Wedgwood was the thirteenth child. Robert Hall, a pulpit orator, was a fourteenth child. A certain Rev. Phillip Doddridge, of whose eminence I confess I am in complete ignorance, was the last of twenty children. Admiral Popham was the twenty-first child. And our good old Benjamin Franklin was—I don't know which child—some say the eleventh, some say the thirteenth, some say the seventeenth. Now, say these quack eugenists, if birth control had been in use we would have been deprived of all these great men! To argue in this manner is to write oneself down an imbecile and to make a man unworthy of admission into the circle of thinkers. A man arguing in this manner is beneath contempt. If this were an argument, then no woman would have a moral right to stop bearing children at any time. Suppose she has had fourteen children. She has no right to stop, because how can she know that the fifteenth child may not be a great man or even a genius? Not even twenty children can free a couple from the moral duty of breeding more. Because it is just possible that the twenty-first might be as wonderfully great a man as Admiral Popham! In fact any time a married couple refrain from the sexual act they are committing a crime,

because how can they know that the result of the missed act might not be a great man? This is the kind of reasoning and this the kind of argument presented by the opponents of birth control, which we are required to answer.

Putting aside genius and mind, and coming down to the body, our pseudo-eugenists claim that the first-born are weaker and shorter lived than the later children, and if we limited ourselves only to one or two children, the result would be in a few generations a weak and short-lived race. This is also false, and I wish to call your attention, first, to a paper by Dr. Louis I. Dublin and Harry Langman of the Statistical Bureau of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, which in my opinion contains a completely satisfactory refutation of Professor Pearson's claims. Second, I want to call your attention to a paper by the editor of the *American Journal of Heredity*, which appeared in the September, 1916, issue of that journal. He investigated the records of eight hundred and two cases of individuals, most of whom were over ninety years of age, only a few being included between eighty and ninety. It was found that the *greatest percentage among them were first-born children*; namely, first-born children constituted 27 per cent, second-born children 15 per cent, third, fourth and fifth, 13 per cent, the rest ranging between 7 and 11 per cent. Eight hundred people is perhaps not a very large number from which to draw final conclusions, but the figures of the first-born nonogenarians and centenarians certainly go far to show the utter falsity of the claim of the pseudo-eugenists that first-born children are shorter lived than the later born.

I have spent considerable time on this point, because this anti-eugenic argument is of rather recent origin, and I have not dealt with it exhaustively before in any of my other books or lectures. And I thought that this would be as good an opportunity as any to put a quietus on the false claims of our eugenic dilettanti.

12. But the *lack* of contraceptive knowledge among the poor has a dysgenic effect in another direction. And this is an important point, which must be taken into consideration, a point which must give every humanitarian cause for anxious thought. The middle classes, the rich, the professional classes, are in the possession of contraceptive knowledge and make use of it. Those who have not the knowledge can easily procure it. The people who are most in need of this knowledge, namely, the poor workingmen, do not possess this knowledge and have considerable difficulty in obtaining it. The result is disastrous, for if this keeps up, then the enormous preponderance of the lower and of the undesirable classes, will so overwhelm us that the general level of our racial stock must necessarily be lowered. The recently published report of the Birth Rate Commission of England has corroborated our claims, and sounds the same note of warning which we issued years ago. What is the remedy? To force the better classes to breed more? In some instances it would be a very desirable thing. But it cannot be done. You cannot force excessive maternity on those who have learned the secret of birth control. You cannot accomplish it by moral suasion, nor can you accomplish it by any law or any penalties in the world. Birth control is so easy to practise that no special appliances are needed, and no law in the world can forbid the sale of . . . and other mild antiseptics which have become common household articles. Nor would the most paternalistic government in the world go so far as to put a detective in the bedroom of every married couple in the land. So there is only one remedy left. And that is to spread the knowledge of birth control so energetically and so rapidly among the poor and the working classes that their fertility may go down to the same level that is now maintained by the rich, the well-to-do and the professional classes.

Let us now review briefly the evils for which the *lack* of knowledge of prevention of conception is respon-

sible. And then we will have no difficulty in perceiving what benefits would result from a spread of this beneficent knowledge.

1. It prevents thousands and thousands of marriages. There are numberless couples who are anxious to get married but whom the spectre of too many children keeps from getting married. If those couples could only be assured that they could regulate the number of their children according to their means they would get married without delay. We know of many couples who were engaged for years and years, always delaying their marriage because they knew they could not afford to bring a large family into the world. After they learned proper means of prevention they got married and are living happily. And they have children too, but they have only the number which they can properly provide for.

There are also eugenic reasons which keep many couples from getting married. There may be a taint either in the man or the woman or in the family of the man or the woman, and that keeps many loving couples from getting married. The man finds his sexual satisfaction in illicit relations—the woman becomes an unhappy old maid. With a knowledge of contraception, such couples get married, their sexual and emotional life is fully satisfied, and they do not bring into the world undesirable offspring.

2. The lack of knowledge of contraceptive means is one of the great causes of prostitution. It is not the only cause but one of the causes. And it acts as a feeder of prostitution in two ways. First, by delaying marriages, a point that I have just alluded to. Naturally when men are, for fear of too large families, obliged to delay their marriages to the age of thirty or thirty-five, they must patronize prostitutes. Second, after marriage, when people have had several children and are afraid to have more, and abstinence for too prolonged periods being out of the question, men find themselves obliged to have recourse to prostitutes. The keepers of brothels

testify that one-half of their patronage comes from married men; and while one cause of this is to be found in man's polygamous tendencies, the other cause is undoubtedly due to the condition just stated. So you see lack of contraceptive knowledge is a great inciter to immorality.

3. It is the *principal* cause of abortion. Where contraceptive knowledge is most difficult to obtain, there abortion thrives most luxuriantly. The evil of abortion is too great and too well known to need detailed discussion. The universal use of contraceptive measures would reduce the abortion evil to a minimum.

4. Too many pregnancies, and too frequently repeated, exhaust the woman's body and age her prematurely. They also kill the woman's spirit. Many bright women lose all their ambition and their interest in social, literary, and artistic work, and become household drudges, for they are continually either bearing or nursing a child.

5. The fear of pregnancy renders thousands of women frigid in their sex relations, something which again acts as a disturbing element in marital life and drives many a husband to prostitutes or to some lady friends. This has been shown to be so in many cases where a woman previously frigid became passionate after the fear of pregnancy was removed either by the use of contraceptives or by the menopause.

It is a sad fact to constate, but it is true that the terror of an additional pregnancy is so great with some women that in order to avoid it they themselves permit and even urge their husbands to go to other women—only to leave them alone. Another way in which the lack of contraceptive knowledge fosters prostitution.

6. It is the greatest cause of an excessive infantile mortality. It has been shown times without number that the mortality in families with many children is not only absolutely, which goes without saying, but relatively or

proportionately, two to three times as large as in families with few children. And, therefore, the excessive bearing of children, which has such a terribly disastrous effect on the physical, economic and social condition of the family, is not even such a great factor in multiplying the race and replenishing the world as the opponents of birth control believe. When are the race and the mothers constituting the race better off? When a mother has eleven children and buries five or six, or when a mother has three children and buries none? I am not going to lay any further stress upon the fact that with a diminished birth rate there goes *pari passu* a diminished infantile mortality, and vice versa, with a great birth rate there is a great infantile mortality, because these facts have been demonstrated in individual families, and in whole races.

7. Lack of contraceptive knowledge is one of the great causes of venereal disease. For venereal disease is a direct result of prostitution. But it is not only that the man suffers from venereal disease—the venereal disease is brought into the marriage-bed, and thousands of women who have had to undergo operations and become invalids for life, owe their condition directly to the lack of contraceptive knowledge. The use of contraceptive measures, by making early marriages possible and by cutting off both the demand and the supply of prostitutes, would greatly diminish venereal disease. This would be the direct way in which venereal disease would be diminished. But there is another way, which has hardly ever been touched upon before (except by the author). The use of contraceptive measures would act directly in diminishing venereal disease in married life. For as is well known the modern contraceptive measures by *preventing conception* act at the same time as *venereal prophylactics*. In other words, the same agent that destroys the spermatozoa destroys at the same time the gonococci and spirochetæ.

This is a very important point to bear in mind. And when I am consulted by men or women who have or have had some venereal disease, as to the permissibility of their marriage, I make it an important point to find out whether they wish or intend to have children soon or not. In other words, whether they are going to make use of contraceptive measures or not. If they are, then I give them the permission, because I know that neither partner then runs any risk of infection. If they are not going to use any contraceptive, I withhold my permission and let them bear the responsibility for their step.

8. Lack of contraceptive knowledge is killing many and many a mother who is unfit to undergo the risks of pregnancy. Many a woman with heart disease, tuberculosis, kidney disease, severe anemia, deformed pelvis, could live safely a moderate sexual life, not only without any danger to her health but with distinct benefit to it. But pregnancy often spells her death-knell. I am not speaking here of the many deaths that occur during and immediately after childbirth from hemorrhage, from eclampsia, puerperal infection, and so forth, things which are carefully concealed from our women, who are made to believe that childbirth, because a natural process, carries no risks with it. As I say I am not referring to these numerous deaths, by which women pay, year in and year out, a greater toll than men do on the battle field. I am not referring to these cases—they are the natural risks inseparable from the business of perpetuating the race. But I am referring to the deaths which could be positively and easily prevented by the use of contraceptives.

9. Lack of contraceptive knowledge is responsible for thousands and thousands of anti-eugenic or dysgenic children. I could spend an hour or ten hours telling you of the thousands of physical and mental cripples and misfits, which the lack of contraceptive knowledge is directly responsible for. I could illustrate the subject with ex-

amples and with stereopticon views which would make your hair stand on end. I could tell you facts which would break your heart, if you have any heart at all. But I am deliberately slighting this part of the question, because most people are already agreed that contraceptive means are permissible or even imperative where there is danger of a syphilitic, epileptic, blind, deaf or dumb, crippled or idiotic child. Even an ordinary imbecile can be convinced that where there is danger of a diseased child or a monstrosity being born, the use of contraceptive measures is not a sin.

And because eugenics as a reason for birth control has, in this country at least, become platitudinous, I cut this part of the discourse short and leave it to those who are brave enough to become protagonists of an idea after it has become common property and is combated by no one.

10. And last, but by far from least, lack of birth control, which leads to unrestricted breeding, is one of the great causes of the most damnable of all phenomena in human society, of that cruel, wretched, demoralizing, race-deteriorating, wholesale murder which we call war. The causes of war are numerous and complex. I do not claim as some do that unrestricted breeding, with its resultant over-population, is the only cause of war, but that it is an important cause is beyond question. I cannot now give the numerous proofs for this claim, but I wish to give a quotation from a source whose conservativeness and reliability you will all admit. In its recently published report of the declining birth rate, the National Commission of England, whom nobody will accuse of favoring birth control, and 50 per cent of whose personnel consisted of clerical gentlemen, makes the following statement:

The pressure of population in any country brings as a chief historic consequence overflows and migrations not only for peaceful settlement but for conquest and for the subjugation and

exploitation of weaker peoples. This always remains a chief cause of international disputes.

And before the outbreak of the war, an influential German paper, the *Berliner Post*, said:

Can a great and rapidly growing nation like Germany always renounce all claims to further development or to the expansion of its political power? The final settlement with France and England, the expansion of our colonial possessions, in order to create new German homes for the overflow of our population, . . . these are the problems which must be faced in the near future.

It seems to me that this fact alone, that unrestricted breeding with its over-population, is bound to lead sooner or later to hell, which we call war, is sufficient fully to justify the supporters of birth control, and to damn those who oppose it.

We come now to a very important, in fact, a fundamental, question. Some of our opponents not entirely devoid of reason are willing to admit the benefits of birth control, are even willing to admit an occasional imperative necessity for birth control. But they object to chemical or mechanical means for attaining the object; they say that men and women who do not wish to have too many children have a very simple method of accomplishing their object—all they have to do is to abstain from sex relations. Whenever they want a child let them indulge. When they do not want to have too many children, let them abstain. Let us see what this argument amounts to.

How frequently in your opinion should a married couple have sex relations? Once a month? No, that is too often. Once in three months? That is also excessive. Once in six months? Perhaps even that is too much. So let us say once a year. I assume that even the most fanatical advocate of abstinence or of sex relations for procreation only will admit that once a year is moderate enough. Of course, a healthy married couple would look at a person as insane who would advise them

to indulge in sex relations only once a year. But let us assume that a man and woman have steeled their wills to that extent and are willing to risk shattering their health and nervous system, and are indulging only once a year. But even with once a year any healthy woman is capable of bringing into the world fifteen to twenty children during her child-bearing period! This being the case, can any honest and sane man with a modicum of self-respect advise the mass of the people to use abstinence as a means of birth control?

I know a young couple; the man is thirty-five, the woman is thirty-two; they have been married nine years and have six children. Both are at the height of their sexual activity, but it is economically criminal for them to have another child. They have to use the utmost economy and to deprive themselves of many elementary necessities in order to feed and clothe the children properly. What would you advise that couple to do? Should they for the next fifteen or sixteen years, that is, until the woman's menopause, abstain from all sex relations? Can any man familiar with human nature honestly give such advice? Would any man with an elementary knowledge of physiology, hygiene and psychology give such advice?

To recapitulate the evils of ignorance of contraception:

1. Ignorance of birth control measures is responsible for thousands of marriages being delayed or not taking place altogether.
2. It is responsible for a great part of prostitution.
3. It is one of the principal causes of venereal disease.
4. It is the principal cause of the abortion evil.
5. It is responsible for the economic misery and social degradation of thousands of families.
6. It is one of the principal causes of a high infantile mortality.

7. It is responsible for the ill-health, chronic invalidism, premature aging, and premature death of many women. It hastens the death of many women who on account of their condition should never be pregnant.

8. It leads to neurasthenia, frigidity, impotence, and many other nervous and psychic disorders.

9. It is to a great extent responsible for low wages, for the slums, and for the illiteracy, and the rowdyism prevailing in the lower strata of society.

10. The lack of birth control among the poorest classes has a dysgenic influence on the race, because the multiplication of the unfit is proportionally much greater than of those most fit.

11. It is responsible for thousands of syphilitic, epileptic, crippled, imbecile, and otherwise physically and mentally defective children.

12. And last but as important as, if not more important than, any of the others, it is a potent factor in international disputes and rivalries which eventually lead to war.

The widespread knowledge of contraceptive measures would do away with all those evils, would do away with them either entirely or to a great extent.

Are we, therefore, not justified in claiming that those who favor birth control are the defenders of morality, and promoters of the health, happiness and progress of the race, while those who oppose birth control are in the highest degree immoral and may be justly characterized as the enemies of the human race?

To me this conclusion is inescapable, and the logic by which we arrive at it irrefutable, incontrovertible.

How else than in the highest degree immoral would you characterize people who in their ignorance and blindness favor late marriages, prostitution, venereal disease, a high infantile mortality, abortion, poverty, the slums, hereditary syphilis, insanity, imbecility, and war? If encouraging all these things is not immoral, then I do

not know what immorality is; and I leave the answer to this question to the audience.

REASONS FOR ADVOCATING¹

The subject is too large to be adequately discussed in the compass of a single article, and we may conclude with the following epitome of the previous and other arguments in favor of the spread of contraceptive knowledge.

The reasons for advocating a general dissemination of the knowledge of contraceptive devices among adult married persons are as follows:

A. FROM THE INDIVIDUAL AND FAMILY STANDPOINT

1. Limitation of the family permits both father, mother and children to have a decent existence, even when the earnings are small.

2. A woman should not have children more frequently than once in every three years, in justice to her own health and strength and to the virility of her children. Where no preventive methods are used it is common for children to arrive at intervals of a year, to the grave detriment of mother and children.

3. Wherever a husband or wife is ill or is discovered to have hereditary disease or taint, it is of the utmost importance for them to be able to avoid having additional children to inherit the defect.

4. Medical authorities of the highest standing have declared that the majority of contraceptive devices (as distinguished from abortifacients) are absolutely harmless.

5. Human beings ought at least to have the same power of exerting intelligence and foresight in their own reproduction as they have in controlling the breeding of the lower animals.

¹From article *Morality and the Prevention of Conception*, by C. V. Drysdale, D.Sc., London. *Critic and Guide*. 20: 67-70. February, 1917.

B. FROM THE SOCIAL STANDPOINT

6. In districts where families are large, poverty, overcrowding, alcoholism and crime are as a rule much more rife than in districts of small families. Social workers among the poor well know that it is the too frequent arrival of children which forms the chief obstacle to improving their conditions.

7. A high birth rate in a district or country almost invariably means a high death rate and infantile mortality, which defy all medical, hygienic, or sanitary attempts to reduce them unless the birth rate falls. In the few cases of countries where the birth rate has risen the death rate has risen despite all modern improvements.

8. Remuneration of labor depends upon demand and supply, and the only really effective means of improving the position of the workers lies in their restricting their numbers.

9. The bulk of the wealthy, educated and governing classes in practically all the civilized countries (the United States not excepted) now limit their families by contraceptive measures, and it is sheer hypocrisy for them to restrain their less fortunate brethren from obtaining the same knowledge.

C. FROM THE MORAL STANDPOINT

10. The fear of being burdened with an immediate and rapidly increasing family is the chief bar to early and universal marriage, and is thus the real excuse for prostitution and other sexual irregularities. The only possible way of eliminating these evils is to make universal early marriage possible, and this can only be done by making it generally known that young people can marry without burdening themselves with children before they are able to support them.

11. Experience has shown that neither law nor religious precept can compel women continually to suffer the pain, suffering, and misery of bringing unlimited

children into the world. If they are ignorant of hygienic contraceptive methods, they have recourse to drugs or artifices for procuring abortion, which may, and frequently do, have the most serious physical effects on themselves and their children. In the United States, where the law against the dissemination of knowledge concerning preventive devices is the most severe, abortion is far more common than in any other country, and hundreds of thousands of women put themselves into the hands of abortion quacks, with the most serious risk to their health. The only possible way of preventing this evil is to encourage the spread of contraceptive knowledge.

D. FROM THE NATIONAL AND RACIAL STANDPOINT

12. It is of the greatest possible importance for any nation that its children should be reproduced principally from its fitter stocks. When difficulties are put in the way of getting information concerning simple, hygienic and inexpensive contraceptive devices, it is only the better-off and better-educated people, who restrict their families, while the poor, improvident, mentally and physically inferior types flood society with weakly and defective offspring. This puts a burden upon the resources of society which is met by the further restriction of families among the fitter types. It is, therefore, of the utmost importance to introduce the practice of family limitation as generally and as rapidly as possible among the poorest classes.

13. Family limitation does *not* mean "race suicide." As the birth rate falls the death rate falls with it, and the increase of population is as a rule fully maintained. In many countries, *e.g.* Germany and Holland, the increase of population has actually become more rapid as the birth rate has fallen.

14. In Holland, where the Neo-Malthusian League has been recognized by royal decree as a Society of Public Utility, and has, therefore, been able to instruct the poor in large numbers in the best contraceptive

methods, the results as regards the improvement in the health, physique, and economic conditions of the people and the children have been greater than in any other country, while the natural increase of its population has become greater than ever before. Holland is the only country where the Neo-Malthusian advocates of birth control have had free scope and opportunity of extending their teachings among the poor on the lines they have always desired to do in all countries, and the result has been a triumphant vindication of their policy.

The foregoing summary will serve to show any unprejudiced ethicist that the case for encouraging the spread of contraceptive knowledge, especially among the very poor, is an exceedingly strong one, and that the objections so commonly urged against it have little or no justification. The experience of Holland alone is conclusive on this point, and the improvement in the economic status, health, and physical fitness of its people since preventive methods have been popularized among them has been so great as to have elicited wondering comment from authorities who have observed them without knowing of this propaganda. Holland has apparently been decidedly behind our own and other countries as regards social legislation, and is one of the most individualistic and *laissez faire* nations of Europe, yet by any of the ordinary criteria of general well-being it has rapidly attained pre-eminence.

Neo-Malthusians with all their confidence in their doctrine are in no way obsessed by it. They realize even more than do their opponents that the spread of this knowledge is putting into the hands of the people the most powerful tool for moulding its destiny that has ever been known; and that, as with other powerful tools, it may be used for good or for evil. But they have seen that ordinary enlightened self-interest leads people naturally to apply it for the general welfare, and the results so far attained justify this belief except in so far as the

policy of keeping the knowledge from the poor has led to reversed selection in many countries.

It is for the rational ethicist to realize its possibilities, and to help to direct this, the greatest of all powers, to the general welfare of humanity. It is for him to consider whether the philosophy of the future is to be based on a continuance of the struggle for existence with its inevitable consequences either of predatory militarism or of Buddhistic resignation to misery; or whether it is to be based on rational reproduction with its opportunities of ever increasing individual happiness combined with race improvement and international solidarity.

WHAT WE STAND FOR¹

The complex problems now confronting America as the result of the practice of reckless procreation are fast threatening to grow beyond human control.

Everywhere we see poverty and large families going hand in hand. Those least fit to carry on the race are increasing most rapidly. People who cannot support their own offspring are encouraged by church and state to produce large families. Many of the children thus begotten are diseased or feebleminded; many become criminals. The burden of supporting these unwanted types has to be borne by the healthy elements of the nation. Funds that should be used to raise the standard of our civilization are diverted to the maintenance of those who should never have been born.

In addition to this great evil we witness the appalling waste of women's health and women's lives by too frequent pregnancies. These unwanted pregnancies often provoke the crime of abortion, or alternatively multiply the number of child workers and lower the standard of living.

¹ Principles and Aims of the American Birth Control League, Inc. *Birth Control Review*. 8: 256-7. September, 1924.

To create a race of well-born children it is essential that the function of motherhood should be elevated to a position of dignity, and this is impossible as long as conception remains a matter of chance.

We hold that children should be 1. Conceived in love; 2. Born of the mother's conscious desire; 3. And only begotten under conditions which render possible the heritage of health.

Therefore, we hold that every woman must possess the power and freedom to prevent conception except when these conditions can be satisfied.

Every mother must realize her basic position in human society. She must be conscious of her responsibility to the race in bringing children into the world.

Instead of being a blind and haphazard consequence of uncontrolled instinct, motherhood must be made the responsible and self-directed means of human expression and regeneration.

These purposes, which are of fundamental importance to the whole of our nation and to the future of mankind, can only be attained if women first receive practical scientific education in the means of birth control. That, therefore, is the first object to which the efforts of this League will be directed.

The American Birth Control League, Inc., aims to enlighten and educate all sections of the American public in the various aspects of the dangers of uncontrolled procreation and the imperative necessity of a world program of birth control.

The League aims to correlate the findings of scientists, statisticians, investigators and social agencies in all fields. To make this possible, it is necessary to organize various departments:

Research: To collect the findings of scientists, concerning the relation of reckless breeding to the evils of delinquency, defect and dependence.

Investigation: To derive from these scientifically ascertained facts and figures, conclusions which may aid all public health and social agencies in the study of problems of maternal and infant mortality, child-labor, mental and physical defects and delinquency in relation to the practice of reckless parentage.

Hygienic and physiological instruction by the medical profession to mothers and potential mothers in harmless and reliable methods of birth control in answer to their requests for such knowledge.

Sterilization of the insane and feebleminded and the encouragement of this operation upon those afflicted with inherited or transmissible diseases, with the understanding that sterilization does not deprive the individual of his or her sex expression, but merely renders one incapable of producing children.

Educational: The program of education includes: The enlightenment of the public-at-large, mainly through the education of leaders of thought and opinion—the teachers, ministers and writers—to the moral and scientific soundness of the principles of birth control and the imperative necessity of its adoption as the basis of national and racial progress.

Political and Legislative: To enlist the support and cooperation of legal advisors, statesmen and legislators in effecting the removal of state and Federal statutes which encourage dysgenic breeding, increase the sum total of disease, misery and poverty and prevent the establishment of a policy of national health and strength.

Organization: To send into the various states of the union field workers to enlist the support and arouse the interest of the masses to the importance of birth control so that laws may be changed and the establishment of clinics made possible in every state.

International: This department aims to cooperate with similar organizations in other countries to study birth control in its relations to the world population prob-

lem, food supplies, national and racial conflicts, and to urge upon all international bodies organized to promote world peace, the consideration of these aspects of international amity.

BIRTH CONTROL AND PUBLIC HEALTH ¹

It is pleasant to reflect on the remarkable change which has taken place in the attitude of thinking men and women today. Neo-Malthusianism, re-christened birth control, is no longer a tabooed subject, as it used to be, not to be mentioned in polite society. On the contrary, it has become distinctly fashionable and is openly discussed around dinner tables and over the tea cups in the most irreproachable circles. Bishops and other dignitaries of the church, eminent physicians and surgeons, distinguished authors, gallant admirals, leaders of society, politicians, social workers, all find it necessary nowadays to be quite *au fait* with the subject of birth control and many have given it their cordial blessing. The most reputable papers and magazines, including progressive church papers, which a few years ago would not have looked at the subject, now publish articles on it and open their columns freely for its discussion; while books on the subject, especially by women writers, dealing with the practical side of the question in the most intimate possible way—the authors and vendors of which would almost certainly have been prosecuted a few years ago—are now sold openly at every bookstall.

Of course, it is not suggested that all controversy is at an end. There is still a sharp conflict of opinion, and there are individuals here and there to whom the whole subject is still anathema; but it is possible now to discuss the question freely and openly, without apology and without necessarily raising hot passions and storms of moral indignation.

¹ By C. Killick Millard, M.D., D.Sc., Medical Officer of Health for Leicester, England. *Public Health*. 37: 129-33. March, 1924.

Birth control, as the term is usually understood today, implies the voluntary restriction of the size of the family. The term is not strictly scientific, and a better one is "conception control," but as the term birth control has now become firmly rooted in the English language it will not be easy to alter it. •

The subject may be approached from many different points of view.

We propose to touch briefly upon the following: 1. The cosmopolitan or world-wide aspect; 2. The national or imperial aspect; 3. The public health aspect; 4. The eugenic aspect; 5. The physiological aspect.

We do not propose to deal here with either the personal or the ethical aspect.

1. THE COSMOPOLITAN OR WORLD-WIDE ASPECT

Here we are faced with the question: Is it desirable that the human race all over the world should continue to increase and multiply to the utmost extent of which, under the conditions existing, it is capable? The answer to this question involves a consideration of the principle associated with the name of Malthus that population tends to increase faster than the food supply, with the result that population ever tends to press upon the means of subsistence. We have further to consider that more and more of the older countries of the world are finding their native food resources insufficient to feed ever-growing populations, and consequently are having to draw upon the food resources of distant parts of the world to an ever-increasing extent; and that simultaneously the undeveloped fertile areas of the world are rapidly diminishing. In view of these indisputable facts we have to face the prospect that should the population of the globe continue to increase at the same rate in the future as has been the case during, say, the past century, there would be real danger at some not very distant time of a world-shortage of food. Any such shortage would in-

evitably lower the standard of life, increase the competition between the different nations, with the resultant increased danger of war, disease and famine. The fact that it may be possible, by improved methods of agriculture, to increase the yield of the land can only postpone the day when the inevitable shortage will occur, for we are up against the inexorable law of diminishing returns.

2. THE NATIONAL OR IMPERIAL ASPECT

From this point of view we have to consider whether birth control would be beneficial or otherwise to our country, irrespective of its effect upon the rest of the world. There are many people who would be quite content to see the population of other countries stationary provided that the population of our own country and colonies continued to increase. Such people are influenced by so-called patriotic motives which make them desire that their own country should grow greater relatively to other and rival countries. But if this sentiment is laudable with one country, it is laudable also with others. Closely allied to this sentiment is that which regards men as potential soldiers and pins its faith to big battalions. Before the great war there was a very real fear in the minds of many that any falling off in the rate of increase of the population in this country would be disastrous in the event of a war with Germany. Similar fears were felt in France, and were, of course, reciprocated by Germany, with the result that there was a veritable competition in birth rates comparable to the competition in armaments. We have to consider whether such a competition is healthy or otherwise, and whether it can be endorsed by those who put the cause of international peace above that of national aggrandisement. Incidentally, it may be observed that even in war quality counts for more than quantity, and that it was the high birth rate nations, Russia and the Balkans, which first gave out in the great war.

As regards Britain, the feeling has certainly been

growing since the war that this country is over-populated. By this is meant that we should find the conditions of life less difficult for the masses of the people if our population were smaller, or at least were increasing less rapidly. Probably the housing shortage, and the obvious impossibility of overtaking it so long as population continues to grow faster than new houses are built, partly accounts for this feeling. Moreover, the large number of unemployed has brought home to us the fact that we are dependent upon the markets of the world for the sale of those manufactured articles by which alone we can obtain the necessary supplies of food and raw materials from abroad to support our teeming millions.

To meet this over-population, organized and state-aided emigration to our colonies on a large scale is being warmly advocated in certain quarters. Unfortunately, our colonies are only willing to receive carefully selected lives; they have no use for the old, the weakly or the thriftless; so that emigration, however beneficial it may be to the colonies, is rather an expensive and exhausting process for the old country. Moreover, it has never been carried out and is hardly likely ever to be carried out, on any scale at all adequate, if it is to be a real remedy for over-population.

3. THE PUBLIC HEALTH ASPECT

The aspect of our subject which specially concerns us as medical officers of health is the effect which birth control is likely to have upon the public health. This is bound up with the study of vital statistics, birth rates, death rates, illegitimacy, infant mortality, etc. This aspect is no longer of academic interest only, but has become a question of practical administration. It is being urged respectively that information and instruction on the practical side of birth control should, or should not be given in connection with maternity and child welfare

work, *e.g.*, at ante-natal clinics, and the Minister of Health is being appealed to by the rival protagonists to allow or to prohibit this. Whether they like it or not, therefore, medical officers of health have now no alternative but to be interested in the question.

There are certain facts which are beyond dispute:

1. The birth rate is very much higher among the poor than among the well-to-do. It is generally believed that this is chiefly, if not entirely, to be accounted for by the practice of birth control among the well-to-do. In support of this there is the fact that in Victorian days, prior to the advent of the birth control movement, the well-to-do classes had very much larger families than they have today; indeed their birth rate was but very little smaller than that we see among the poor today. The fall in the birth rate which has been so continuous for the past half-century, has been chiefly confined to the higher strata of the community. Moreover, the fall in the birth rate is gradually invading successively lower strata, which is what we should expect if it be due to voluntary influences.

On the other hand there are those, notably Mr. C. E. Pell (author of *The Law of Births and Deaths*), who believe that the decline in the birth rate is almost entirely due to natural causes; that there is, in fact, a natural law under which fertility decreases as comfort and material prosperity increase. While not denying that there may be some truth in this, it seems hard to explain, by Pell's theory, the difference in the size of the middle-class family today compared with what it was in the Victorian era, unless we are expected to believe that this natural law has only recently come into existence. Nor does it explain away the remarkable coincidence between the fall in the birth rate and the advent of the birth control movement. The birth rate in this country has been falling more or less continuously since 1876,

the year in which the Bradlaugh-Besant trial gave such an advertisement to the movement.

2. Another undisputed fact is the high degree of correlation between birth rates and infant death rates which, as a general rule, tend to vary directly, although undoubtedly there are some striking exceptions. It is difficult to resist the conclusions that there is a causal relationship at work, and that a high birth rate tends to produce a high infant mortality. Certainly it is easy to understand why this should be the case. With a high birth rate, infant life is likely to be "held cheap." Unwanted babies will not receive the same amount of care and attention as those whose advent is desired; and apart from this, with a large family and limited means, it cannot be possible for new arrivals to receive so much care and attention. This is specially true, of course, where the births in a family succeed each other too rapidly.

3. A third fact which can hardly be gainsaid, is that a given weekly wage, which will just suffice to maintain a small family of, say, two or three children above the poverty line, will fail to maintain satisfactorily a large family of, say, six or seven. It is true that many working men and women, who are thrifty and capable, do often succeed in rearing a large family on an astonishingly small income, but this does not affect the general truth of our statement. Consequently, as long as the amount of wages which a man receives bears no relationship to the size of his family, we are justified in asserting that large families are one cause of poverty.

4. A fourth fact is that too frequent child-bearing has a detrimental effect upon the health and strength of many women, especially among the poor, who have to look after their families singlehanded and on inadequate means. Although it is true that some women keep well and strong in spite of a numerous family, this again does not disprove the general truth of our statement.

5. Fifthly, it is certainly the case that very many women among the poorer classes live in positive dread of becoming pregnant again, because they realize that an additional mouth to feed will only intensify the existing struggle for existence.

6. While we must admit the great advantages to the child of being one of a family rather than an only child, it can hardly be denied that the members of a large family among the poor are often seriously prejudiced and handicapped by having to start work early in life, and with little training and education.

A consideration of all these facts justifies us, I submit, in concluding that birth control tends to be beneficial from the point of view of the public health and that an unrestricted birth rate tends to be prejudicial.

4. THE EUGENIC POINT OF VIEW

We have also to look at this question from the point of view of eugenics. This is clearly allied to the point of view of public health; indeed eugenics may be regarded in one sense as the public health of future generations.

No one will deny that the present position, with its differential birth rate between the upper and the lower strata of society, is most unsatisfactory. Birth control is being largely practised by the more desirable stocks, while it is being neglected by the less desirable, and although this is compensated to some extent by the reduced infant mortality which usually accompanies a lower birth rate, the fact remains that our population is being unduly recruited from those elements which, humanly speaking, are the least fitted to make good parents.

It must be frankly admitted, therefore, that birth control, as we see it today, is distinctly dysgenic in its operation. How can this be remedied? It would appear that there are only two alternatives: (1) Induce the more desirable stocks to abandon birth control and have larger

families; or (2) Induce the less desirable stocks to adopt birth control and have smaller families.

Does anyone seriously think that the first alternative is in the least degree practicable? The educated and "thinking" classes have decided that restriction of the size of the family is desirable. The clergy, doctors, schoolmasters, in short the intelligentsia of the nation today all have small families. Who shall go forth and persuade them to act differently? Birth control has been on its trial for at least two generations (in reality very much longer) and I suggest that no civilization which has once discovered it is at all likely to abandon it. We may as well recognize frankly that birth control has come to stay.

We, therefore, have to fall back upon the other alternative, *viz.*, to induce the less desirable stocks to follow the example of the more desirable stocks and to practise birth control also. This is surely the more natural, the more logical and the more progressive course. How far is it practicable? It may be objected that we shall never succeed in persuading the more reckless, thriftless and thoughtless elements in the population to exercise the considerable measure of forethought, circumspection and self-control which the successful practice of any method of birth control demands. I frankly admit the difficulty and it is quite possible that we shall never be entirely successful; but this is no reason why we should not set this alternative before us as an ideal to be aimed at. Much, I believe, could be done by sympathetic practical instruction, and by providing adequate facilities. Also we may reasonably hope for improvement in methods now that the subject is being seriously studied not only in this but in almost all civilized countries. What is needed is a method which is at once simple, safe, effective and inexpensive. The experience now being gained in the two birth control clinics which are being carried on in London should help us in deciding how far the lowest

strata of the population can be taught birth control. The following is from a description of a visit to Dr. Marie Stopes' clinic which appeared in the *Daily News* for June 20, 1921, from the pen of Mr. Herbert Ashley, secretary of the London Council of Social Service.

To social workers who are willing to sweep aside false "modesty" and to think with courage, one fact is apparent: that the mother of the poorer classes who bears a child unwillingly, rebelliously, bitterly, and with anguish, is not she who best serves our race. Such children are a loss to the state, an anguish to their mothers, and a misery to themselves. . . . With such thoughts in my mind, I called at Dr. Marie Stopes' clinic in Holloway. In a drab neighborhood it is a beautiful place. . . . The whole atmosphere of the place is one of confidence and purity. . . . The founders of the clinic, who are supported by many thinkers in many different walks of life, have taken upon themselves a work which will save untold expense to the whole community, as well as untellable misery to individuals."

I see no reason why a similar description should not be applicable to all birth control clinics. I would suggest that whatever our views may be on this question of birth control, it is up to all of us who are medical officers of health to watch the work of these clinics carefully and sympathetically.

The problem of the most degraded stocks, *e.g.*, the feeble-minded, calls for special treatment. No doubt when public opinion is ripe for it—and it is certainly moving in that direction—measures will be introduced for the permanent sterilization of those unfortunates as an alternative to segregation. Already legislation with this end in view has been passed in some countries.

5. THE PHYSIOLOGICAL OR MEDICAL ASPECT

Lastly we have to consider the physiological or purely medical point of view. What effects—physiological, pathological or psychological—have contraceptives on those who habitually use them? This is an aspect which, of course, specially concerns the medical profession. It

is much to be regretted, but none the less true, that we are not as a profession, at present, able to answer this question with any degree of certainty or unanimity. In an anonymous letter which appeared in the July number of *Public Health* over the *nom de plume* of "X and Y," and headed "The Dangers of Birth Control," the opinions of certain practitioners and gynecologists were cited, expressing the belief that the use of contraceptives was injurious to health. Elsewhere I have collected a number of opinions on the other side, and I have also published (*Report of Fifth International Birth Control Conference*), the results of two special inquiries I instituted, by means of questionnaires, among medical practitioners, men and women, including gynecologists. Suffice it to say here that these inquiries satisfied me that the consensus of medical opinion today was that no serious ill-effects need be apprehended from the use of some at least of the contraceptives in common use. My own feeling is that among those who have been most emphatic in alleging that serious ill-effects follow the use of contraceptives there has been a great deal of unconscious exaggeration and of confusion between *post hoc* and *propter hoc*, due to strong prejudice on supposed ethical and patriotic grounds, and that this to a large extent discounts their testimony. In this connection the medical evidence against the use of contraceptives, given in a recent *cause celebre*, and for which large fees were paid, makes interesting reading, especially the answers elicited under cross-examination.

CONCLUSION

Let me conclude with an expression of my own personal opinion. I regard the ideal of responsible parenthood, accompanied as a necessary corollary by regulation of the size of the family, as a much higher and more worthy ideal than the principle of unrestricted

breeding which prevailed prior to the days of birth control. It is all very well for the opponents of birth control to say that responsible parenthood has always been held as an ideal. It is common knowledge that until birth control came into vogue the orthodox teaching used to be that children were "sent" and that it was the duty of married couples to take all that came.

I regard the use of contraceptives as the only practicable or desirable method of effecting regulation of the size of the family in the case of normal individuals, and I regard their use for this purpose as perfectly legitimate and a necessary part of the hygiene of marriage where restriction of the size of the family is indicated. Properly selected and properly used, I do not believe that they have as a general rule, any seriously deleterious effect upon health, though I am quite prepared to believe that their ignorant or improper use may in certain cases have been productive of harm.

I regard the suggestion that the use of contraceptives may cause permanent sterility as a bogey, quite unsupported by adequate evidence; but I recognize that if young married couples begin using contraceptives before they have had a child, and if, later on, when they desire a child, they fail to get one, it is very probable that they will reproach themselves and regard it as a "judgment." I recognize also that nowadays many young people are apt to practise birth control where there is no real need for it, and that they do not sufficiently appreciate the immense and permanent value of children in marriage, or the fact that after a certain age in the woman the likelihood of conception diminishes.

For these reasons I think it better, as a general rule and under normal conditions as regards housing, that young couples should always make sure of at least one or two children before adopting birth control and I disagree with those who teach otherwise.

CONTROL OF BIRTHS¹

What so many of the well-to-do and the educated practice, the poor are prevented from learning. The law in effect insists that where conditions are worst, breeding shall be most unregulated, that those who can care for children least shall stagger under a succession of pregnancies, that the race shall be replenished by ignorance and accident, that the diseased, the weak-minded, the incompetent, shall by law be compelled to fill the world with horror. Men and women pay for it. They pay for it by a high infant mortality, that monument of tragic waste. They pay for it by the multiplication of the unfit, the production of a horde of unwanted souls. They pay for it in the health of women, the neglect of children, and the fierce burden of destitution. They pay for it in late marriages and their complement of prostitution and disease, in the wide-spread practice of abortion, in illegitimate births, in desertions and adulteries. There is no one of these miseries which cannot be largely reduced by the extension to all classes of inventions already the property of the educated.

What are the objections to the use of knowledge which is defended by so few and practiced by so many? The root of them is the tendency to shudder at anything which seems to interfere with God's plan. Added to it is the theory that sex is sin, that whatever reduces its terror increases its joy. In this scheme of things the child is a threat against unchastity, a punishment, as they say, for "getting caught." It is the view of life which makes men fight prophylaxis as an inducement to immorality, which terrorizes the unmarried mother, and insists that the wages of sin shall be expiated in the death of infants, in thwarted childhood, in hospitals, insane asylums, and prisons.

But the clean good sense of mankind is through with

¹ From *New Republic*. 2: 114-15. March 6, 1915.

that black inversion, and wherever intelligent people meet, the doctrine is accepted that the child shall not be considered the punishment of sin but the vessel of the future. All decency today insists that no one shall be born until there is a home anxious to receive him, and nothing is to be gained by the bearing of undesired and unforeseen children. It is argued that contraception is injurious. No doubt some methods are injurious, but that there is a simple method innocuous enough seems to be amply proved. It has been claimed that there is a subtle psychic injury in the use of mechanical preventives, but it has not been demonstrated, and against this possibility must be weighed the crushing effects on the health of the race which clearly result from chaotic breeding.

Among reasoning people the argument from superstition is no longer heard, and the supposed injury to health is urged less and less. The ground of the discussion today is moral. It is said that if sexual intercourse is severed from childbearing, a great increase of promiscuity will result. Reduced to accurate terms, it is believed that more unmarried women will have sexual relations. On this ground the existing law is defended. But what is the actual situation? The fact that contraceptives are not widely known is the greatest cause of late marriages, because it is the cost of children which makes men postpone their marriages. This leaves an increasing population of unmarried men and women. The great majority of men live an illicit sexual life with the minority of women who are prostitutes. The other women remain abstinent or they take a lover and either bear an illegitimate child or undergo an abortion. The use of contraceptives would undoubtedly diminish the real evils of illegitimacy and abortion. There would remain the women who prefer celibacy, the women who are condemned to it, the women who honestly prefer to wait for a husband, and the women who are afraid not to wait. These last are the ones whom the moralists have in mind. They are thinking of a vaguely defined but real class

who preserve a technical virginity for fear that they will become pregnant. The defenders of the law are afraid, too, that a general relaxation would follow, that this class would grow at the expense of the women who now believe in a really monogamous life.

This, as we understand it, is the case as it stands in the minds of most people today. There is an honest conviction that ignorance of preventives is the safeguard of chastity. It would be folly to deny that it is a safeguard, though it is certainly not the only one. The question is whether earlier marriages, the reduction of illegitimacy and abortion, the prevention of too frequent pregnancy with its disastrous effect on the health of the wife and the morale of the husband, of lightening of economic burdens, the decrease in the birth of the unfit, are not reasons which far outweigh the importance attached to the personal chastity of a minority among women. Is everything to wait for them? Are we to balk at measures which will do more than any step we can take to solidify the family, to make it sane, tolerable, and civilized, because we are afraid that some women cannot be trusted with the conduct of their own lives? Is society to set all its machinery in operation to make a terrifying darkness, for fear that the light of knowledge may tempt a few?

Surely the cost is monstrous and the method ridiculous. For after all, ignorance can be enforced only upon those wives of the poor who suffer from it most. The young woman of the middle class who really wishes to know can find out, but it is the poor and the illiterate who need to know and cannot find out. It is the business of society to enlighten them, to allow physicians and district nurses and mothers' clubs to spread the needed information. What society cannot afford to do is to enforce the ignorance because of a timidity about the potentially unchaste. A mature community would trust its unmarried women, knowing that the evil of unchastity is **greatly exaggerated**. Our society does not seem to

have attained such self-confidence; it still seems to regard virginity and not child life as the great preoccupation of the state.

It has been claimed that the knowledge of how to limit births is the most immediate practical step that can be taken to increase human happiness. The relief which it would bring to the poor is literally incalculable. The assistance it would lend all effort to end destitution and fight poverty is enormous. And to the mind of man it would mean a release from terror, and the adoption openly and frankly of the civilized creed that man must make himself the master of his fate; instead of natural selection and accident, human selection and reason; instead of a morality which is fear of punishment, a morality which is the making of a finer race. Fewer children and better ones is the only policy a modern state can afford. If there are fewer children there will be better ones. A nation must care for its young if they are precious. It cannot waste them in peace or war with that insane prodigality which is characteristic of the great spawning and dying nations where the birth rate and the death rate are both exorbitant, where men breed to perish.

PREVENTIVE MEDICINE AND BIRTH CONTROL ¹

Large families, that is to say, numerous children as the issue of one couple are an everyday spectacle among the ignorant, the poor, the under-fed, and badly housed, the tuberculous, the degenerate, the alcoholic, the syphilitic, the vicious, and even the mentally defective.

The fact does not admit of discussion that the social

¹ From article by S. Adolphus Knopf, M.D., Professor of Medicine, Department of Phthisiotherapy, New York Post-Graduate Medical School and Hospital; Visiting Physician to the Riverside Hospital-Sanatorium for the Consumptive Poor of the Health Department of the City of New York. *Medical Times*. 45: 94-8. April, 1917.

and moral life is superior in a smaller family where the father earns enough for its support, where the mother may devote her time to the care of the children, and where neither she nor the children need go out to help in the general support of the family, to that of a family with a large number of children where the mother and also the older children must slave. The larger the family of the poor, the more child labor, the more disruption and irregularity, and the more frequently we find a lower standard of life and morals in general. The records of our charities and benevolent societies amply prove that, as a rule, the larger the families are that apply for relief, the greater is their distress.

John A. Kingsbury, Commissioner of Charities of New York, expressed his opinion on the limitation of families among this class very emphatically to me by saying: "In the year 1915 more than ten thousand children were proposed in the Department of Charities of New York City for commitment to institutions, and 1916 will probably have had the same number, if not more. Poverty, sickness, or unemployment has outgrown the welcome of more than ten thousand innocent little citizens in their own homes. Many of these children are paying the penalty of the social error of *too large families*. It is frequently remarked that children are often found in the largest numbers in those homes which are least equipped to properly provide for them. I believe it is a serious mistake for parents in adverse circumstances to bring children into the world for whom they are not prepared physically, mentally, morally, and economically, just as I believe it is a serious mistake for parents in affluent circumstances and otherwise prepared for parentage to decline to bear children because of the inconvenience or embarrassment to their scheme of living. If contraception can benefit the born by limiting the unborn, without bring-

ing about any physical or moral deterioration in human lives, I am unqualifiedly in sympathy with it."

Insanity, idiocy, epilepsy, alcoholic predisposition, tuberculosis, and syphilis are often transmitted from parent to child. Countless are the millions of dollars expended for the maintenance of these mentally and physically unfit. The state of New York alone spends \$2,000,000 annually for the care of its insane, and the insane population of our state increases twice as fast as the sane.

Fifty thousand children die annually from tuberculosis in the United States at a cost of \$75,000,000 to the community. Such children have died without having been able to give any return to their parents or to the community. The loss of mothers who have died of tuberculosis, or cardiac, renal, or other diseases because an avoidable pregnancy was added to their ailment cannot be calculated in dollars and cents. In such cases, judicious advice on the part of the medical profession concerning contraception would mean fewer deaths, more healthy mothers, and more healthy babies.

The question as to the moral and economic outcome of judicious birth control is answered as follows: Millions of unborn children would be saved by contraception from the curse of handicapped existence as members of a family struggling with poverty or disease. There are hundreds of young men and women, physically and morally strong, who gladly would enter wedlock if they knew that they could restrict their family to such an extent as to raise few children well. Even our moralists must acknowledge that by an early marriage with a man of her choice, enabled by understanding to limit the number of children, many a girl would be saved from so-called dishonor and in many instances from prostitution, and many a young man from contracting venereal disease.

At the same time, I do not for a moment think that

birth control alone will do away with all the ills of society or the procreation of the feeble-minded, idiotic, half insane, chronic alcoholics, or chronic criminals. Birth control is not a panacea for all the ills of society, it is only one measure toward a saner and happier man, woman, and childhood. To minimize the harm to society and to future generations produced by the just mentioned class of unfortunates, the state should step in and demand medical examination of both the prospective father and mother, prior to granting them a marriage license. Even with our present limited but growing knowledge of the laws of heredity we should be able to prevent many of the evidently unfit from becoming parents and save many a child of tomorrow from a handicapped existence—a burden to himself and others. That in some instances segregation or even sterilization should be resorted to is now an accepted conclusion by all modern thinkers.

As a result of all this there will arise within a score of years a generation of young men and women superior in physique and moral fibre. There will no longer be thousands of our youths unfit to pass a military examination, and in event of a national crisis there will be enough strong and brave men to defend the highest ideals of home and country.

It has been said that the knowledge of birth control would only affect the intelligent, while the ignorant will continue thoughtless precreation, and that knowledge of contraception would be dangerous and would lead to immorality. It is always interesting to have the opinion of clergymen and philosophers on the moral aspect of an issue as vital as birth control, particularly when a large part of an important medical society recently publicly declared the subject of birth control to be an immoral one. Here is the opinion of the Rev. Frank Crane, a doctor of philosophy, an ordained clergyman of the Congregational Church, perhaps the

most widely known editorial writer in the United States. Permit me to quote from Dr. Crane's editorial in *The Globe*, of February 19, 1917: "There are laws in most states prohibiting the giving of information which will enable parents to limit the size of their family. These laws are due to the opinion in the minds of the legislators and of the communities that elect them that any knowledge of how to prevent conception is dangerous and will lead to laxness of morals. There is a very active campaign now going on to change these laws. The advocates of change argue that ignorance upon this matter (1) results in too large families among people that are not able to support them, thus intensifying the evils of poverty and burdening society with paupers; (2) that diseased parents, tuberculous and otherwise, continue to bring unfit offspring into the world; and (3) that a knowledge of contraception would prevent mothers from breaking down in health from the too frequent bearing of children. . . . As to the moral side of the question, it is about time to abandon the theory that virtue depends upon ignorance, and that knowledge is dangerous to one's soul. That is a doctrine that belongs to the Middle Ages. All knowledge is clean. It is ignorance that is poison. To assert that the health, virility, and morality of the people rests upon keeping them in ignorance is monstrous. The women in New York who are undergoing prison and persecution by their defiance of the laws in this matter may seem extravagant and unbalanced in their methods, but perhaps their way is the only one to awaken the public to the realization of the wrong of our present stupid, unscientific and immoral laws."

Since we are a society of medical jurisprudence whose membership is equally divided between medical men and lawyers, permit me to add to this expression of opinion of a philosopher and a divine that of a distinguished jurist, the Honorable Judge Wadhams of the

Court of General Sessions, who made the following public statement after having freed on a suspended sentence a woman accused of burglary: "The woman's tuberculous husband is not permitted by the authorities to work because of his being ill with tuberculosis. It would be dangerous for him to work on children's garments. It might spread the consumption to the innocents. There is a law against that. As a result of this law the husband has had no work for four years. Nevertheless, he goes on producing children who have very little chance under the conditions to be anything but tuberculous, and themselves growing up, repeat the process with society. There is no law against that. But we have not only no birth regulation in such cases, but if information is given with respect to birth regulation people are brought before the bar of justice for it. There is a law they violate. The question is whether we have the most intelligent law on this subject we might have. These matters are regulated better in some of the old countries, particularly in Holland, than they are in this country. I believe we are living in an age of ignorance, which at some future time will be looked upon aghast. So here we have a family increasing in number, with a tuberculous husband, with a woman with a child at her breast, with other small children at her skirts, and no money. There is a report which I have from the Charities Society showing that the defendant, this woman, had to have assistance from time to time to keep from actual starvation, and in order to give her family bread she steals. I will not send her to jail. Sentence is suspended."

Now for the benefit of our medical colleagues, I will add the opinion of one of our most distinguished sanitarians, physicians, and medical teachers, Hermann M. Biggs, M.D., LL.D., State Commissioner of Health, who, prior to the dismissal of the case by Judge Dayton of the Federal Court against Mrs. Sanger for send-

ing information about birth control through the mails, gave to the press the following statement: "I am strongly of the opinion that the present laws in regard to the giving out of information in relation to the governing of infant control are unwise and should be revised. There can be no question in the mind of any one familiar with the facts that the unrestricted propagation of the mentally and physically unfit as legally encouraged at the present time is coming to be a serious menace to civilization and constitutes a great drain on our economic resources. This is my personal view."

I will anticipate the one criticism which would surely follow the reading of my address if I should not make it clear right here that it is a mistake to say that the advocates of birth control do not believe in self-control. On the contrary, I believe it to be the cleanest, purest, and best preventive measure for family limitation. But, unfortunately, here as in so many other instances, it is easier for the physician to teach it than for the patient to practice it. In the often published report of Dr. Alice Hamilton, of the Memorial Institute for Infectious Diseases of Hull House, Chicago, on the excessive birth rate among the poor in the neighborhood of that settlement, there is cited the case of an Italian woman who had borne twenty-two children and only raised two. The *Chicago Herald* made the following interesting comment on this case: "Society would have been better off if this prolific mother had borne only two healthy children. The net increase in the population would have been the same. Further, the terrific waste of twenty babies born only to die, the impoverishment due to twenty fatal illnesses, to twenty little funerals, is appalling." The type of husband this poor woman called her own, I am sure, if he attended church and saw his priest, has been told more than once to exercise self-control. Evidently neither this priestly injunction nor the doubtless frequent appeals for moderation on the part of the physician or the suffering wife were of no avail.

Let me tell you of another case of which I have the record, where the advice to use self-control was of no avail. A woman was discharged from the insane hospital as cured. She had three children and had been insane three times. She was told that she must have no more children. She and her husband were devout Roman Catholics and they thought it a sin to use contraceptive methods. The woman had another child and is now back in the insane asylum. Well, may we ask what chance in life has such a child borne between two attacks of insanity?

Self-control is certainly possible, but while it may be easy for many, it is not easy for all. Sociologically speaking, it is even more difficult when you deal with a married couple belonging to the poorer classes who cannot have separate bedrooms. Self-control can be much more easily exercised prior to marriage than afterward.

Certain critics of birth control maintain that with the knowledge of birth limitation many women, whether poor or rich, who should and can bear children will shirk the duties of motherhood. This I do not believe to be true. You can no more prevent the desire for motherhood in the normal, healthy woman than you can stem the tide of the ocean. It is inherent in every woman's heart. With more marriages of young people and a rational birth control, I do believe there will not be fewer children but the same number of better ones. There will be, of course, instances—and there are too many in certain classes of society now—where for purely selfish reasons the marriage remains barren, but it is a question in my mind whether it would be really desirable for society to have such women be mothers.

I have been asked a number of times why I became suddenly interested in birth control, apparently so foreign to my specialty, so I will tell you. After all it was not so sudden as it seems. I have worked among the tuberculous for over a quarter of a century, among the rich and the poor, in palatial homes and humble cot-

tages, in dark and dreary tenements and in over-crowded hospitals: I have witnessed the tears and sufferings of many a tuberculous mother to whom I have had to decline help because it was too late to prevent. The despair of the poor, frail creature at the prospect of another inevitable confinement, and later the sight of a puny babe destined to disease, poverty, and misery, have opened my eyes to the utter immorality of thoughtless procreation.

Nature's forces are blind. She creates without thought of provision for the offspring in the highest, as well as in the lowest types of life. Think of the bacterial parasite if it had remained unchecked by the genius of a Pasteur, a Koch, or a Lister; of the insects, such as the yellow fever and malaria spreading mosquitoes, if unchecked by a Reed and a Gorgas! I could continue the theme of man's triumph and control over nature indefinitely if I were to enter into the field of agricultural and industrial science. I could tell you of the battles of the Australian farmer with the rapidly multiplying rabbit. Here nature's blind tendency to procreate devastated the fields destined to nourish the population.

The excessive birth rate of human beings in India and China is to my mind also largely responsible for the frequent famines and their sequellae of pestilence, plagues, etc., in those countries. The idea that there is and always will be enough room and food for all mankind on this earth, no matter how great the increase of population, is, to say the least, erroneous. Charles L. Reed, A.M., M.D., former president of the American Medical Association, in his work *The American Family*, expresses his views on this subject in the following words: "It seems, indeed, to the careful student that the danger to the American family today and still more in the future lies in the direction of over-population rather than under-production."

To me, judicious birth control under the guidance of the best and ablest among our own profession, the clergy and the sociologists, based on the highest conception of sanitary, medical, moral, ethical and economic reasons, can well be considered a spiritual asset which will uplift the race and may lead us to universal peace and a better understanding of man's divine mission upon earth.

SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE OF BIRTH CONTROL

There are two preliminary postulates which we shall wish to remember, and make clear in the minds of others. In the first place, it is a fact that no movement by itself is sufficient, and as members of the movement for birth control I am sure that we do not claim that it alone is adequate to the tremendous needs of society. We must be largely dependent upon, and certainly cooperate with, all the splendid agencies that are working at present.

Therefore, the birth control movement is not in-harmonious, but entirely compatible with the eugenic measures of sterilization and permanent custodial care of the mentally defective and congenital criminal. At times I find a tendency to confound birth control with sterilization and custodial care. Birth control is a measure requiring intelligent understanding of reproduction by the responsible classes in society. The reproduction of the irresponsible classes must be regulated by society itself, and among the methods that have been favored are sterilization and permanent custodial care.

In the second place, when a new problem is presented to us, it must be considered from an entirely unprejudiced point of view. It is a great injustice to ourselves, I think, to impose upon our reason the limitation of prejudice. We are not going to do it, nor encourage it upon the part of others. We have, then, two preliminary

¹ By Harriette M. Dilla. Department of Economics and Sociology, Smith College, Northampton, Mass. Address before the First American Birth Control Conference. *Birth Control Review*. 6: 34-5. March, 1922.

postulates, first, there is need for cooperation with every present agency doing genuine work in society; and second, each new movement deserves fair consideration by a free mind. We know that fear and scientific freedom are incompatible.

A discussion of birth control from the sociological point of view would be incomplete if its relation to eugenics were not emphasized. For the sake of brevity and clarity, may we observe the somewhat dogmatic division into positive and negative eugenics?

Under positive eugenics, we shall consider racially fit individuals, with high standards of life, high evaluation of family relationships, and appreciation of the economic obstacles to realizing them.

1. Have we ascertained the proportion of such individuals who remain celibate because economic conditions do not justify assumption of family responsibilities based upon an uncontrolled parenthood? Their's apparently is the choice between celibacy and a parenthood which they are not permitted to control. Amid economic stress and uncertainty they choose the former, and can we censure them?

2. If there are such, would the power of self-determined parenthood help to remove the barrier to marriage and eventual parenthood? If individuals of this class were permitted to exercise their judgment in this, as in infinitely lesser realms, would a considerable number be happy to assume parenthood?

3. If so, would this fact tend to increase the number of family units among the racially desirable, and bring greater numbers within the sphere of potential parenthood?

4. If so, does it seem that the power of control of parenthood is of interest to eugenicists as one promising possible solution of this problem?

Under negative eugenics we shall include, among the racially less desirable, only those who possess suffi-

cient intellect and control to render them responsible individuals. The irresponsible, it is obvious must be excluded from our consideration, and their reproduction subjected to social control.

Is it not true that eugenists have hoped to preclude dysgenic parenthood by directing their interdict against marriage? Have they not, in this way, identified parenthood with marriage and attempted to prevent the former by enjoining the latter? I refer to the racial conscience which they hope to build up among responsible individuals. Now we may ask ourselves this question: What proportion of the racially dysgenic individuals conform to this racial standard, and what are the results of conformity and non-conformity?

First, there are those who conform and do not enter upon marriage. The men of this group decide to live celibate lives, and it is only fair to them to suppose that they intend to live continent. But they find the world as lonely as it is populous, and as many disappointments as there are expectations. The monotony of a gray life in drab furnished rooms becomes unbearable. Stress of effort, strain of disappointment and resistance to the great drive in human nature are sometimes too much, and the hope to live continent fails of realization.

If this is true, does it seem that a possible aftermath of conformity to our standard may be promiscuity of sex-relationship? And may this be true also of the unmarried class whom we considered under positive eugenics? Can the race and promiscuity profit at the same time, especially that factor of promiscuity which we term prostitution?

And if we pass to the further problem of illegitimacy, resulting from promiscuity, shall we be compelled to confess that at times we suffer additional defeat? Parenthood through marriage was discouraged, and to some extent—we do not know how great the extent—parenthood independent of marriage has arisen to defeat what

looked at first like victory. And to the disaster of dysgenic heredity, which we sought to prevent, is added the tragedy of illegitimacy.

Second, there are those who enter upon marriage, notwithstanding our hope that racial conscience would prevail. The dysgenic factor may be tuberculosis, psychopathic and neuropathic instability, some higher and less obvious form of mental deficiency, venereal infection, or one of many other unfortunate defects. How can this family be prevented from becoming a racial menace?

1. Shall it be dissolved? Perhaps it is a union founded upon rare fineness of interest, where there is present every element for the better association of two responsible individuals. Society would hesitate indeed, to disrupt such a family, and is it not possible that society would have much to lose by such disruption?

2. Shall absolute continence be imposed, if so, how and with what results?

3. Shall parenthood be risked by chance that amounts to negative compulsion? or

4. Shall there be made possible to the members of this union immunity from dysgenic parenthood, through control of conception by information which we know exists today?

These are the phases of the problem of birth control as it relates to the individual family. How overwhelming the problem in the field of social relationships at large! From the well-known studies of the Children's Bureau, the report and evidence of the National Birth Rate Commission of Great Britain, the statistical publications of organizations conversant with nation and state-wide problems of social pathology, and the case records of countless social service agencies, we see something of the panorama of tragedy in society at large.

Is it true we have defective children doomed to defect from the moment of conception? Dependent and delinquent children and adults strongly predisposed to path-

ologic careers, not by environment alone, but by congenital defect, effective both by heredity and other channels of transmission? Children conceived of parents suffering from tuberculosis, psychopathic and neuropathic instability or venereal infection, when we are more certain than uncertain that these defects, or that predisposition to them is transmissible in many cases? Is it not true that children continue to be born against the judgment and will of parents, to augment the problem of relief and to increase the number of persons already destined to the humiliation of dependency upon others? And is it not true that many of those children will pay for their intrusion the penalty of early labor?

Is it true that women, many times mothers in the midst of squalor, are seeking the knowledge by which they may cease to burden themselves and society and impair the race? That these mothers upon being refused this knowledge by those professions to whom they look for advice in other vital matters, resort to such modes of self-help as only frenzied minds can conjure up? Is it true that entire neighborhoods of mothers succumb to horrible remedy because prevention is denied them? And all this in an age of the glorification of motherhood, and the existence—we may be permitted to assume—of knowledge sufficiently ethical, aesthetic and physically non-injurious to receive the approval of the most exacting classes of our society today!

Can it be that the menace of extending information is greater than the menace of withholding it? Is it physically possible that the danger from abuse of knowledge can exceed the danger from abuse of ignorance?

Are these not the conditions among enlightened peoples after race-long attempts at relief and decades of modern preventive effort for social welfare? Excellent, searching and systematic as our social work has become, does it sometimes seem to us, (especially those among us who are in the midst of it), that our progress lies not

so much in the solution of our problems, as in the elaboration of more magnificent machinery for their perpetuation upon an ever-increasing scale? And still is it not true that the human nature with which we deal today with such imperfect understanding is essentially the same that it has always been, for after all, has it not remained remarkably unchanging?

Where lies the inadequacy, if not failure, of our past effort? It is possible that we have omitted from our plan of action some vitally important factor of solution? If we seem to possess too much reason to be purely instinctive, and too much instinct to be purely rational, can we not harmonize these endowments, and do so openly, honestly and healthfully? Have we made available to mankind every power at his command for self-rehabilitation? Is it possible that the power to regulate parenthood by control of conception is one great resource upon which we have not yet drawn in our general programs for social welfare?

BIRTH CONTROL AND EUGENICS¹

Birth control is nowadays discussed from many points of view. There is, for instance, that standpoint of economic doctrine which furnished the old Malthusian basis for the limitation of offspring; the production of human life, it was held, tends to outstrip the production of the food needed to sustain life, so that, unless procreation is restrained, nature steps in to attain the same end more disastrously by wars, pestilences, and famines. That argument is still a fruitful source of debate, the most careful investigators seeming to acknowledge in this contention an element of truth, although not accepting Malthus' law in the strict form in which it was first proclaimed.

¹ From article by Havelock Ellis. *Eugenics Review*. 9: 32-41. April, 1917.

Then there is the evolutionary or zoological point of view. Along this line of argument it has been shown how the whole course of natural progress has consisted in the imposition of checks on the immense reproductive impetus acquired at the beginning of life. Throughout the course of evolution there has been a progressive diminution in the quantity of offspring—comparatively few of which in the lowlier forms of life succeed in surviving—and this diminution in quantity is accompanied by an increase in quality which insures far greater chances of survival. Birth control is a continuation of the same evolutionary process, become conscious, voluntary, and deliberate; it is, therefore, altogether natural.

Then there is the humanitarian standpoint of social reform; here we find the democratic argument which appeals to the champions of labor, and is the most widely popular of all in this matter. Any one, indeed, who is acquainted with the lives and homes of the workers, even in the richest and most progressive countries, knows the misery produced by over-excess of children, who are unwanted and cannot be properly provided for. We find an undue strain on the fathers, exhaustion and ill-health of the mothers, and the worst possible conditions for the care of the children, many of whom ought never to have been born, while a large proportion die soon after birth.¹ Hence in all directions radiating centers of wretchedness exert a depressing influence on the whole social level of a community. This is the standpoint of those noble-hearted pioneers who are determined at all costs to free society from a shameful stain.

Very different is the attitude of those who take the purely medical standpoint in relation to birth control. They do not commit themselves to any wide generaliza-

¹As regards England, I may expressly refer to the pictures presented by the letters of one hundred and sixty working women brought together by the Women's Co-operative Guild, in a little volume entitled *Maternity*. These letters, which are published without reference to birth control, are by no means written by working women of the lowest class, but they present many pathetic situations due to overlarge families and constant laments of the awful results of the writers' ignorance in sex matters.

tions, but merely assert that in certain diseased conditions when pregnancy would involve serious risks—as in some forms of heart disease or when a woman is liable to puerperal insanity—it is imperative to use contraceptives. This standpoint has been recognized by enlightened physicians for over half a century.

Finally—and distinct from the evolutionary, economic, social, and medical outlooks—there is the eugenic standpoint. It is not a new standpoint. But today when so many of the chief branches of the white stock are being sapped in their racial vitality by influences of previously unknown virulence—for even the great pestilences of old at all events spared the strongest—this aspect of the problem assumes the gravest significance of all.

That we possess in birth control an invaluable instrument, not merely for immediate social betterment, but for the elevation of the race, is tacitly admitted today by nearly all thoughtful eugenists, though they often retrain from emphasizing the fact. The reason they thus refrain is that they recognize that the prevention of conception, by itself, however beneficial it may be in improving social conditions, has no necessary improving effects on the race, and may even act in the reverse direction. This is evident. A merely random restriction of the fertility of a stock, without reference to the racial qualities of the stock, cannot possibly improve the stock's quality. In actual practice, moreover, as carried on at present, Neo-Malthusian methods may even be dysgenic rather than eugenic, for they tend to be adopted by the superior stocks, while the inferior stocks, ignorant and reckless, are left to propagate freely. This unfortunate result is encouraged by the notorious failure—still so conspicuous among us—to spread the knowledge of contraceptives among the classes which from the eugenic standpoint most urgently need them. It is obvious that the present state of things in this matter could not definitely continue,

for it means that, while the classes that impose social burdens continue to pile up those burdens at the same rate, the classes that bear social burdens are relatively diminishing in number and are, therefore, forced to bear an ever greater burden. In proportion as we realize this vital fact we shall work ever more zealously to spread the knowledge of contraceptive measures among those classes whose fatal fertility it is necessary to arrest.

Putting aside this temporary and transitional aspect of the question, it is important to remember that while the mere limitation of offspring is not in itself a method by which the eugenic selection of the race can be secured, birth control yet remains the only instrument by means of which that eugenic selection can be rendered practicable. When Malthus, more than a century ago put forward his new and revolutionary doctrine concerning the need to limit the production of offspring for economic reasons, he knew of no better method for carrying out the recommendation than abstention from sexual intercourse. In any case it is probable that at that period continence was the only method of limiting the size of a family which a respectable Anglican clergyman could admit. But it was not a practical method. The number of married people who from any motive, and especially from any eugenic motive in which their own personal welfare was not concerned, could exercise the unselfish self-control necessary to carry out such a method must be very small, while people capable of obeying such lofty motives and possessed of the will-power needed to do so effectually are, from the eugenic standpoint, the very last people whom we should desire to limit their families unduly. The method of birth control by the use of contraceptive measures is the one and only method which places in the hands of the whole population possessed of ordinary care and prudence the complete power to regulate, limit, or, if necessary, altogether prevent, the production of offspring, while yet enabling the functions of married life to be exercised, without

any vain struggles to attain an ascetic ideal, or any wasteful impoverishment of physical or spiritual well-being.

Here, clearly, we have the key to the eugenic position. The pioneers of eugenics, while realizing the gravity of the problem they were setting forth, usually left it in the air, out of reach of any driving force. Even Galton, the first and greatest of these pioneers, who was always so reasonable and so temperate in his statements of the objects and aims of eugenics, never emphasized, or even clearly set forth, the nature of the method by which alone eugenics could become practical. Galton nearly always spoke as though procreation and marriage were the same thing, so that persons unfit to propagate the race were, therefore, unfit to marry, and must be excluded altogether from all the personal benefits, physical and spiritual, of the marriage sacrament. That was clearly an impracticable demand, scarcely to be allowed by social opinion, and placing an intolerable burden on many of the best people. The inevitable result was that eugenics was constantly misunderstood, ridiculed, regarded as a fad, while even many of its would-be followers ventured to take up impossible and absurd positions, thereby still further discrediting the eugenic doctrine.

Only a few years, however, after Galton first began to put forward the new ideas concerning the better breeding of the race, in 1885, Miss J. H. Clapperton, a friend of George Eliot's, in her *Scientific Meliorism* clearly indicated that the voluntary restraint of procreation by Neo-Malthusian methods, apart from economic and prudential motives, is a necessary condition for "national regeneration." It may well be that this was the first definite public intimation that in birth control we have the key that unlocks the eugenic door and lays open to human practice a region which is otherwise only accessible to the theorist, if not the faddist. Since then that realization has quickly spread among all who think seriously in this department of life. At the present day it is only the ignorant and the superstitious, including

doubtless many would-be legislators, who really imagine that procreation is one with marriage, and that there is no way of affecting procreation except through the prohibition of marriage. All those today who are deeply concerned in the great problem of eugenic progress assume, as a matter of course, that the only practical instrument by which eugenics can work is birth control. Only by the regulation, limitation, and, if necessary, prevention of conception, in the light of our gradually increasing knowledge of heredity, can we hope to raise satisfactorily the general level of the race.

BIRTH CONTROL AND ORGANIZED LABOR ¹

The advocates of race restriction are striving for the same end as organized labor, namely, the bettering of the condition of life of the human race, and particularly of that portion consisting of the unskilled and semi-skilled workers.

Emphasis on the elevation of the standard of life has been a most important characteristic of the labor struggle in the United States since the real beginning of labor unions nearly a century ago.

Organized labor is vitally interested in raising the standard of life of the toiling masses. To obtain that elevation in the standard of living, the prime requisite is the increase of real wages among the working classes, particularly the unskilled and semi-skilled.

Under the present economic system, however, wages are, at least partly, dependent upon the relative supply of, and demand for, labor. Other things equal, the larger the supply of a certain type of labor in proportion to the demand for it, the lower will be the wage of that labor. On the other hand, the smaller the supply relative to the demand, the higher will be labor's pay.

¹ By Edward G. Punke, A.M. Excerpts from an address before the Fifth International Birth Control Conference, London, 1922. *Birth Control Review*. 8: 347-8. December, 1924.

Unfortunately, owing to immigration and other forces, unskilled and semi-skilled labor in this country is relatively too great for the demand for it. This class of workers, bidding against each other, beats down the wage of labor. Moreover, this class, in which there is a vital need for a larger wage, is the most difficult and last to organize. It is, therefore, largely denied the gains flowing from collective bargaining. Here numbers mean weakness.

A lessening of the number of unskilled and semi-skilled workers relative to the demand for that type of labor is a vitally important measure for organized labor and those really interested in the welfare of the toiler. To a limited extent this is what labor unions strive to do.

Judicious birth control spread after the manner of dissemination by the Neo-Malthusian League of Holland, or that of Great Britain, offers one of the easiest, safest, and racially most beneficial means for the diminution of the size of the manual working classes. Only the United States legally prevents the giving of such information to the people. Imitating the Federal government, which classes all contraceptive information in the same category with obscenity and indecency, many states have made the dissemination of such knowledge a misdemeanor or felony.

However, despite this Federal and state legislation, birth control is now practiced almost universally among the more educated and better situated classes of the population. Through their education, better financial position and social connections, these groups can, and do, obtain the needed contraceptive information. Their low birth rate testifies to the extent to which they practice voluntary parenthood.

On the other hand, the high birth rate of the poorer classes—the unskilled and semi-skilled groups—indicates how effective this anti-birth control legislation is for the less well-situated groups. The poor are penalized for

their poverty. Thus our present society presents a most topsy-turvy condition—those most able to rear and educate a larger number of children have few; while those unable to decently rear and train but a few have many.

Further, it is chiefly these poorer classes—the low wage groups—who overstock the labor market with their type of labor, who furnish the children to work despite the various child labor legislation, who beget cannon-fodder and machine tenders. These classes, through their ignorance and stolid hopelessness, are the joy of the war-makers and conscienceless employers. Likewise, these groups—not from desire but from lack of knowledge to do otherwise—propagate offspring most recklessly, without regard for the latter's future education and chance of ever winning a decent livelihood. It is these classes who most urgently need the knowledge and opportunity of employing modern, scientific birth control.

Hence the birth control movement offers organized labor and its leaders a unique opportunity. Today voluntary parenthood is recognized as a most important step toward the regeneration of mankind, toward the elimination of poverty, with its attendant misery and hopelessness, and toward the prevention of over-population, with the resulting threat of more war, with its gigantic reversal of race improvement. Birth control offers a welcome relief to the working-class mother, who has a child with almost annual periodicity, and sees in the future only a monotonous repetition of this thankless task, ended, finally, by the grave.

Now, by virtue of its name, and of its constituency, organized labor is the champion of the working classes—women as well as men—not only of the skilled and better situated, but also of the unskilled and semi-skilled, of the poorest and worst conditioned. Its mission, its purpose in existing, is the raising of the standard of life of the working groups—the emancipation of the toilers

from their heritage of long hours, low wages, large families, and the resultant ignorance and misery. Further, it is duty-bound, if it would remain true to its early record of social achievement, to get behind all important movements for racial and social betterment.

Voluntary parenthood, then, for the poor as well as for the well-to-do, has an irrefutable claim to the support of the labor movement. This is true because birth control for the lower classes offers a most important means of elevating the standard of life of these groups.

English labor, the leader in so many fields, clearly recognizes this. It is putting its shoulders behind the Neo-Malthusian League in Great Britain. It is helping to diminish the number of laborers competing for a given job, aiding to lessen the number of scabs and unemployables by furthering the dissemination of contraceptive knowledge and materials among poorer members of its constituency. Briefly, it has grasped the tremendous significance of voluntary parenthood as a weapon in the struggle for bettering the conditions of the workers.

It is only a matter of time, moreover, until American labor must assume the same attitude, if it is to forward the true interest of its members and of the large unorganized group for which it speaks. This is inevitable. For it will avail organized labor little to attempt to unionize all the workers, to limit the number of competitors for a given job, to have helped in restricting immigration from abroad, if it does not aid in limiting "immigration from heaven."

WAGES AND CONTROL ¹

I wish to ask consideration for this bill on behalf of the millions of wage earners who have a right to demand a square deal.

¹ Statement of Mrs. Sonia J. Bronson, secretary of the Voluntary Parenthood League before the subcommittees of the Committees on the Judiciary, United States Congress. Cummins-Vaile bill; joint hearings on H.R. 6542 and S. 2290, May 8, 1924. p. 22-4.

In the glamor of romance such as is depicted in the movies, on the stage, and in stories, it is easy to forget that there are almost forty million grown-up men and women whose yearly earnings are below the income-tax exemption of \$1,000. The mass of these people cannot emerge into prosperity. We must face this fact.

Of course the heroic individual occasionally fights his way through to the top, in spite of the most adverse circumstances. But to every case of success there are thousands of cases which amount to tragedy, due to the fact that millions of mothers and fathers have sternly limited incomes which do not permit the successful rearing of unlimited families.

Congress need look no further than to the vast army of government employees to find ample reason for the immediate passage of this measure. The human story revealed in the pages of dry figures of the official register is most compelling. It shows that in the Federal civil service alone there are 548,531 employees. The addition of state and municipal employees would carry the figure into the millions for the whole country. There seems to be no official statement of what the average government salary is; but the director of the Voluntary Parenthood League has made an illuminating estimate by taking one hundred names in alphabetical sequence from the directory in the official register. (It does not include members of Congress, the army or navy, or post-office employees.) These hundred employees include clerks, guards, charwomen, draftsmen, attendants, teachers, firemen, laborers, machinists, accountants, customs inspectors, watchmen, foremen, supervisors, a harness maker, a seamstress, and a judge. The average salary proves to be \$1,605. There were only five who get over \$3,000, and there were eighteen getting below \$1,000. It is a fair guess that any other one hundred names taken from the book at random would tell about the same story.

Now, is it fair play for the government to retain laws which try to keep its own direct employees in utter igno-

rance as to how to regulate their families somewhere in proportion to their earnings? As the government can never provide unlimited wages for its servants, it ought at least to allow them legal access to the knowledge by which they may, if they choose, safeguard themselves against unlimited families.

During the war the War Labor Board reported that a salary of \$34.80 a week was the least on which a family of five, with three children of school age, could maintain health and a decent standard of life. The average government wage, as estimated by the figures already quoted, is considerably below this necessary minimum, announced by one of the government's own boards.

Please also bear in mind some representative facts about non-government wage earners. In the peak of what was called war prosperity the average wage in the shipyards was only \$1,411, nearly \$300 short of the standard set by the War Labor Board. The average wage of the railroad workers in the same period was \$1,137. Dr. P. P. Claxton, former Commissioner of Education, gave \$630 as the average school teacher's salary in 1918. The average weekly wage of the New York factory workers before the after-war slump was \$23.10, and in one hundred and sixty-nine sorts of factory work in Massachusetts during the first year of the war only a little over one-seventh of the adult males were earning above \$25 a week.

At the same time health authorities agree that a growing child should have a quart of good milk a day. Also that there is no adequate substitute for milk. At 15 cents a quart the bill for milk alone for six children would be over \$6 a week. Of course, a man earning \$25 a week cannot provide that and all the other necessities too, and so his babies are puny. Or if they pull through it is at the expense of the parent's vitality, or else charity steps in to save them. And when the children reach adolescence, the age when most of all they need alert, intelligent parents, the father and the mother—especially

the mother—are worn out and dull, unfit to take a strong hand in rearing a race that will have brains and brawn and character.

The point I urge is fair play for the millions. These, and other millions to follow, will for an indefinite period make up the actual majority in this country. They cannot be left out of consideration. They are "the people."

We are bound to believe that on the whole they are decent, normal, responsible folks, who naturally love children and want as many as they can wisely rear; but they cannot afford so very many, nor have them so close together that the family welfare depreciates beyond redemption. That parents and children should be crushed by the very thing which ought to be the cause of their deepest happiness is too ironic. Congress surely has the heart to look at this matter humanely.

All too often young married couples start out in life with an inadequate income even for the preparation of the first child, and the young wife finds she must continue working for the first year at least in order to help meet the expense which the birth of a baby involves. No decent, self-respecting woman wants to become the object of charity.

I ask you in particular to bear in mind the great army of these young married people, who are facing life and parenthood with high hopes and ambitions, and who have no background of financial security, with nothing but their individual earning power to safeguard themselves and their children. It is somewhat the fashion nowadays to decry the young people, and doubtless some of the worry is warranted, but also there are unnumbered thousands who long for and are working for everything that is fine and beautiful, including families of sturdy, well-born, and well-bred youngsters who will make the next generation. On behalf of these young people I beg you to enact this bill, so they may have free and proper access to whatever help science can give them in the vital task that is ahead of them.

BIRTH CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT¹

There seems indeed to be some great fact which Mr. Norman Angell has overlooked in his *Great Illusion*, and of which people are vaguely, if not definitely, conscious, that drives nations into war, in spite of all assertions and proofs that they cannot expect to gain by it.

Now is there such a compelling agency, and if so, what is it? Yes, there is, and it is the pressure of population. It is surely unnecessary to labor this point in view of the utterances which came to light in the course of the late war. The greatest statesmen and military geniuses of the ages—to cite only Aristotle, Bacon, Napoleon, General Brialmont, and the ex-Kaiser—have recognized this fact, and the “biological necessity” for war was the slogan and justification of German militarism. The rapid growth of the German population and the consequent need for expansion were put forward by the militarist writers like General Bernhardt, as a justification for war, and it was accepted as an article of faith by the German people. It was a logical deduction from the Darwinian theory of the struggle for existence and the survival of the fittest, to which all educated people had paid lip service, without the courage to face its great consequence—birth control or war. The great crime of Germany was that after clearly recognizing this conclusion she deliberately chose the brutal course of glorifying and intensifying the struggle and its inevitable result; but the whole of the remainder of the world, or at least the conventional portion of it, must stand convicted of being accessory to the crime by also deliberately refusing to face the alternative, and by glorifying the “increase and multiply” policy which led to it.

Although the general proposition that a high birth rate leads to militarism and war is generally admitted

¹ From article by C. V. Drysdale, O.B.E., D.Sc. (London), F.R.S.E., president of the Malthusian League, London. *American Birth Control Conference. Proceedings, 1921.* p. 124-38. *Birth Control Review.* New York, 1921.

by thinkers at the present day, especially by those who have compared the birth rates of European nations, few have given any attention to the mechanism by which it operates. It will be well, therefore, to give a little consideration to this point, as it helps to clear our minds of many misconceptions. The fundamental doctrine of Malthus which stands as the unshakeable foundation of all rational sociology, teaches that unrestrained population always tends to press upon the means of subsistence, and that in all long settled communities it constantly does so. Today, in every country in Europe (with the possible exception of Holland) and in the United States of America, the birth rate is still too high, in spite of its rapid decline in the last few decades, to permit of adequate provision for all the newcomers; and consequently the death rates are higher than they should be if all the people were sufficiently well fed. In the eastern nations such as India and China, as well as Russia, with their enormous birth rates, the death rates are terribly high, betokening a constant state of semi-starvation in the great mass of the people; and although an immense improvement has taken place in western nations with the fall of the birth rate, there is still a greater or less proportion of the population in nearly every country in a state of chronic destitution. It is to the credit of American economists that they have kept this great fundamental truth alive in their writings, while the economic writers of the land which gave birth to Adam Smith, Malthus, Mill, Darwin, and Spencer, have allowed conventional prejudice and socialistic fallacies to dominate, or silence, their consciences.

Now, the effect of this over-population on a community depends on its temperament. Where the mass of the people are apathetic, either by nature or by religious resignation, to misery, they die off without a protest or struggle, and do not menace surrounding nations. But in proportion as the people are high-spirited and are rebelling against their evil conditions, they exert a

pressure against other countries, which leads to international rivalry and sooner or later to war. Almost every nation may be likened to a boiler in which steam is being generated and the pressure is continually rising. As every student of physics knows, the pressure is due to agitation of the molecules of the steam which may be likened to the individuals forming the community and their impact against each other and the walls of the boiler, the fire which produces the fresh molecules of steam being comparable to the reproductive force of humanity which produces fresh individuals. If the boiler were of easily yielding material so as to be like a balloon, the production of steam could go on practically unchecked for a considerable time, and this would be equivalent to a new community in a large, practically unpeopled country affording room for very rapid expansion, which was nearly the case with the United States in the early part of the last century.

But a time must come sooner or later when the available space is practically occupied and the pressure begins to rise. It can, however, be kept to a fairly low value if the boiler is leaky. The leaks for population which may prevent the pressure rising to the bursting point are all those agencies which cause premature death—starvation, pestilence, disease, infanticide, crime, drunkenness, and noxious drugs, etc. If people are willing tamely to submit to this leakage without effective protest, as in China and to a less degree in India, they will not exert a pressure on their frontiers and neighbors, and will not be aggressive. Emigration is another leak which may help to keep down the pressure. But in scientific, progressive nations the leaks are being continually stopped up. Medical science and sanitation made the start by rapidly reducing the pestilence and disease leaks, and during the last few decades the masses of all civilized countries have awakened from their submission to the starvation check by making stronger and stronger demands upon the economic resources of their countries.

Emigration has also been checked, both by the increase of pressure in other countries, which has made it less advantageous, and by the embargo which one nation after another has recently been putting on the emigration of pauper aliens. In consequence, the pressure of population has tended to rise; and had it not been for the counteracting effect of birth control which has to some extent mitigated this tendency, it is safe to say that militarism would have been more rampant and wars more frequent than they have been. Justification for this view may be offered at this point by calling attention to the fact that the lowest birth rate nations—France, Holland, Belgium, Scandinavia, the United Kingdom, Switzerland, etc., have been remarkably pacific in their recent tendencies as compared with the higher birth rate nations—Germany, Russia, the Balkans, etc.

The process which leads to war can thus be clearly seen. Even in primitive society, where lawlessness, ignorance and superstition make for a high death rate, the expansive force of reproduction is so great that famine is of periodical occurrence and inter-tribal warfare results. As civilization advances, diplomacy and international agreements step in, tending to preserve peace; but at the same time medical science, sanitation and humanitarian legislation stop up the leaks and intensify the pressure, even in the face of a falling birth rate. The internal resources of most long-settled countries being insufficient to provide food for their inhabitants, a commercial struggle ensues in which each country tries to produce goods to exchange for the food of other less crowded countries. For this purpose it is necessary to capture the most important markets and to produce goods at the lowest possible cost in order to hold them against competitors. The capturing of markets leads to international jealousy and friction, and the process is intensified by the continual efforts of the wage earners through strikes and agitation to get higher wages and thus increase the cost of production. Just as in the case of

our steam boiler, any pressure in one part is diffused through the mass and tends to strain it to the bursting point. The rivalry and friction grow in spite of efforts of the diplomatists to allay them, until the explosion comes and the world is plunged into war.

The importance of this aspect of the question is that it puts a totally different face on the origin of war to that which is popularly imagined. The popular idea is that war is caused by the ambition of rulers, or the machinations of greedy capitalists, and that the well-meaning masses who desire to live at peace with their neighbors are hounded into war for the vanity or avarice of these evil workers. However plausible this may appear on the surface, it is an absolutely false view of the situation. We are all responsible for war, and we must realize our responsibility if we wish to prevent its recurrence. I do not mean that we are all equally responsible in fact or intention; but no pacifist or socialist can stand aside or say that because he has a horror of war and has written denunciation of it he is absolved from responsibility for it. On the contrary, all those who have spent their time in preaching vain ideas instead of in increasing production, and all those who have attempted to wrest a greater share of the produce of the community through labor agitation or demand for humanitarian legislation, have assisted in increasing the competitive struggle between nations in order to supply their needs or demands and have contributed largely to the forcing on of war. The medical profession in its constant conflict with death, and in its succor of unfit types, has been a most powerful war maker. It is true that when the pressure is high there are certain rulers and individuals who see a prospect of advantage to themselves in war, and may cause a somewhat premature explosion; but the pressure and rivalry arise from the mass of people, and the machinations of emperors and capitalists would be of no avail if the pressure were not there.

This is the meaning of the German "biological necessity for war" which is remorselessly true, unless the birth rate of each country is restricted to the level which enables its inhabitants to live on its own resources or on the amount of foreign trade which arises from the actual desire on the part of other countries to obtain their manufactures. Unless this is recognized as a fundamental principle by the League of Nations its efforts will be of very little value and no sane patriotic people will be willing to disarm and entrust the security of their country to its imaginary protection.

But now that birth control is available and that the great majority of people are eager to avail themselves of it, the whole outlook is changed. If the knowledge of hygienic methods of birth control were made available to all adult people, as the most elementary principle of liberty demands that it should be, all young people could marry early and only have as many children as they could bring up comfortably by their own unaided efforts, the competitive pressure of each family against its neighbors would be removed, and the pressure of the whole nation against its frontiers or neighbors would disappear with it. If this happy state of affairs comes to pass in a few years, as it appears likely to do in some of the great European nations at least, the shadow of militarism will recede, the League of Nations will gain real power, and progressive disarmament can be undertaken without fear.

There are many who will admit the justice of this view, but maintain their opposition to birth control on the ground that it is unsafe for one nation to diminish its birth rate in advance of other nations. This is the most serious difficulty in the situation, and it needs vigorous handling by the advocates of birth control.

What I specially want to make clear is that *birth control, while diminishing the aggressiveness of a country, actually increases its defensive powers.* Just as the

same wind may cool a hot body and warm a cold one, so birth control will diminish militarism and increase military strength, and there is no greater paradox in the one statement than in the other. Surely it is patent by this time that large populations enfeebled by want are not a source of military strength. China, Russia, and India have the largest populations in the world, but no one seriously regards them as great military powers. Any danger which exists in the east does not arise from them, but from the Asiatic country which has the smallest population and the lowest birth rate—Japan.

But now comes the point when the true meaning of the population question appears, and which shows why birth-controllers ought to give the greatest possible attention to the fundamental Malthusian doctrine.

Birth control, especially when eugenically applied, does not lessen the numbers and even causes them to increase more rapidly.

This is the most important matter from the national standpoint which we can possibly deal with. It is perfectly simple, but it seems very difficult for most people to understand it.

Imagine a family living alone on a small islet, and, therefore, composing a small state in itself, with just enough food to support the husband and wife and four children. If the parents have four children all will be well, and they can bring them up to vigorous maturity. But suppose they have twelve children. The eight additional mouths to be fed will mean a reduction of rations all around; and unless the parents deliberately make a selection of the four which are to survive and let the others perish quickly, the attempt to preserve all will lead to such a serious weakening of the whole family that the whole of the children may die, or at most only one or two survive. In other words, the arrival of each child beyond the maximum actually diminishes the amount of survival, besides seriously impairing the vigor

of those who do survive. Consequently, if by birth control the parents are able to restrict their family to the number they can feed properly, they will actually gain a greater and more efficient increase than if they have an unlimited family.

A nation is simply a congeries of such families, and what is true for the family is true for the nation as a whole. When we observe the individual families of a nation, the rule does not appear to hold, as we find many instances of ten or a dozen children in which the bulk have survived. But this is generally because such families have received assistance either from the state or from other individuals, which means that they have received supplementary rations from the common stock. The result is that through taxation or high prices others are either prevented from marrying or (if they have birth control knowledge) limit their families to a greater extent than they would otherwise have done. Celibacy and very small families are common among the educated, prudent, and public-spirited classes, because of the increasing burden laid upon them by the large families of the poor and ignorant. Although, therefore, it may appear to the superficial observer that large families are the great source of increase of population, this is certainly untrue when the whole of the phenomena are taken into account.

Today, owing to the ignorance of birth control methods, we have the degrading spectacle of a large section of poor women condemned to the torture of bringing forth an unlimited number of weakly underfed children, partially supported by the efforts of the educated classes, whose women are denied marriage or maternity in consequence. I have shown, and the experience of France confirms it, that if all women married and had an average of three children, the increase of population of any European country would be as high as it is now, and this would mean a 50 per cent increase in under thirty years, or a doubling of population in about fifty years.

Any attempt to increase faster than this has the same results for the nation as for the isolated family—a high death rate and an actual reduction of the rate of increase owing to the useless consumption of abbreviated lives, and a reduction of efficiency from under-nutrition. Birth control for the nation, as for the family, actually enables the population to increase faster by eliminating useless consumption of food. And, further, if it is selectively applied, so that the poorest, diseased and least efficient types reproduce less, as natural inclination would lead them to do, the efficiency of the race and its productive power would be increased, and a more rapid increase of population could be sustained.

“Pure theory,” it will be objected. But the fact confirms it. In the majority of European countries the birth rate has been steadily declining during the past four decades at least, the starting point of the decline being in many cases the Bradlaugh and Besant trial of 1876, which was the means of spreading contraceptive information all over the world. But in every case the death rate has fallen with the birth rate, and in some instances at an even greater rate, so that the rate of natural increase of population is actually greater now than before the decline of the birth rate set in, just as our theory indicated. Even in France, which has so often been held up as a terrible example of a “dying nation,” and in which the birth rate fell from 38.9 per thousand before the revolution to 20.6 per thousand in the decade 1901-1910, the death rate fell from 37 to 19.4 per thousand, so that she was still slowly increasing in numbers at the rate of 1.2 per thousand per annum, and almost as fast as when her birth rate was nearly double the pre-war figure. The low average increase of France is explainable not by her low birth rate but by the fact that her food resources can only be increased very slowly, as her agriculture was developed to a very high degree even before the revolution, and she has had very few mineral resources to enable her to be a successful manufacturing nation.

As Ontario, in Canada, with a similar birth rate, had a death rate of only 10 per thousand, or a 9 per thousand increase, it is obvious that France could greatly increase its acceleration of population by decreasing its death rate if its food supply permitted, and that appeals for an increase of its birth rate are worse than futile.

Germany has witnessed an extraordinary fall in its birth rate since 1876, but its rate of increase up to the beginning of the war remained practically as high as ever. In fact the rate of increase of western Europe has shown a steady acceleration since the decline of the birth rate set in, in 1876.

Holland, however, shows the most remarkable verification of this theory. As is now fairly generally known, the Neo-Malthusian movement in Holland, which started in 1881, was able to work almost from its inception with greater freedom than in any other country, and to give birth control information freely to the poor. Thus Holland is the only country in which birth control has had an opportunity of being exercised on eugenic lines. The result has been exactly what Neo-Malthusians predicted. The birth rate has fallen from 37 per thousand in 1876 to 28 in 1912, but the death rate has fallen from about 23 per thousand to 12.3. So the rate of natural increase has actually risen from 14 to 15.7 during the period, and before the war it was about the highest in Europe. The infantile mortality has also fallen rapidly and regularly; and the general death rate in Amsterdam and the Hague, the two great centers of the propaganda, was only 11.2 and 10.9 respectively in 1912, the lowest for any large towns in Europe, and nearly as low as the record death rate (about 9.5) for New Zealand.

And the effect on the national physique, as evidenced by the army returns, is no less marked. Since 1865 the proportion of young men over 5 feet 7 inches in height has risen from 24.5 to 47.5 per cent while that of those under 5 feet 2½ inches has fallen from 25 to under 8 per cent. Indeed, Dr. Soren Hansen at the first Eugen-

ics Congress actually asserted that the average stature of the Dutch people had increased by four inches within fifty years.

Whether this is due to birth control, as we Neo-Malthusians contend, or not, these facts prove beyond the possibility of dispute that a considerable reduction of the birth rate may take place with an actual acceleration of numbers and an immense improvement in military efficiency, which is exactly what we have contended. But in spite of this rapid increase of strength, Holland has certainly not shown the least sign of military ambition or aggressiveness. She is able now to live on her agriculture and industry without undue stress, and she asks nothing more than to live at peace with the world. We never even hear of her in connection with the international complications and disputes, although the intense patriotism of the Dutch people needs no proof.

It cannot, therefore, be gainsaid that the only country in which Neo-Malthusian propaganda has been given fairly free play, and in which the mass of the people are able to regulate their families in accordance with their own desires, has completely vindicated our contention that a universal knowledge of birth control strengthens a country for defence while removing all cause for offence. If the example of Holland were followed by the whole civilized world, each country would become so strong and at the same time so pacific that the risk of war would rapidly disappear and the League of Nations would be able steadily to gain such support and strength that its protective power could be relied upon, and disarmament could be undertaken by all powers simultaneously without danger. Until this happy state of affairs exists, however, the only rational step is to aim for *a federation of all the low birth rate nations*. Scandinavia, Holland, Belgium, Great Britain, France, Switzerland, United States, Australasia, Canada, and now even perhaps Germany and Austria, have already lowered their

birth rates well below the thirty per thousand mark, and should be ready to bind themselves into a federation which will not only keep the peace in Europe, but form an impregnable protection against any possible attack from the east. But if the opponents of birth control keep up their senseless and suicidal repression, and keep the poor in misery and ignorance, nothing can prevent constant labor unrest with its injurious effect upon industry, over-population, and international rivalry for markets, with the friction it engenders and the need for huge armaments to back up this rivalry; while on the other hand the class hatred and suspicion born of evil economic conditions will inevitably tend to ever greater national insecurity. The opponents of birth control are the greatest enemies of peace and prosperity, and it matters not how loudly they proclaim the ideal of international brotherhood so long as they maintain this opposition.

Another most serious factor in the situation nowadays is that if the mass of the people are discontented and at war with society they may form a most formidable menace to the power of their country in time of war by strikes and the holding up of the production of munitions, etc. Nearly every nation was seriously weakened by this difficulty in the late war, and there can be no doubt that this difficulty will be more grave in the future unless economic conditions are improved by birth control.

The Neo-Malthusian formula for attaining lasting peace and removing the need for armaments is, therefore, as follows:

1. Birth control information should be made freely accessible to all adult married persons so that people may marry early and regulate their families in accordance with their health and economic position, without seeking help from others.

2. The fall of the birth rate should be encouraged so long as it produces a nearly corresponding decrease of the death rate, and each country should strive to se-

cure that its death rate does not exceed the nine or ten per thousand of New Zealand.

3. While encouraging birth control in their own countries, all true patriots should join in assisting missionary birth control propaganda in all high birth rate countries, and especially in Russia and the east.

4. While not putting at present too great faith in international efforts, such as the League of Nations, every nation ought to assist them by all means in its power in order that they may become effective as the birth rate falls in all countries. But they should also insist that the League of Nations should recognize the population difficulty and regulate its policy and decisions in relation to it.

5. While waiting for and assisting the reduction of the birth rate in all backward nations, a Federation of Low Birth Rate Nations should be formed for mutual support and protection, to which other nations should be admitted as their birth rates fall, say to below thirty per thousand. These nations can agree among themselves upon a certain limitation of armament consistent with presenting an impregnable united defence to outside aggression.

6. The federation, as the nations successively reduce their birth rates to the point of being admitted to it, will grow in power until the point is reached when it can dictate limitation of armaments to all other nations and constitute itself into an international authority holding sufficient power to enforce its decisions without needing more than a moderate force to back it. From that time onward all international questions will be regulated by the international law laid down by the federation and war will be definitely eliminated.

There is nothing utopian about this program. It is based on a full recognition of the causes and past necessity for war and not on any vain appeal to high sentiment. It does not call for any immediate sacrifice on

the part of any nation for a risky experiment, but gives a procedure whereby the path of pacifism may be steadily followed, however gradually, until the goal is reached.

It is hoped that the above statement will prove clear and convincing, and that it will lead to the adoption of the following resolution, which has been drawn up in conformity with these views :

This meeting desires to call the attention of all those who are desirous of maintaining international peace and securing the limitation of armaments to the supreme importance of the population question. We maintain that the pressure of population caused by too high birth rates inevitably causes an economic rivalry between nations which forces them into war, even against their inclination, and in spite of all efforts of pacifists, or realization of the horrors and economic evils of war. While, therefore, we cordially endorse the aims of the League of Nations and the desirability of limitation of armaments we would impress upon all supporters of these ideals that they should seek to realize them by the following means:

a. By assisting the birth control movement to disseminate the knowledge of hygienic methods of birth control especially among the poor and unfit of all nations, with the object of reducing economic stress and eliminating poverty and unfitness, which forces nations into war, but weakens them in times of crisis. The reduction of the birth rate in all nations should be encouraged in its own interests, so long as the death rate falls *pari passu* with it, and it may be provisionally assumed from the examples of New Zealand, Australia and Holland that a death rate of about 10 per 1000 should be aimed at as marking the termination of economic stress.

b. By urging on the League of Nations that it should endorse the above policy, and that it should define its attitude to the population question, either by admitting the right of rapidly increasing nations to expansion of territory at the expense of slowly increasing ones, or by laying down the principle that each nation must control its population so as to be able to maintain its inhabitants in comfort within the area assigned to it, and that it shall have no right to demand increase of territory or to force other nations to receive its emigrants if it does not exercise this control.

c. By advocating the formation of a Federation of Low Birth Rate Nations including all those with birth rates of 30 per 1000 or less, and commencing with the United States, the United Kingdom, Scandinavia, Holland, Belgium, France, Switzerland, Australasia and Canada, bound together for mutual defence against aggression.

BIRTH CONTROL AND EUGENICS
IN HOLLAND¹

The English Neo-Malthusians were strong negative eugenisists from the inception of the movement in 1877, but all their attempts at introducing birth control to the masses were foiled by the opposition of the upper classes and more especially by the persistent hostility of the socialists. In Holland, however, a more scientific attitude was shown, and in 1876 Dr. S. van Houten (late Minister of the Interior) wrote a strong article in favor of Neo-Malthusianism in the *Vragen des Tijds*, and Mijnheer Greven received his doctorate in law for a dissertation on the subject; while several other prominent men, including M. Heldt the leader of the National Labour Party, enthusiastically championed the doctrine. In consequence when the International Medical Congress was held in Amsterdam in 1879, arrangements were made for the late Dr. C. R. Drysdale (president of the English Malthusian League) to address a large public meeting, and a powerful league was immediately formed which was able to commence a vigorous propaganda. Thirty-four members of the medical profession joined within the first five years, and a practical leaflet describing centraceptive methods was issued in 1886.

At the commencement of 1882, Dr. Alletta Jacobs, the first lady doctor in Holland and wife of Mijnheer Gerritsen a prominent founder of the league, opened a gratuitous clinic for poor women and children in Amsterdam and gave Neo-Malthusian advice and contraceptive information; and in 1883, Dr. Mensinga, a gynecologist of Flensburg, published a description of his contraceptive device which has proved the most satisfactory practical means, and which has been adopted by the Dutch league and at the center recently

¹ From article by C. V. Drysdale, O.B.E., D.Sc., F.R.S.E., *Eugenics Review*. 15: 474-9. October, 1923.

opened by the New Generation League in South London. By 1892 practical instruction could be obtained by poor people in Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and Groningen, and the Dutch league entered into a period of intense activity. Thirty-five thousand practical booklets were distributed in a single year, and midwives were trained and paid to give gratuitous consultations. In 1899 it was found desirable to change the personnel of the league in order to make it more popular with the masses, and Dr. and Mme. Rutgers took up the work with such success that the league now numbers about seven thousand seven hundred members in a country of only about seven million inhabitants. As the salaried midwives had not proved thoroughly satisfactory, Dr. Rutgers took the bold step of instructing lay-nurses in the best contraceptive technique, and at the present time there are about fifty-five of these trained women distributed among the principal towns of Holland, beside several medical practitioners who appear on the league's list as prepared to give advice. These nurses receive no salary but are allowed to charge a small fee for advice and appliances, and they are eagerly consulted by poor women.

There can be no doubt, therefore, that practical information has been available to the poorer classes on a fairly large scale in Holland for many years, and we have now to consider its results; particularly from the eugenic standpoint.

It must however be recognized from the outset that it is extremely difficult to distinguish between eugenic and environmental phenomena. The question of the height of conscripts is an obvious case in point, as it appears highly probable that height is considerably affected by nutrition, and especially at the adolescent period. Before the settlement of Europe in 1815 Holland had passed through a long period of war and economic distress, and it seems likely that this resulted

in a serious diminution of stature from which she was recovering when figures first began to be published in 1863. The rising birth rate up to 1876 which is also noticeable in many other countries was associated with an improvement in economic conditions due to the extension of industry and transport, and this no doubt had an influence on stature. The acceleration of this increase of stature from about 1879 would be considered by Neo-Malthusians to be due to the fall of the birth rate from 1876 which was accompanied by a rapid fall in the general and infantile mortality suggesting better nutrition, and consequently almost immediate effect on the young men coming up for measurement at the age of eighteen. But, of course, this is a matter of opinion, and in any case it is quite obvious that such a change could only be of an environmental and not of a genetic character. When, however, we find the rapid relative increase of the highest grade persisting up to the present time, and contrast it with the revelations as to the physique of our own conscripts in the late war it seems reasonable to suppose that something more than purely environmental causes are at work, and that there is now some selective agency in favor of better physique. One thing, however, is clear—that the vigorous birth control propaganda in Holland has certainly been accompanied by a most gratifying improvement both in the number and stature of the young men, and this decidedly appears to negative the frequently made assertions that birth control must operate for race degeneration or deterioration.

Coming now to the vital statistics themselves, Holland most certainly shows the most satisfactory progress of any country in Europe, although here again experts must decide for themselves whether it is of hereditary or environmental significance. Prior to 1876 the general death rate fluctuated considerably but averaged about twenty-six per thousand with a very slight falling

tendency. Since that time, however, it has fallen rapidly and steadily and even faster than the birth rate so that in 1912 when the birth rate had fallen from thirty-seven to twenty-eight or by nine per thousand, the death rate had fallen to twelve or by fourteen per thousand and the rate of natural increase had risen to sixteen per thousand—the highest figure in Europe. A slight rise, both of the birth rate and the death rate took place in 1913 and 1914, followed by a rapid fall of the birth rate and a rise of the death rate in the war years.

It will be seen that this compares very favorably with the corresponding figures for this country, where a fall of the birth rate from 36.3 to 22, or of 14.3 per thousand has been accompanied by a fall of the death rate from about 21.5 to 12 or of only 9.5 per thousand, producing a diminution of the rate of natural increase from 13.8 to 10 per thousand instead of an increase to 16 per thousand as in Holland. From the Malthusian point of view this indicates a diminution of the national efficiency in our own country and an improvement in Holland as the rate of increase according to the Malthusian theory depends upon the efficiency of production, but this point of view will not necessarily appeal to everyone. At any rate the combination of acceleration of natural increase with improved physique accompanying a rapidly falling birth rate is of immense significance to those who fear the effect of birth control on the military strength of a nation.

The course of the infantile mortality in Holland is also very interesting. There has been a rapid and steady fall over the whole period of the declining birth rate (with a slight arrest during the war period) and it had fallen to only seventy-three per thousand in 1920—the lowest figure in Europe. The contrast between this and our own country is striking as we had actually a rising infantile mortality from about 1881 to 1899 fol-

lowed by a very rapid fall. This again would be explained by Neo-Malthusians on the ground that in Holland the fall of the birth rate was made common to all classes by the freedom of dissemination of birth control information, thus reducing poverty and overcrowding; whereas in our own country it took many years before it began to penetrate down to the artizan classes, and it was in fact about this time that the papers began to report a diminution in the supply of children to the public elementary schools. Others will no doubt ascribe the recent fall of infantile mortality to the efforts which have been made to combat it, but it does not appear that such strenuous efforts have been necessary in Holland.

Another point of considerable importance is the comparison between the infantile mortalities of various parts of Holland, and especially between those of the urban and country districts. Taking the latter first, it is the general impression that large cities are especially prejudicial to infant life as compared with the country, but the figures for Holland show quite the reverse in recent years. Although the general and infantile mortality (as well as the birth rate) was higher in the towns than in the country as a whole in the first period, the reverse is the case in 1912 and 1921, and the infantile mortality in Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and the Hague has fallen materially below that of the kingdom. The general death rate in the two latter towns has now fallen to practically the value of New Zealand which has for many years held the record.

Of equal interest is the comparison of infantile mortalities in the different provinces of Holland. Here we see in the first place that the order as regards the fall of the infantile mortality is nearly the same as that of the fall in the birth rate; secondly that north Holland started with the highest birth rate and infantile mortality ending with the lowest birth rate, and the

lowest infantile mortality next to Friesland; and thirdly that Limburg (a notedly Roman Catholic province) started with the lowest birth rate and nearly the lowest infantile mortality, but has kept its birth rate practically constant *with an actual rise of the infantile mortality to the highest in Holland*. Comment of these figures seems superfluous. If a low infantile mortality is regarded as a eugenic feature, the eugenic effect of birth control in Holland appears to be established beyond dispute, but it is again only fair to say that a Neo-Malthusian would regard this reduction of the infantile mortality as principally due to better environment due to the improved economic circumstances arising from smaller families.

The only other evidence bearing on eugenic questions which I have been able to obtain are the figures for still births during the last ten years:

Year	Still births per cent of total births	Year	Still births per cent of total births
1910	3.9	1916	3.85
1911	3.83	1917	3.77
1912	3.75	1918	3.78
1913	3.72	1919	3.47
1914	3.75	1920	3.26
1915	3.81		

Except for the war years 1914-1918 there has been a distinct reduction in the proportion of still births, which may perhaps be taken as an indication of a reduction of venereal disease. The proportion of still-births appears to be low in comparison with that of other countries for which I have seen figures, which would appear to indicate both a small amount of venereal disease and of attempts at abortion. The comparative figures for maternal mortality from puerperal fever which have been compiled by Miss Ettie Rout are also of interest. In her table Holland stands at the head

of the list as having the lowest maternal mortality of all countries, although Sweden runs it very close. It is worthy of note that the United States where birth control information has been, until recently, rigidly repressed, has nearly three times the maternal mortality of Holland, although Belgium which has a very low birth rate is still worse. It would appear at any rate that sex hygiene must be at a high level in Holland for such a favorable result to be shown; and this low mortality is one more proof of the good conditions which prevail there. This is also indicated by the much closer equality of numbers of the sexes in Holland (3,410,262 males, 3,455,052 females at the end of 1920) than in most European countries, and by the small number of emigrants averaging only about two thousand five hundred annually. It is also indicated by the figures for wages and the cost of living which show that real wages were rising in Holland for some time before the war when they were falling in most other countries, and that this rise has been accelerated during the war period in spite of the very great rise in prices. But these facts are, of course, only of eugenic importance in so far as they may indicate an improvement in the efficiency of the people, which, in combination with the rapid rise of population, they certainly appear to do.

A distinguished American sociologist who is scientifically interested in the birth control question but is not a propagandist or advocate, has just been investigating this question in Holland, and informs me that he is satisfied that sex mortality is in a comparatively high state, that there is relatively little venereal disease and abortion, and that the economic and social conditions of the Dutch people are on the whole good. Unfortunately I have not been able to obtain any figures for the incidence of venereal disease, and the figures for infantile and maternal mortality must be taken as

the only evidence on this point. From the eugenic standpoint the most important feature would have been the comparative fertility in the various social grades and professions, but I regret that I have been unable to get any figures on this point. But the authority above mentioned agreed with my own impression that there is a much greater uniformity in the size of families in different social grades in Holland than in this country.

The bulk of the figures quoted or given have been taken from the *Jaarcijfers voor het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden*, but those relating to the height of recruits have kindly been furnished me by Dr. J. Rutgers, to whom I am also indebted for the information concerning the history of the Dutch birth control movement.

CUMMINS-VAILE BILL ¹

REASONS FOR THE BILL

- I. This bill would permit the contraceptive knowledge that is needed in most homes.
 1. There should be no more babies in the home than the income and strength of the parents will allow to be cared for properly.
 2. It should be possible to "space" babies, so that births shall be at the best intervals, and at the best times.
 3. Sex abstinence should not be forced upon married couples against their will. Abstinence is always open to those who believe in it; but to enforce it on others is neither fair nor wise, and practically the effort to enforce it fails.
 4. The temptation to abortion, caused by unwanted pregnancy should be removed.
 5. The fear of pregnancy is a disturbing factor in

¹ Brief by Professor J. F. Crawford of Beloit College, Wisconsin. *Birth Control Herald*. 2: 2. May 1, 1924.

many marriages, often causing misery and estrangement.

Note: Familiarity with a wide range of evidence has convinced me that the normal married life is enhanced by clean and wholesome knowledge of birth control, and that lack of it causes much distress.

II. This bill would tend to equalize the birth rate in different sections of society.

1. At present there is relatively too high a birth rate in that part of the population that is (1) congested; (2) poor; (3) ignorant. This is due in large part to ignorance of sound birth control in this part of the population. The bill would correct this.
2. A better equalization of the birth rate would relieve many of our other social problems.

Note on the birth rate: While the extreme eugenisists make certain invalid claims, there is general agreement, and adequate proof, that a high birth rate is more to be feared than a low one. When the birth rate is reduced, the death rate almost always gets reduced still more, thus keeping up the population while avoiding great human waste. Our biological knowledge is entirely opposed to unrestricted breeding.

III. This bill would do away with the greater number of criminal abortions.

The number of criminal abortions is tremendous. There are no exact statistics, but there are probably several hundred thousand each year in this country. In any case the number is appalling. A large proportion are married women. Contraception would make these cases unnecessary, and this bill would therefore soon eliminate most of them.

IV. This bill would do away with the exploitation of ignorance.

1. Contraceptive information and means are now widely sold, but under a secrecy that favors rank exploitation. Exorbitant prices are charged, and the goods are often worthless or harmful.
2. It is impossible now to secure contraceptive information by *legal* means; even *scientific books by scientists and for scientists* are secured in this country only contrary to law, and our own scientists cannot publish their researches in this field. In consequence our people are fertile soil for the exploiter.

V. This bill preserves a safeguard against the irresponsible circulation of unsound information. (It requires adequate medical *endorsement* of all contraceptive means and information, without giving the medical profession a monopoly in the *circulation* of this information.)

VI. This bill corrects a mistake made in the Comstock anti-obscenity law of 1873.

1. As the Comstock bill was first read in Congress, it contained a provision which allowed a knowledge of the normal and clean use of contraceptives.
2. As passed by Congress, (hurriedly and without discussion) this provision was omitted. Every one was in sympathy with the main purpose of the bill, and no attention was given to details.
3. As passed, that bill definitely classes contraceptive information as obscene. This has not been done by the law of any other country.
4. The purposed bill would correct this blunder of the Comstock law.

Note: It calls for no appropriation or administration. It simply opens the way for sound information. And it relieves the postal service and other bodies of the burden of an unenforceable law.

VII. This bill is supported by informed and responsible opinion.

1. Eugenists, biologists, and social workers, generally favor birth control.
2. The list of members of the Voluntary Parenthood League is evidence of the high character of the support this bill has.
3. I am personally acquainted with many others, the best in the community, who, though not members of the league, support its position. The same must be true in circles outside my acquaintance. In fact, where there is adequate information there is very little opposition.
4. In England birth control is supported by a large body of distinguished people. In Holland, and to some extent in other countries, a system of birth control clinics has been long established, with wholly salutary results.

REASONS AGAINST THE BILL

VIII. This bill may increase immorality, through removing the fear of pregnancy.

1. But there is very little morality merely through the restraint of fear. Those who cannot otherwise restrain their passions seldom stop for fear of pregnancy. (The number of abortions proves this.)
2. This bill would greatly decrease some kinds of immorality. A large proportion of abortions are by married women, and a large part of prostitution is supported by married men. Birth control in the home would do away with much of this.
(See 1, 5 and III above.)
3. The tendency of moral education today is strongly to emphasize and to rely upon positive motives of moral and social concern, not upon

fear and ignorance. With the younger generation the appeal to fear simply does not work. but they are concerned about genuine human needs when these are frankly made clear to them.

4. Those who oppose this bill are mostly glad to have birth control information themselves, even illegally obtained; it is only other people's morals they are afraid of. This is an unjustifiable paternalism.
5. Those who are going to be promiscuous anyway are the very ones who should *not* have children, from the point of view either of heredity or of child rearing.
6. Granting even more harm to morals than would probably be the case, the good effects of the bill would far outweigh the bad. In other countries, free contraceptive knowledge has not proved harmful to morals.

IX. This bill may tend toward race suicide.

1. It has not so proved. In Holland the birth rate has slightly decreased, but infant mortality has decreased even more, and there has been a net increase of population.
2. There is in most families a strong desire for children which seems to be quite adequate under favorable economic conditions.
3. It is usually better for society that those who do not want children should not produce them.

X. This bill may cause physical harm.

On the contrary, it would reduce the harm now caused by some of the less desirable methods of contraception.

Note: I am somewhat widely informed about medical opinion and about common practice in this field, and

I venture to say positively that the best attested methods are physically harmless ones. (See IV, above.)

XI. This bill is against religion.

It is difficult to argue about religious conviction, or bring it to the test of facts. It is right for those to avoid contraception whose religious convictions condemn it; but it is not right that they should forbid information to those who do not share these religious convictions. Public policy should be determined by the common good, not by religious authority.

XII. This bill is embarrassing.

There is a taboo in this country on the frank consideration of sex problems. This does not increase real delicacy of feeling, which of course we should cultivate at its best. But it does lead to sex embarrassment, which makes it difficult to discuss or vote for such a bill as this. But this is an irrational attitude, which wise persons are discarding. In spite of some prejudiced constituents, the vote should be on the merits of the bill. Eventually the bill will pass. It is needed and should pass now.

XIII. Certain confusions about birth control.

(These are not arguments, but are confusions very common in opponents of birth control, and need correction.)

1. Confusion of contraception with abortion.
(In fact contraception does away with abortion. See III, above.)
2. Confusion of permitted knowledge about contraception with the enforced practise of it.
(In fact it is not proposed to *require* birth control of any one.)
3. Confusion of permitted freedom in the home with governmental intrusion into the home.
(In fact the bill involves no such intrusion. It is not paternalistic, as our present law is.)

CUMMINS-VAILE BILL¹

I speak for both myself and my husband, Dr. Otto Charles Glaser, who is the head of the department of biology at Amherst College, the alma mater of President Coolidge.

It seems to me that there is a slight misunderstanding on the part of the various religious organizations here represented, especially the Catholics, about the Vaile bill, and I would like to discuss it from the scientific point of view. I feel that we only stand on our rights as American citizens on this proposition. Do not misunderstand me. We do not object to the teachings of the Catholic faith on this subject for their own people. But we do feel that it is up to their own priests to advise them, instruct them, and keep them in order. They have no right to ask Federal aid to help the priests in matters of church discipline. I would make the same reply to any other set. Suppose, gentlemen, that the Christian Scientists came to you and said that they could not keep their people from using doctors. Would you then pass legislation to do away with medical knowledge at the request of these Christian Scientists? We have no objection to their taking any attitude on this matter, but we do object to their method of forcing it on others. We wish to be free to create scientific values without their interference. This is very difficult in the field of birth control, because under the present law the scientist is not free to work in this particular field. In every other than the human species there is freedom. The United States Bureau of Fisheries have a corps of scientists who work across the road from us in the department's

¹ Statement of Mrs. Dorothy Glaser, of Amherst, Massachusetts, before the subcommittees of the Committees on the Judiciary. United States Congress. Cummins-Vaile bill; joint hearings before the subcommittees of the Committees on the Judiciary, on H.R. 6542 and S. 2290. April 8, 1924. 68th Congress, 1st Session, p. 30-3.

laboratories at Woods Hole. They carry on experiments at government expense with huge tanks of eggs and sperm. They limit the birth of the fish until such time as the temperature, season, and other environmental conditions are right, so that the young fish may have a square deal. But then America wants the best possible fish. The Bureau of Animal Husbandry is carrying on work in fertility, and I have a letter from Doctor Cole, the chief of this department, indorsing the Vaile bill. Now, however, if some one is very much interested in problems of fertilization in his own species and wants to work in this field, to create new material for the use of the medical profession, what happens? He goes into his laboratory; and suppose he makes a discovery; if he then tells anybody, if he publishes what he has discovered, or whispers it through the key-hole, he is in the position of Galileo, about four hundred years ago. He is likely to go to jail for giving his scientific knowledge to the world. In fact, the law tells him that it is obscene. He can, however, publish it in any other country in the world, except the United States.

Of course, we cannot agree with the point that has been made this morning, that it is an interference with nature, nor grant that that is a logical argument. For scientific discovery and all medicine is an interference with nature, as are electric lights and plumbing. In fact, it is when we do not know how to interfere with her that many of our worst calamities befall us. The flu came so suddenly that science could not help, and few of us enjoyed letting nature run her course. In the case of yellow fever the government scientists stepped forward and through birth control of the mosquito, a rank interference with nature, removed one of the greatest menaces to the south.

Again, I would like to emphasize the right of every American to all the scientific information that we can

give him and to insist that no group have the right to keep it from him. The scientist has not found that ignorance is bliss. Is it, then, unreasonable for him to ask why his government, which stands for free education and the public school system, should write into a law in this instance a faith in man's ignorance about himself? I plead, then, for the removal of this law which would restrict man's knowledge about himself. Have we not faith enough in the people to let them have such information as we possess, or are some fields of science to be kept for the favored few?

Of course, the point of restriction of experimentation, had it come up in other relations, would have been a serious thing for all of us. As an example, the man who discovered insulin, the only known control for diabetes, could never have made this discovery had he been prevented by law from having free access to the material and work done by others before him. There is much valuable material being published in European laboratories. If, however, any scientist or physician brings this material into our country for use in our laboratories that we may advance our knowledge in this field, he is likely to go to jail by reason of the fact that the law tells us it is obscene literature. It can only be done on the bootlegging basis.

We have at present students at Amherst going into all professional fields, many to medical schools, but they may not be given any information in relation to this subject, even though they may ultimately want to use it for the control of venereal disease among their patients. They, like the rest of us, must just find out what they can as best they may. Doctor Litchfield has already stressed this point.

One other point I should like to touch on in regard to the scientific point of view: We hear a great deal about "interference with nature" and the "right of the child to be born." To speak perfectly frankly, to a sci-

entist this is nonsense, for in the light of the facts it leads to the *reductio ad absurdum*. I am sorry if I shocked the reverend father, who has just told us that these are things not even to be mentioned among Christians. The scientist must face all facts, sex included. The recent studies of bubonic plague in China have been very unsavory and have been made at great personal risk. But some one must have the courage to face all of life, not selected sections of it.

So I will continue and tell you that it has been found that every human female has thirty-six hundred eggs and every male liberates two million five hundred thousand sperm at a time. Now, if the "right of the child to be born" means anything at all it must mean, then, the right of the egg to be fertilized, for it does not become a child until it does. Which, then, gentlemen, is the sacred egg? I would say that it is that egg which is fertilized at a time when both parents are in a position to give it a square deal; to give the child food, care, and the sort of environment which goes to the making of a decent American citizen.

Nature, as you know, has another way of getting rid of the excess of the unwanted children, and this way is death. In other species—fish, frogs, etc.—the greater portion of the young die before maturity. Nature does it not by birth control but by death control. We have a way which we call less brutal. We keep many of these children alive, unfed, and in misery until they are ripe to fill the ranks of the Industrial Workers of the World and Bolsheviks; or we put them into asylums for the unfit at huge public expense, where, if you have seen them, you know that science's way is kinder.

I think I have covered the main points. I say again, we have no antagonism to the churches. The scientist would simply like to be left free to investigate his material and to put it at the disposal of all the Ameri-

can people, without church interference. He asks no pay for what he does. The man who discovered insulin and the man who discovered 606 did not charge. We simply want the American people trusted with the best information that we can give them about this matter; that all, not some, may have the right to use it or not, as they see fit.

CONTROL OF PARENTHOOD--MORAL ASPECTS.¹

In this short article I can only give the headings of the points which I proved at length in my little book, *Outspoken Essays*.

1. Human evolution has been steadily in the direction of diminishing fertility and increasing parental care.

2. Population always presses on the means of subsistence, and in no circumstances is anything like the natural rate of multiplication, which would double population about every twenty-five years, possible except for a very short time.

3. Voluntary limitation has always been practiced. The old methods are seasonal wars, which are defended as necessary on this ground; infanticide, which is almost universal among savage races, and has been preached from sheer necessity in such civilized communities as ancient Greece and modern China; abortion, which Plato speaks of as one of the regular accomplishments of a midwife; and neglect of infant children which produced such results as the family of Dean Colet's parents, who had twenty-two children in thirty years and lost them all except the future friend of Erasmus. It is said that the French Canadians of today take very philosophically the deaths of, say, six children out of fourteen.

¹ By Dean W. R. Inge. *Nation*. 113: 642-3. December 7, 1921.

4. The very rapid increase of the white races during the nineteenth century was a transitory phenomenon which is now drawing to a close and can never be repeated. It was caused by the discovery of machinery which produced masses of commodities for exportation, and by the development of new food-producing areas in empty countries. These new countries are now filling up. They no longer need Europe and Europe needs them more than ever.

5. The decline of the birth rate and of the death rate has almost everywhere run parallel during the last generation. It is absurd to suppose that this is an accident. As I have said, if our doctors want more maternity cases they must make more work for the undertaker. The expedients often advocated to encourage denser population—such as the endowment of parenthood and the building of houses at the expense of the taxpayer—have no effect except to penalize and sterilize those who pay the doles for the benefit of those who receive them. In England the professional class is being taxed and bullied out of existence. Statistics show that the doctors, the teaching profession, and the ministers of religion average only two children each.

6. Whenever attempts have been made to suppress by legislation the sale of the use of preventives the only result has been a great increase of abortion. The German Hirsch, who has written the most complete book on the subject, makes the appalling estimate that in the United States, which he describes as "the classic land of abortion," two million unborn children are destroyed each year. I should be sorry to believe this; but it may be taken as proved that the Comstock legislation has achieved nothing except to substitute a crime for a practice which many good people regard as innocent. In England, where the method is to prevent the public from having access to information, the result is much the same. Mr. Elderton, the editor of an ex-

haustive report on the birth rate in countries north of the Humber, published for the London University Eugenics Laboratory, finds that the public are now taking abortifacient drugs to an enormous extent and gives abundant evidence as to the trade in pills for "female irregularities" which are taken in vast quantities by women of the working-class in every northern town. It is needless to add that great injury is frequently done to the mother and to the child who, after all, is often born.

It seems to me that both the American method of prohibiting what Hirsch calls *Präventiv-Verkehr* and the English method of withholding information are morally unjustifiable and practically disastrous. The state has no right to treat adult citizens like children. Opinions are divided whether certain actions are right or wrong. Let each man and woman decide for themselves. The American law should be repealed; the English embargo on information should be suspended. We must trust to the moral sense of the people; if we trust to any other method we shall only drive them to go further and do worse.

So far I have been trying to clear up the issue before us. It still remains for us to consider whether parental control is right or wrong. I do not propose to distinguish between one method of *Präventiv-Verkehr* and another. It is not a pleasant subject and in my opinion it must be left to the individual conscience or taste. But what is a minister of religion to say if he is asked for his opinion on the matter? I think we may rule out one possible answer—that a couple who wish to have no more children must dissolve their marriage altogether on the physical side. It is not only the sensual side of human nature which protests against this solution. This and no more I will say about means and methods.

We are right to protest against the selfish individual-

ism which makes many young people determined to have a good time, to live their own life, or whatever catchword they may choose. Our duty to posterity is as great as our duty to our own generation. Our children's lives, so far as they are under our control, are as sacred a trust for us as our own. It is a lamentable thing when a young woman has no ambition to be a mother. There are some, no doubt, whose function in life is to bring ideas and not children to the birth; there are others who take up some life-work of public service in which freedom from domestic ties is almost necessary; there may be some who are legitimately attracted by the Catholic ideal of ascetic virginity. But for the majority the right track is the high road which leads through marriage and parenthood; and when any nation or any class raises its standard of luxury so high that parenthood becomes an intolerable burden, nature's heaviest penalty has been decreed against that nation or that class; it is doomed to extinction. May an Englishman express his regret at the dwindling numbers of the old New England families, whom, although (or rather because) they stood up to us successfully one hundred and fifty years ago, we have never ceased to regard as among the finest representatives of our common stock. It is, I fear, racial pride which is killing them off and racial pride is not a biological virtue.

If we have reason to think that we belong to a good stock, it is our duty to choose a simpler life rather than cut down our family tree. Of course, it does not follow that we should have so many children that we cannot do justice to any of them. I only maintain that while civilization is effecting a dysgenic counter-selection of a mischievous kind, sterilizing the good stocks and encouraging the multiplication of the bad, we must be willing to make some sacrifice of comfort for the sake of eugenics—if, that is to say, we are ourselves well born in the Galtonian sense—and we should have enough

courage and family pride to send forth fresh holders of our name once more on an adventure brave and new.

But I cannot seriously blame either the textile worker, whose wife contributes regularly to the family income, if he restricts the number of children below the ideal average which is perhaps three or perhaps four; or the poor clerk who can hardly preserve his pinched black-coated respectability even without a family; or the professional man who can give one son, but not two the education of a gentleman, which in England costs about three thousand pounds; or the highly educated woman who rebels against being a mere household drudge and asks for a little time to cultivate her mind and follow her tastes. These concessions may be made without the slightest danger of race suicide; for in most civilized countries the margin of increase is about 1 per cent per annum, a rate which in my opinion it will not be possible to maintain in the future, unless Asiatic competition forces us to descend to Oriental standards of living.

BIRTH CONTROL AND THE EPISCOPALIANS¹

The newspapers announce a report prepared for the Triennial General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Portland, Oregon, by the Joint Commission on Home and Family Life, which includes a denouncement of birth control. The Voluntary Parenthood League, therefore, respectfully presents, for the thoughtful consideration of the commission, the following points, in answer to those made in the report:

1. Birth control in its modern application means the conscious, responsible control of conception. It does not mean interference with life after conception has taken place, but consists solely in the use of intelli-

¹ By Mary Ware Dennett, director of the Voluntary Parenthood League. *Nation*, 115: 308, September 27, 1922.

gence and scientific hygienic knowledge to determine the wise times for conception to occur. There is ample and distinguished medical authority for the statement that the best methods are simple and are not dangerous to physical health.

2. It is an established practice among most educated parents; and the principle of voluntary parenthood is specifically indorsed by such representative Episcopalian clergymen as Bishop Benjamin Brewster of Maine; Bishop Frederic F. Reese of Georgia; Rev. Stuart L. Tyson of Princeton, New Jersey; Rev. Percy E. Kammerer of Boston; Rev. Thomas Cole of Hudson, New York; Rev. W. P. Ladd of Middletown, Conn.; Rev. Eliot White of Grace Church, New York City; and Rev. Percy Stickney Grant of the Church of the Ascension, New York City.

3. Sex passion, like other human functions, is a God-given impulse. Must it not then be respected and beautifully utilized for human good, instead of feared and suppressed as a shameful thing which is redeemed only when used for procreation?

4. Progressive physicians, scientists, psychologists, and educators, after thoughtful and extended study of mated life, have concluded that the sex relationship has a proper duality of function—the procreation of children and the enrichment of the lives of those who make it a sacred and beautiful expression of their love for each other, with reactions that are mentally, morally, and spiritually stimulating.

5. It is true that all bodily functions can be misused. Excess may occur in eating, drinking, in the misuse of clothing and shelter, in recreation, and even in work. Self-control and temperance are the ideal in *all* expression and *all* functioning.

6. The mind of man is just as surely a part of his human nature, just as much God-given, as is his body. Mind has been used for the development of life

in the fields of science, art, material and industrial progress of all kinds. Are we then to believe that the superlatively important matter of the future welfare of the race must be left solely to bodily impulse, blind chance, and ignorance? Is there not greater dignity, fineness, and response to parental duty in consciously cooperating with God by thoughtfully choosing desirable times and conditions for the creation of our children? And shall not the human mind which has already discovered and utilized so many of God's scientific laws proceed with reverence to perfect the utilization of the discovery that civilized sex union has a righteous duality of purpose?

7. The control of conception is not primarily or principally a birth-restriction idea. We urge the freeing of knowledge so that not only may parenthood be deliberate and desired instead of accidental and unwelcomed, but also that science may more completely serve those who long for children but who from physical or psychical inhibition have not been able to fulfil their longings.

We ask you to present this letter to the conference as the viewpoint of a large, increasing, and representative body of people. This is a group of high-minded people who would like to see the theory of the Christian church reconciled with the obvious practice of both the enlightened clergy and laity.

It is clear to the most casual observer that family limitation is widespread among clergymen and among their congregations. It is also clear—as physicians will testify—that among these people there is no general sterility, so that the limitation of family cannot largely be due to physical inability to conceive children. Can it then be assumed that it is the result of celibacy within marriage? There is ample evidence from much direct testimony that while there may be a few who practice the necessary abstinence, the vast majority do not. Sci-

entific authorities on this subject report that among those who accomplish, and also those who conscientiously strive for but fail to accomplish celibacy in marriage except when children are to be procreated, there is an exceptionally large proportion of neurosis.

In these days of evolutionary discovery in applied psychology, the interactions of mind, body, and emotion have given a wonderful new meaning to the famous old inquiry in the Bible. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of the living God?" Can the church afford not to give thoughtful consideration to this subject in the light of modern science, the laws of which are indeed discoverable by man, but are not created by him?

We urge you as responsible representatives of the church to reconsider the report of the Commission on Home and Family Life, and to revise it with faith that family welfare must be based not upon arbitrary repressions and ignorance of science, but upon self-disciplined natural expression plus knowledge and conscience.

BIRTH CONTROL: IS IT MORAL?¹

The question I submit to you tonight is this: Is birth control moral? Now, when any problem of morality is put to you on whether any particular action is right or wrong, the first question you have to ask yourselves is, What is the purpose of that action? For, if the purpose be wrong, the thing itself must be wrong. What, then, are the purposes of birth control?

The first purpose of birth control is to preserve the health of the mother. If a woman has children as repeatedly as nature permits, her health cannot be preserved. I have heard of women in our slums in London, married women, who say, "Our lives are one long disease." Is it desirable that that should continue

¹ By Harold Cox, editor, *The Edinburgh Review*. Speech at the meeting of the First Birth Control Conference, New York, November 18, 1921. *Birth Control Review*. 6: 7-10. January, 1922.

indefinitely? Is it desirable that thousands, even millions, of married women in the poorer quarters of all our towns should not know for ten, fifteen, twenty years what it is to have a whole year of real health? That, then is the first purpose, to preserve the health of the mother.

The second purpose is even more important. It is to promote the health of the child, for here you have the new generation involved. The children that are born today make up the new generation now. If children are born so rapidly in succession to one another that the mother cannot give proper care to each, it is impossible that they should be brought up healthy children. Attempts are made in many countries to escape from that difficulty by establishing public institutions to assist in the nurture of the children; but I contend that no public institution is an adequate substitute for a mother's care. I contend, further, that you can find no higher moral purpose in life than the rearing of healthy children to be the men and women of the next generation, the fathers and mothers of generations to come.

Those are two purposes which I think you will agree with me are moral purposes.

The third purpose of birth control is to raise the general standard of life throughout the whole community. Now, that is impossible as long as the families of the poor continue so large. In the poorer districts in all countries the children are brought up in poverty without sufficient food, without sufficient training, without sufficient opportunities of play; they are turned out at an early age to earn money, and the absurdity of the thing is that though they go out to earn money in order to assist the family income, their competition in the labor market actually lowers the wages of their own parents.

Again, many people try to escape from this evil of

the multiplication of poor children by all sorts of state subsidies, free meals for school children, for example. Again I say that you are doing a thing which produces worse results than you anticipate, for you are destroying the link between parent and child. Only a little while before I left England a friend told me that she had heard some of the women down in the east end of London—that is our poor quarter there, as here—saying, “Well our kiddies aren’t our own any longer; they belong to the county council now.” I contend that you break the most fundamental of human relations if you substitute the charity of the state for the duty of the parent.

What, then, do the advocates of birth control propose in order that we may have a higher standard of life throughout the whole community? They propose that exactly similar measures should be taken to improve the standard of the human race that a skillful gardener takes to improve the quality of the flowers that he grows, and sows his seed widely and thinly—he leaves plenty of space for each seedling to grow, takes care of each plant as it appears above the ground, and the result is the production of a fine flower. But is not the production of fine human beings an even higher moral purpose than the production of fine flowers?

And the fourth purpose of birth control is, from some points of view—especially in view of the present condition of the earth—even more important. The fourth purpose of birth control is the prevention of war. The surface of the earth is limited and by no magic can we increase that surface; but the power of multiplying human beings is unlimited—you can go on multiplying them indefinitely as you can multiply any plant or any race of animals—and if you continue to do so, if you continue to multiply the human race, disarmament agreements will count for nothing, because

as the different races continue to multiply they will be brought up against the hard fact that there is not room enough on the earth for all of them and then they will fight for space to live. You may take it as certain that the majority of men would sooner kill one another than starve themselves. And what the opponents of birth control, in effect, say is that it is the duty of women to go on breeding the men to kill one another.

Well, that danger of war, I say, is perhaps the most serious of all the questions before us because it is getting progressively more imperative, more dangerous progressively, because the earth is so full that a small rate of increase in any country will give you a large annual increase of population. That is a very simple proposition which a great many people fail at first sight to realize. You can see it in a moment if I put it to you this way: that 1 per cent on a million yields a larger income than 10 per cent on a thousand. If you have got a small population, you can have a large birth rate; if you have got a large population, you cannot have a large birth rate because you will have so many millions of children produced that there won't be room enough for them all. You must reduce the birth rate as the population grows.

How are you to do it? There are only two ways; you can either have fewer marriages—that is what Malthus suggested many years ago, suggested that marriage should be postponed—or you can have fewer children to each marriage—ask people to marry early and live happy lives together but not to have so many children.

I contend that fewer marriages mean, in practise, more prostitution; and fewer children per marriage mean more happy homes.

These, then, are the four purposes of birth control: the preservation of the health of the mother, the promotion of the health of the children, the establishment of

a higher standard of life for the whole community, and finally, the prevention of war. I venture to say that no one will deny that all these are moral purposes of highest order.

Some people however, declare that though the purposes are moral the methods proposed are immoral, and they begin by saying that birth control is an interference with the processes of nature. Well, I confess I find it a little difficult to be politely tolerant when that argument is used, for what is the whole of human progress but an interference with the processes of nature? It is not natural to wear clothes; it is not natural to live in houses; it is not natural to apply science to cure disease; marriage itself is unnatural. The truly natural man, the savage in central Africa, waits for the woman he wants, stuns her with his club, and carries her off to his cave; that is real nature. And if these idealists of what they call "the processes of nature" were true to their own convictions, they would get up and advocate that we should all go back to our primitive nudity and to our primitive savagery—and then there perhaps would be a case for the police to interfere.

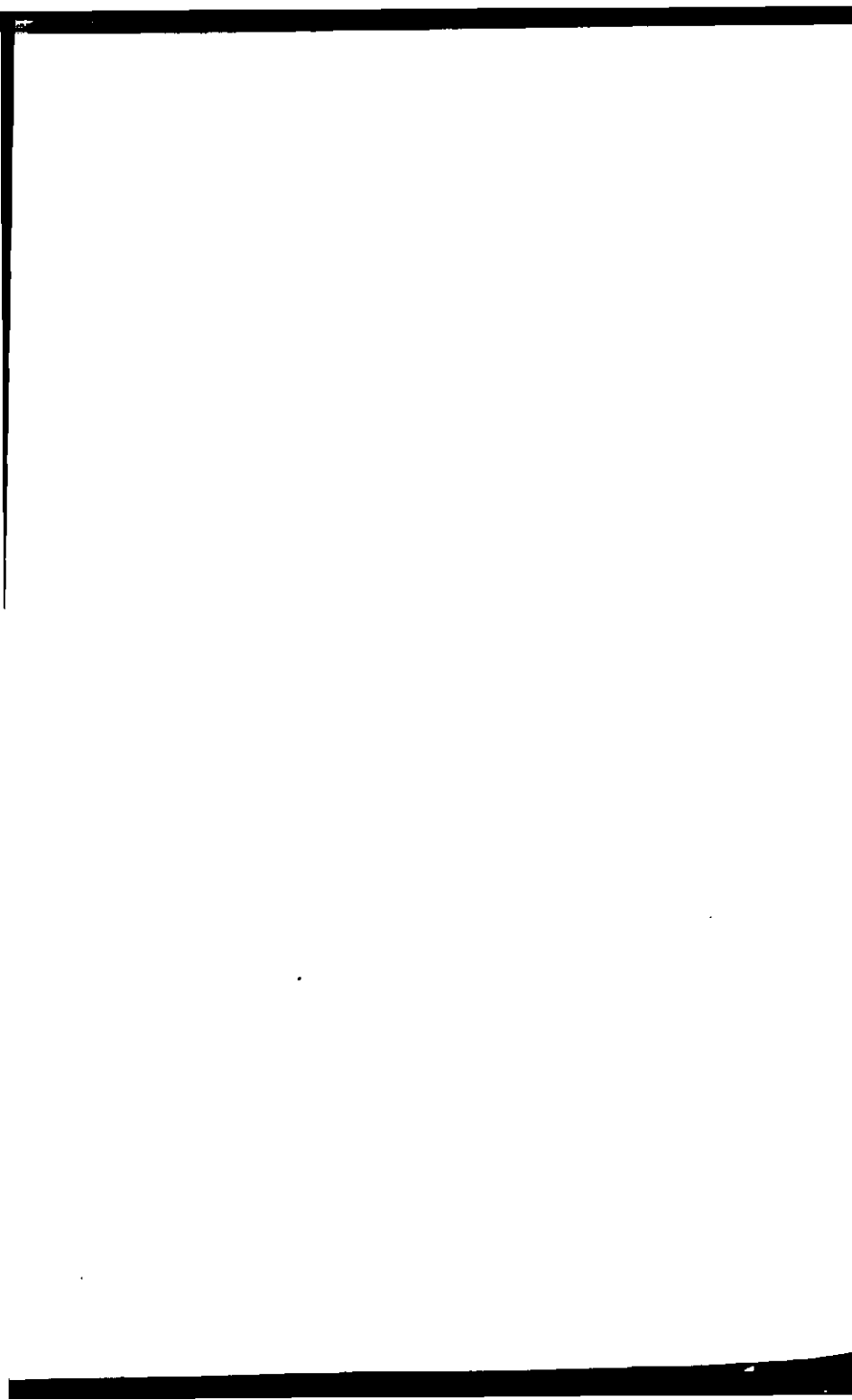
Well, not content with that argument about nature, they proceed to quote the Bible, and they quote a particular text from the Book of Genesis which enjoins persons to whom the command was given to be "fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth," and they have gone on quoting that for centuries, and very few people have taken the trouble to look up the circumstances under which that command was given. It was given to Noah and his three sons and their four respective wives immediately after the flood. Noah, I may remark in passing, was six hundred years old at the time and his eldest son was ninety. To these eight people of rather extended age the command to be fruitful and multiply was given at a time when all the earth was empty; and yet you have ecclesiastics getting up

and quoting that command as if it applied to London and New York today.

Today it is not numbers that we want to increase, but quality that we want to improve; and perhaps it may be worth-while to remind you that that elementary proposition was understood a great many centuries ago by some of the people who contributed to the Bible. You will find in the sixth Chapter of the Book of Ecclesiastics these words: "Desire not a multitude of unprofitable children, neither delight in ungodly sons; though they multiply, rejoice not in them, for one that is just is better than a thousand."

But if parents are to have fewer children they must practise birth control. I contend that it is impossible to expect healthy young married couples to abstain altogether from the fundamental relation of married life, except at intervals of two or three years, and then to live entirely as celibates after they have had two or three children. The thing is utterly inhuman and impossible and it would break the happiness of millions of married couples. I contend that the love of man and woman is one of the most moving and also the most ennobling of human instincts, and I cannot do better at this point than quote the words of the King's physician, one of the most distinguished physicians in London, Lord Dawson, who, speaking recently at a meeting of the Church Congress, said: "Life without love of man and woman would be like the world without sunshine."

Therefore, I contend that birth control is moral because it renders possible the continuation of that sunshine, because it renders possible the attainment of a higher standard of life for mother and for child and a higher standard of living for the whole community; and finally, it is moral because it prevents the otherwise inevitable recurrence of devastating wars.



NEGATIVE DISCUSSION

EXCESSES OF BIRTH CONTROL¹

Let me say at the outset that I consider your invitation not only a fine courtesy, but a very real privilege. That I disagree with your founder does not alter my sincere respect for her. I admire her courage, her sincerity and her readiness to tackle a difficult social question in spite of the obstacles which constantly have been placed in her path. However great our disagreement may be, regarding the means of attaining the common goal—an efficient and happy society—I fully agree with her that the problem of birth control in all its ramifications is one which sincere and decent people must discuss. We can get absolutely nowhere by burying our heads in the sand and pretending that no problem exists; or that we must avoid its discussion as something unmentionable and even contaminating. Honest men and women should not avoid or fear to discuss openly any question so vital to their well-being.

Why, then, do I disagree with you? It is because your propaganda until yesterday has been based essentially on an emotional reaction and not on a scientific analysis. You have observed, as everyone else has, that there are poverty-stricken and diseased people whose families are far too large for their own good or for the good of the community in which they live. Granted; but does that justify a nation-wide program of broadcasting contraceptive information without reserve? You do not appear to have considered that the problem of

¹ By Louis I. Dublin, Ph.D., statistician Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, New York. From address delivered before the Sixth International Neo-Malthusian and Birth Control Conference, New York, March 26, 1925.

birth control is only one aspect of the larger population problem. There is a bigger issue than the immediate preference of the individual. The very life of the state is involved as soon as we begin to tamper with who shall and who shall not be born. My objection has been that your program has been elaborated prematurely, without due regard to the permanent interest of the state; without adequate consideration of the real population tendencies which today prevail; without sufficient regard to the reliability and safety of the procedures that you recommend and to the consequences on the spiritual life of those who are influenced by your advices. I am afraid that your effort will simply replace an evil of which we are fully aware and which we all deplore with even greater evils lurking less obviously in the background. There is need for caution; for you are playing with fire. Mistakes in population policy are more easily made than rectified.

I shall now proceed to consider some of my objections in detail. There is first, your disregard of the interest of the state. One would think from reading your literature that the matter of parenthood was entirely an individual affair. As one gentleman recently put it "I suit myself with regard to the number of my children. I owe the state nothing." This attitude is obviously very short-sighted and indefensible. It serves, however, to focus attention to the conflict between the immediate interests of the individual and the more permanent interests of the state. The average man or woman generally determines his or her personal conduct without much consideration to the good of the community. We are most of us rather selfish and need very little encouragement to avoid parental responsibility. It is often pleasanter and always easier to keep the number of our dependents down to a minimum. Today, we live; tomorrow, we die. But, the logical consequence of such attitudes is nothing short of a challenge to the permanence

of the state. Society, accordingly, seeks to protect itself against such a contingency. It expresses a general disapproval of celibacy and proscribes the dissemination of birth control practices. On the other hand, it recognizes the dignity of parenthood and as a crudely constructive measure, it has recently begun to take into consideration the number of children as an item in fixing the amount of taxes. In some countries, as Professor Douglas has told us, the size of the family is becoming a factor in determining the amount of extra compensation of the worker. These are a few initial steps in the plan of the state to make more attractive to its people the obligation of parenthood. The state insists on its perpetuation and cannot condone or argue its own suicide. We may express our freedom as individuals only within the limitation that the continued existence of the state is assured.

The birth control problem is, secondly, only one aspect of the larger population question and will never be settled satisfactorily except as the larger issue is solved. Your propaganda to date has emphasized almost altogether the necessity for population reduction as though there could be no doubt of over-population in the United States. I shall be willing enough to admit when I go home by subway tonight that there are too many people in the world, and I have often felt that way in considering the congested areas of our large cities. These undoubtedly represent ineffective community organization. On the other hand, we have a problem of under-population in our open rural areas. But neither picture alone justifies a snap judgment on the present status of our population, whether it contains too many or too few people. A sound population analysis is called for, which would attempt to relate our present population structure to the natural resources of the country and the efficiency with which we utilize our resources. These are highly technical matters which cannot be decided out of hand, not even by generous and high-minded people. If there

ever was a question which called for expert handling, it is this one. For this reason, the American Statistical Association at its recent meeting in Chicago gave five sessions to the consideration of the various phases of the population problem as it confronts America today. It was illuminating to note the great variety of opinion that still prevails among serious students of social science on virtually every topic under discussion. Where there are so many conflicting points of view, there is little room for easy dogmatizing. There can be, in fact, no simple solution, and no ready panaceas in a matter of this sort.

But, if there is no consensus of opinion on details, there is at least general agreement that the population problem can be attacked only through long and intensive study of our present composition with due regard to the natural resources of the country, to our future immigration policy, to the organization of industry, the improvement of our channels of distribution, the training and direction of our labor supply and a host of other factors which will determine the limits of our future population. Such an approach is a hopeful and constructive one. It is a far cry from the hasty and rather depressing assumptions which have determined the policy of your organization. Without much hesitation, you have ascribed most of our social and economic troubles to over-population and have proceeded to remedy them by striking at the very root of our procreating capacity.

This leads to my third objection, namely, that you have not read correctly the current tendencies in our population growth. Your impression that our numbers are increasing too rapidly might perhaps follow from a cursory examination of the population figures of the country, but not from a more intensive study of the facts. It is true that past decades have shown large increases; but, we must not forget that this growth certainly in recent years, has been mainly the result of immigration

and the relatively high fertility of the newcomers. It is only in the southern states and in the rural communities that the native population has much more than maintained itself in late years. Now that immigration has been almost completely cut off as a source of population increase, we must look to the fertility of the groups within the country and learn what the conditions of natural increase are among them. After careful study of the situation, I have become convinced that we are, in fact, rapidly approaching a condition of a stationary population. Our study shows that the crude rates of natural increase in the United States are spurious and misleading. We have been living in a fool's paradise heretofore, overlooking altogether the sources of our successive increases. Immigration has enormously padded the proportion of our people at the reproductive ages, and this has, in turn, resulted in increasing our crude birth rates and in decreasing our crude death rates. If, on the other hand, we determine what the present birth rate would be if the age distribution of our population were the result of a prolonged continuation of our present rate of procreation, unaffected by padding from without, you will find that the figure would fall from twenty-three per thousand, which it is approximately today, to well below twenty per thousand; and the corresponding death rate would increase from a little over twelve, the present crude figure, to well over fifteen. The effect of these two corrections resulting from an artificial age distribution, will be ultimately to reduce the rate of natural increase from over 1 per cent per annum to only $\frac{1}{2}$ of 1 per cent. Our crude birth rate, however, is falling very rapidly. It has declined over 30 per cent in the last thirty years and the end is not yet in sight. How much lower it may go, I do not know. But, even at its present level and with our current death rate, it will take over one hundred and twenty years to double our numbers if we continue to depend on natural increase alone. These

figures agree closely with the estimates of Professor Pearl who, on biological assumptions, forecasted a population of close to two hundred millions in 2040. Certainly, no country with the wealth of natural resources of the United States will fail to provide its people with the necessities of civilized life if it continues to increase so slowly.

Another and perhaps more instructive approach is to consider the number of births that it requires under present conditions of mortality to keep our population stationary. According to the mortality and marital rates prevailing in 1920, it is necessary on the average for every ten married couples to have twenty-six children in order to replace the original quota from which the parents sprang. But, not all families have children; one marriage in every six is either sterile or does not lead to live issue. The burden of childbearing, therefore, falls on the remaining families, every ten of whom must have not twenty-six but thirty-one children. In other words, present conditions of mortality and fecundity require that families having children shall average better than three in order to maintain a stationary population. All groups of urban American families recently investigated have shown fewer children than this minimum. It is only because of the greater fertility of the newcomers and of those in most rural areas that our annual figures of increase show up as favorably as they do. I would venture the opinion that this very audience would, on investigation, illustrate the current tendency that those who are most able to assume the obligations of parenthood are not reproducing themselves.

This state of affairs is almost altogether a new thing. Until recently, it was the American fashion to have good-sized families. Professors Baber and Ross, investigating this subject among middle class families of the present generation in the middle west, found a shrinkage in family size from 5.4 to 3.3 children in the course of one

generation. This is equivalent to a drop of 38 per cent in the number of offspring in the space of only a relatively few years. Others have found exactly the same situation in other localities. The tendency toward small families has apparently become a fixed habit among the American people. I cannot consider the underlying causes for the decline in our birth rate except to point to the very obvious influence of the widespread knowledge of contraceptive methods. One would imagine from your literature that such methods were a recent discovery which, if only applied generally, would release a long suffering world from all its troubles. But, this is clearly a misconception. There is evidence on all sides that birth control practices are in vogue to an enormous degree in the United States. Every doctor, every nurse, every druggist, and every social worker, will, I believe, admit as much. In no other way can we explain the falling birth rate of the country in recent years.

Knowledge of contraceptive methods is more widely practiced here than in any other country of the world, except Germany and Austria, where the aftermath of the war has taken all desire and incentive for living out of the hearts of the masses. Holland, which you consider the exemplar of voluntary parenthood, shows a birth rate of twenty-six per thousand as compared with twenty-three in the United States.

It is, therefore, not true that we are multiplying too rapidly and that we must resort to a nation-wide policy of birth reduction to keep our population within reasonable bounds. The real danger, if there is one, lies rather in the change in our internal composition which will follow a too rapidly declining birth rate and our approach to a stationary population. There is always grave danger in such a shift of weakening the social organization by increasing the proportion of defective and dependent stock. For it is always the least desirable parents who are the last to curtail their fecundity. We, likewise,

unduly increase the percentage of old people, whose support falls, more or less, upon the young who, therefore, face the prospect in coming years of carrying greater burdens. We must remember, too, that the greatness of America and of our large cities has reflected the prevailing enthusiasm and youth of our people. The spirit of adventure and of progress go well together and have been the outstanding characteristics of our young and vigorous nation. New York, which is the youngest large city in the world in the average age of its citizens, is a striking example of the power and ability of youth. Reducing the proportion of our young people, as we shall by curtailing birth rates, will at once modify the whole spirit of our intellectual and economic life. This is not a hypothetical but a very real danger confronting the country to which little attention has as yet been paid. It is always amazing to me to consider how little we have learned from the perfectly obvious story of the population changes of France and how ready we are to travel her easy road to national misfortune.

Your movement has also thriven on a series of confusions of thought. Your efforts have been especially directed to the amelioration of the lot of that large number of poor people who, you say, have suffered from ignorance of contraceptive knowledge. You certainly have made no plea for those whose favorable economic and social status would readily enable them to bring into the world normal children and to give them every possible advantage for future citizenship. Yet, it is among these very people who need it least that contraceptive information is most widely disseminated and most intensively used. Such activity is distinctly anti-social; for it enables selfish people to escape their proper responsibilities, ultimately to their own detriment and certainly to the injury of the state. You have also won much sympathy for your program through the assumption that it works in the direction of social and economic improve-

ment of the poor. But obviously economic battles cannot be fought by other than economic weapons. The way to meet low wages, bad housing and the other evidences of mal-adjustment is to attack them directly through a broad social program including the better organization of industry, more equitable means of distribution, constructive legislation and those other methods which are gradually bringing about a better day. You do not solve the worker's problems by encouraging him to lose his greatest and noblest possession, his children. On the contrary, you help to maintain the *status quo* by accepting present economic mal-adjustments without a struggle.

The very first question which arises, then, is how best to regulate the granting of contraceptive information and not how to devise methods for its indiscriminate broadcasting. The state expresses clearly in its legislation that such information shall be restricted to cases where the life or health of the mother is in danger. There is undoubtedly a larger group to whom information may be extended with propriety and to the welfare of all concerned. But how shall that group be defined? What demarcations shall be enforced? Shall contraceptive information be available to those who have already borne several children? Obviously, you would not put such information into the hands of young boys or girls. No sane community would dream of permitting it. What consideration shall be given to the economic status of families or other sociological factors in releasing such information? These and other vital questions must be faced and answered before your association is justified in launching a nation-wide program of birth control.

My next objection is that you have proceeded without sufficient proof of the efficacy and the safety of the measures which you suggest. Have you not a moral obligation to assure those whom you wish to help that the procedures you sponsor are at once effective and

harmless? The best medical opinion informs me that you are, in fact, not prepared to make any such guarantees. You have collected no evidence on which to predicate the measure of your success. Such information as is available indicates clearly that there is still a large element of uncertainty in the suggested procedures. Those who have studied the work of the so-called birth control clinics abroad have been equally unable to discover approved methods in general use. But, more vital, is the question of safety. Are contraceptive practices, in fact, without hazard to those who indulge in them? Gynecologists and obstetricians of the highest standing have been very suspicious of some of the devices in use and have traced serious affections back to them. Has that been answered? Have you eliminated altogether the possibility that such practices result in permanent sterility of young married women? I know nothing so tragic as the case of young people who avoid children in the first years of their married life only to find later that they cannot have them when they want them. The number of childless marriages is rapidly increasing to the point of becoming a first-class problem, and there is good evidence that contraceptive practices by young people may have a good deal to do with it. What is your answer to the constantly recurring charge that various contraceptive practices lead to mental disorders affecting either the husband or the wife? And what is the usual effect on the spiritual life of those who, through continued control, keep their families down to next to nothing? This is probably the most serious single consequence of the current fashion. I do not put this at your door, for there are many causes. But nowhere, to my knowledge, has your voice been raised to warn those who, desiring more comfort and ease for themselves, lose the greatest of all blessings and the source of our deepest inspiration, a family to provide for and to live for. Therein lies the well-spring of character development for adults which

is choked and forfeited for what usually turns out to be a mess of useless baggage.

TRUE BIRTH CONTROL¹

The only formidable foe that the nations abroad have met is the Roman Church. In Catholic countries the battle has been fiercely waged for many years—the church refusing to yield an inch to “preventive” demands. Nevertheless, slowly but surely their use has spread “over there” as well as here, till in one instance at least, it has gained government support sufficient to make well-nigh void all the prohibitions and anathemas of the church. If she could but read aright the “hand-writing on the wall” of her costly edifices, she would see that the womanhood of the world is in revolt against enforced child-bearing, and hasten to find something other than material means to set her free. Failing this, her women will take the matter into their own hands, even if thereby, they threaten the life of the race, and imperil—as their churches teach—their immortal souls as well.

When the womanhood of the world—the naturally religious element, the supporter of every religious institution—shows rebellion such as now, the church—even the Catholic Church—should see that notice has been served on her, that unless she devise some way to free her women from unwelcome motherhood, that her house shall be left unto her desolate, and the power over the souls, minds and bodies of her devotees shall fail.

To the claim of the contraceptivist however, that *devices* spell the freedom of woman from her age-long bondage to sensualism, we must answer, not so. The soul-destroying, body-wrecking sex-invasion may still go on, though no child be conceived, and the last state of

¹ By Reverend Mabel Irwin, lecturer on social hygiene, in debate with Mrs. Mary Ware Dennett. *Arbitrator*. 1: 8-14. August, 1918.

the woman be worse than the first. By consenting to the use of preventives, she rivets her chains the more securely, lends herself to her own humiliation, becoming thereby a creature that even the prostitute of the street need not envy. "Prostitute, do you say?" Aye, for *the very essence of prostitution lies in the fact that a function has been so used as to frustrate its evident end.* Preventive devices are used for no other purpose than this. To thus tolerate prostitution *within* the family life, is to make it impossible to successfully cope with it *outside.*

The belief in the physical sex-necessity of the man, is now relegated to the scrap heap of science, by the best medical authorities everywhere. Indeed what is all this sex educational effort on the part of our government at the present time, but to expose that fallacy, and to drive home to the consciences—not only of our soldiery, but of our civilian men and women as well—that they must take a finer, saner, cleaner attitude toward the question of sex, than has hitherto prevailed in order to protect the health and sanity of our nation. No sooner however, is this educational work well under way; no sooner are men and women beginning to look into each other's eyes unafraid; no sooner is the voice of science heard, declaring that the sex appetite belongs, not to the individual, but to the race; that the conserving of sex forces makes for a virile manhood and womanhood, than wily, or misguided, birth control propagandists shift their point of attack—from the physical to the spiritual—or sentimental—and suggest that only in the use of these devices may "the complete liberation of the spiritual object of marriage be effected."

It is true, indeed, that something must be done to stay the revolt of woman against enforced motherhood—some true birth control way must be found. One might as well "bay the moon" or attempt to stem Niagara with a straw as to inveigh against material preventives, while

still holding woman in the chains that lust has forged for her throughout the ages.

It is coming to be recognized among the most intelligent women of the nations that there is no dignity in enforced motherhood—all the moralists and religionists to the contrary notwithstanding. It is plain to their eyes that children—for the most part—are born, not of mothers, but of wives in the performance of their "marital duty" which duty they are beginning to question. They are feeling the injustice of the position, and, either openly or secretly they are rebelling. Women everywhere, are becoming acquainted with the use of drugs, appliances, and multiform methods of prevention, and are using them to escape conception. If woman has not yet been pointed to the way out of sex-slavery, she, at least, has been shown the way of sterility, through the use of preventive devices. Indeed in such a state of revolt is much of the womanhood of the world, that they are becoming reckless as to how their freedom be attained, thus doing violence to their own natures, and menacing the life of the race. Neither shot nor shell on the battlefields of Europe today, can work such havoc to mankind as can woman—the mother of the race—if, seeing no other way of escape, she set her mind and heart against motherhood. How shall we answer women such as these? What sure prevention shall we put into woman's hand? What is the true birth control we have to offer her? To this there can be but one satisfactory reply: *Man must put into woman's hand the control of her own life-giving function*—put the control where it belongs—where nature put it and intended it should remain, as witness all other kingdoms below the human. *This and this alone will satisfy.* Not only must the wife be privileged to say when she desires to become a mother, but she must be privileged to say *when she will enter into that relation which makes motherhood possible.*

Woman has well-nigh freed herself from her political and economic bondage to man. A mightier task awaits her yet: she must free herself from bondage to man's sensual demands, if not for her own sake, then for his—for man looks to woman for salvation from himself—if not for her own sake nor for his, then for the sake of the coming race.

Sensualism dies hard. It has cursed humanity from its beginning, bringing in its train unnumbered diseases and woes. This birth control propaganda is the last gasp of sensualism—masquerading in the guise of love—asking for just one more span of life, before being relegated to the mephitic realm of lust from whence it came. Woman—the mother of the race—she who is the “gateway of the body and the gateway of the soul” must rise in the dignity of her true womanhood, to guard this gateway of life—not with cunningly wrought preventive device, but by her own understanding of the meaning and purpose of sex, and consecrate its use to the uplift of the race.

But let not woman think for a moment that she shall be made free to become man's temptress or his plaything at her will. Not so shall her bonds be snapped. “Thy desire shall be unto thy husband, and he shall rule over thee” shall still sound in her ears, until she take her God-intended place in the human scheme, as arbiter of the race, in behalf of the race itself. Then—and not till then—may she be free indeed.

To the plea that thereby “sweet love were slain” we answer: love is the passion, not of the body but of the soul. Love belongs to the realm of the spirit, not of the flesh. Love may include the body in its ecstatic joys only when it translates the flesh into the language of the spirit, links itself, in desire, to the life of the race, and passes on—if God and nature so will—the life of humanity to a higher level still. Only so shall love itself at last come into its own.

REBUTTAL

I find myself in agreement with Mrs. Dennett upon several points: First: That all good knowledge and practices understood and used by the "well-to-do conservatives" should be permitted to be passed on to the poor and unfortunate, on the basis, if you please, of *noblesse oblige*. Between us it is simply a question as to whether the knowledge and practice of "preventives" is good knowledge and good practice. If it can be shown—as I think it can—that the use of these devices is a sign that "society is rotting at the top"—where national decay always begins—that it is a detriment rather than a help to the race, the question would then arise, have we the right to attempt to rot society at the bottom as well? I think to this conditional question, we would both answer, *no*. If those who are really eager to help the slum-mother out of her sex-slavery, would give but half the tears and time spent in instructing her in the use of preventives, in teaching her that her body is her own, and at the same time instruct her husband in the hygiene and sanity of self-control, in a single generation there would be no "slum-mother" to teach!

Second: We agree too, that birth control tends to "race-conservation" rather than race-suicide, as so many fear; but we differ as to the methods to be employed: Mrs. Dennett believes that information in the use of preventive device is the one thing needful. I deem self-control, or self-direction through proper understanding of the meaning and purpose of sex, to be the most effective method, and the only one, which will lead to a happy solution of all the vexed sex-problems that confront mankind.

Third: With Mrs. Dennett, I understand that "conception-control" is not the same as abortion—it but destroys the seed, the possible child—and yet—in purpose

—it is the same only *in subtler form*. Its adherents are asking legal and ethical sanction to destroy the germ of life rather than life itself, whenever and wherever they do not wish their sex-union to be fruitful—the right to personal indulgence without responsibility to society or the race. This is dangerous ground. As Prince Morrow has pointed out “The fact that the sexual instinct in man may be excited at any time and indulged merely for sensual gratification, is a human peculiarity—unlike the kingdoms below man—and leads to the vicious aspect of sex relations.” That contraceptive device makes this easier of accomplishment, none would deny. *This is its fatal defect.*

To Mrs. Dennett's plea that birth control makes early marriages possible, and is, therefore, the one “biggest step toward abolishing prostitution” we must take issue: It is commonly agreed that at least 75 per cent of the support of the houses of prostitution, comes from *men already married!* Lust is a maw that refuses to be satisfied; the more it is filled, the emptier it becomes. Teach our young men that the chaste man is the virile man; that to conserve, and rightly use, his creative power makes for efficiency in every direction, and he will take pride in working and waiting for her who shall crown his life to completeness, keeping himself every whit as clean and chaste as he expects her to be.

When we are exhorted to “bring up the young folks so they will have good taste, temperance and ideality about sex matters” and then it is proposed that “preventives” be given them as a part of that bringing-up, we must again take issue: Does anyone think for a moment, that good up-bringing can be accomplished by putting into the hands of our young people contraceptive devices, in order that they may frustrate nature's evident end, while at the same time inviting, by their acts, that very end? This folly is paralleled only by the patrons of the ancient Vomitoriums, where the over-gorged

feaster was relieved of his fulness—mechanically—that he might again return to his gluttony. It would be difficult for the most ardent advocate of epicurean art to find dietetic ideality here!

Again, the statement that it is the tendency of nature to improve the quality by reducing the quantity, seems well within the biological surmise, but this improvement has reference to type rather than to individuals within the type. It yet remains to be proven that a one or "two child family" furnishes the human the best euthenic conditions for development.

Mrs. Dennett says that we are "only on the outskirts of discovering the wonderful value of the reactions from sex relations apart from reproduction." We would like to call attention to the fact, that for thousands of years—even to the present time—sex relations have—for the most part—been entered into without a desire to reproduce. On the contrary, the will of man has been set against reproduction. He has called to his aid every kind of preventive method, from that practised by Onan of old, to the latest form of contraceptive device, supplemented by the beguiling method of "karezza or "sex magnetation." Notwithstanding all this, there is no sign, either "physically, psychologically, emotionally or spiritually that these practices have led to that which is "best and most inspiring in human life." Instead of this we see on every hand, all kinds of perversions and sex-vices, with their attendant loathsome diseases and abnormalities, till "men's hearts are failing them for fear" lest the race go out into darkest night.

In conclusion I am moved to ask Mrs. Dennett, and the National Birth Control League which she represents, if in times such as these, it would not be well to turn its eyes from contraceptive devices—"idols made of wood and stone," to make its appeal to the ever-living, ever-waiting-to-be born spiritual man and woman. For I am convinced that when this spiritual birth has been

accomplished, that the problem of birth-control will have solved itself.

ATTITUDE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PHYSICIAN¹

There are many important and pertinent medical topics of the day of a popular and community interest, in which the opinions of physician and layman must be correlated and the view point of each judged by the other with patience and understanding. It is only by such united endeavors that questions of public policy and importance of a medical nature can be properly adapted to meet the desired ends. Among the questions of this kind we find that the movement popularly known as "birth control" occupies at the present time an important place in the public interest.

"Contraception," "birth control," and "limitation of offspring," are terms that of late have been very much on the public tongue, due largely to the newspaper and other notoriety given to that particular class of social reformers, who believe that a widespread dissemination of contraceptive knowledge will bring about a millennial condition in which poverty, vice, crime, and numerous other disagreeable attributes of a modern civilization, will be immediately eliminated and joy will reign supreme in every household which is not burdened with a large number of children. It is safe to say, however, that this utopian dream will not come within the realm of possibility or probability by the adoption of any such means as those advocated by the "birth control" propagandists, for they fail primarily to take into consideration the fact that the question of conception is one that cannot be regulated by rule of thumb in the

¹ By George W. Kosmak, M.D., attending surgeon, Lying-in Hospital of the City of New York, editor of *Bulletin*. Paper read at a meeting of the Society of Medical Jurisprudence, New York, March 12, 1917. *Lying-in Hospital of the City of New York. Bulletin.* 11: 181-92. August, 1917.

fashion which they so glibly publish. There are many underlying factors, physiological, biological, economic, moral, legal, etc., which must be taken into consideration and carefully weighed in the balance against the problematical advantages of any widespread propaganda of artificial family limitation. Let us start with the assumption that a family of moderate size is the ultimate goal to be attained. We will forego all mention of what moderate size means, except that possibly it refers to the number of children a mother can comfortably raise and a father efficiently support. If this question was put to the average mother she would cry, "stop," immediately after the birth of the first child, depending somewhat, of course, on her own physical ability to bear children and the care given to her by her physician. The trials and troubles of the lying-in chamber are soon forgotten, however, but the same reply will be made after the birth of the second, third, or subsequent child. Perhaps the mother is justified in her expressions, but as a general rule the average pregnancy and labor at the present day, in a healthy mother can be made fairly comfortable. As I shall show later on, the small family with one or two children is insufficient for the demands made by nature and we must accept her laws, harsh as they may apparently be in many cases. The question of birth limitation has been restricted, however, to apply more particularly to the poorer families, where the addition of every new and hungry maw may and often does mean less care and food for the others, more work for the already overworked mother, less to put aside for the proverbial rainy day. It is this class of large families that has aroused the sympathies and called forth assistance of many worthy, well-meaning, but let us be charitable, ill-informed persons. Birth control leagues, national and international in scope, have been formed to give their aid in settling this question. They seem to believe that

the most potent factor in their success consists in the repeal of certain legal restrictions to the dissemination of contraceptive knowledge. Enthusiastic members of these self-constituted reform organizations have even risked jail sentences in order to spread their light and learning among the "ignorant." They justify their activities in part by the oft-repeated assertion that as the rich know how to prevent large families, the poor should be accorded an equal privilege. All this is very plausible and no wonder the unthinking have been misled in giving their support to such propaganda. Let us inquire, however, whether all this effort is worth-while and whether it will bring about a cure of the evils which are claimed to attend an unrestricted and unrestrained birth rate.

This brings me to the point of my paper, namely, that the physician as such has certain responsibilities to the race, to the community, to the family, and to the individual, based on the knowledge he possesses and his contact with all classes of the population. It is the physician also who must sound a warning cry against false teaching based on wrong premises and lack of understanding. He must not cast aside the problem as undeserving of his time and attention but should endeavor by a firm judgment of the reformers, and a sympathetic attitude toward mothers to help bring about a settlement of this widespread agitation. In physicians as a class, sympathy is a quality that is developed by their calling and many may have probably lent their aid to this propaganda of birth control without realizing the import and significance of their action.

To begin with, we might inquire as to the cause of this widespread propaganda which has invaded our own land after its development and spread through several European countries. "Is this movement to be ascribed to an honest intent to better the world, is it another expression of the spread of feministic doctrines, is it

demanding by scientific investigators, or is it merely another instance of one of those hysterical waves with which our civilization is so frequently assailed?" Every effort to better the individual and the race in a physical and moral sense should obtain the full support of the medical profession and it is this support which calls forth the responsibilities referred to, but we must inquire closely whether the "birth control" movement can be justifiably included in this class. The desirability of limiting the size of the family, or viewed in a less charitable light, sexual intercourse without the natural and often times annoying consequences of conception, has formed a subject for discussion for layman, priest and physician for centuries, only to find renewed life in the Malthusians of a few generations ago, who seized upon the name of an English economist, Thomas R. Malthus (1766-1834), as their patron saint. This gentleman published a book in 1826 in which he maintained that the population of a country unchecked increased in a geometrical ratio while the food supply can be made to increase at furthest only in an arithmetical ratio. The checks upon such increase he resolved into vice, misery, moral or prudential restraint, but I do not believe that artificial methods of preventing conception entered into his schemes. Now the relation of food production to increase of population is a very complex problem which, however, undoubtedly depends at the present time on an abnormal increase in the number of consumers as compared with the producers of food, and to my mind has nothing whatever to do with the question of the size of the family. Nevertheless the argument sounds well and has been thoroughly manipulated to suit the ideas of the modern birth control propagandists: in fact, the law is to be appealed to in order to attain the desired end.

After more or less extended debate in England,

Germany, Holland and other countries, the birth control movement has spread to this country and has been accompanied by the usual hysterical enthusiasm which is so characteristic of our national life. The standard once raised, reformers have rushed to support the same and their activities are already well known. At this point we might stop to inquire whether such a widespread propaganda of birth control is called for by the conditions presented among our people. The fact that certain families, particularly among the poorer classes, are blessed with a correspondingly larger number of children than those who are better off in the world's goods, has been taken as a text for a sermon in which the biblical instruction "go forth and multiply" is sought to be negated. In addition we are told that "quality" and not "quantity" should count in the building up of a family, and while this desideratum is not to be denied, the question is how can we bring about such an ideal condition. Shall it be by giving license to a married couple by providing them with the knowledge of methods, usually doubtful, that will prevent conception, or shall it be by teaching them moderation in this as well as in the exercise of their other physical functions? There is little hope, however, that complete or temporary sexual continence will ever be attained, for the expression of the natural sexual impulse in normal individuals, is one that cannot be curbed by any laws that man may make. It is a question which every individual is a law unto himself or herself and any artificial interference with the natural expression of this important bodily function will sooner or later result in disaster both to the individual and to the race.

Let us inquire a little more closely into the methods which have been advocated for the purpose of rendering futile or negative the sexual act. Our good friends who believe in the birth control movement think they can bring about an ideal marital relationship in which

conception will result only from deliberate and planned effort. If they were better acquainted with the physiology and psychology of this process they would realize that this is practically impossible of attainment. Conception in all but a few instances must be regarded as an accident and we really know very little about the time when it takes place. We do know that it often results notwithstanding apparently insurmountable obstacles, and only those methods of avoiding it can be regarded as successful which actually prevent contact between the male and female elements. It is quite obvious, therefore, that only a few contraceptive measures are possible among which continence, partial or complete, plays an important rôle. Nearly all the other methods which have been described in the pamphlets circulated by the propagandists associated with the birth control movement, if regarded from a strictly medical point of view, can be truthfully labeled harmful. I do not care to take it upon myself to discuss in detail before a lay audience the measures which have thus been brought to the attention of women, usually ignorant of their potential harmfulness. Any medical man who will take the trouble to investigate this literature must be convinced of the general uselessness and filthy character of most of the methods advocated for preventing conception. Antiseptics, patent medicines of various kinds and a variety of pessaries and other appliances are indiscriminately proposed for the purpose, and in certain instances the inability of the husband to detect the deception is also urged in favor of its adoption. Aside from their specific local danger, the effect on the general morality of a married couple also deserves comment. We are told, moreover, that married people need not have children until they are ready for them. If such an important question could be decided would, in the majority of cases, a woman agree voluntarily that such a time was ever at hand? The maternal

instinct is one that is very strongly developed in most women and how often do we meet with intense disappointment, where, after a few years of married life, no issue has resulted. Inquiry in such cases often elicits the admission that methods for preventing conception were employed, that children were not desired in the early years of married life. We find this frequently demonstrated in women who are approaching the thirtieth year of their life, who may have married after an active social or business career at the age of twenty-five or twenty-six, and then after a period of several years' sterility the desire for offspring becomes paramount, only to be met with disappointment and failure. To my mind, if such cases were left to nature the fact of their sterility would be known at an earlier period and appropriate measures might be taken to correct the same. If the incidence of a possible pregnancy could be left to nature much less trouble and distress in the lives of many people would be the result.

There is another class of cases which must be considered in this connection, and that is one in which a number of children have been born and in consequence of economic or other factors no further offspring is desired. Every physician has no doubt been appealed to by his patients to prevent any further accidents after the birth of one, two or possibly three children. But can he conscientiously agree to such proposals if there are no other factors to be considered and what would happen if this guaranteed advice fails? Can he be held responsible for the non-success of his remedies and must he consent to an abortion in cases of failure? One might well inquire at this point what would the population of any country amount to after the lapse of a century if the average family included only one or two children. Unfortunately the accidents of pregnancy or perhaps other diseases may prevent further conceptions in a given family and it is only by the introduction of new

blood from families that can spare the same that the progress of our population in numbers must be looked for. It is well enough to talk about small families and enlarge on the element of "quality" instead of "quantity," but we must remember that the accidents of life take away a large proportion of individuals who never reach maturity and to whom the power of procreation is never given.

Moreover, those classes of our social system who are placed in a certain position by wealth or mental attainments, require for their upkeep and regeneration the influx of individuals from the strata which are ordinarily regarded as of a lower plane. If this striving for better things was not present among the so-called lower classes, the world, literally speaking, would soon come to an end. I am led here to make a very broad statement, which I have repeated elsewhere and which may be most obnoxious to those whom I would respectfully class as my opponents, but I sincerely believe that it is necessary for the general welfare and the maintenance of an economic balance that we have a class of the population that shall be characterized by "quantity" rather than by "quality." In other words, we need the "hewers of wood and the drawers of water," and I can only repeat the question that I have already proposed to our good friends who believe in small families, that if the "quantity" factor in our population were diminished as the result of their efforts, would they be willing to perform certain laborious tasks themselves which they now relegate to their supposed inferiors. Might I ask whether the estimable lady who considered it an honor to be arrested as a martyr to the principles advocated by Mrs. Sanger, would be willing to dispose of her own garbage at the river front rather than have one of the "quantity" delegated to this task for her? I again repeat that we need the element of "quantity" in the make-up of the world's

population, for it is from this "quantity" element that the "quality" is obtained.

The claim is constantly being made that the knowledge regarding the limitation of offspring as believed to be practised among the well-to-do should likewise be afforded to the poor. Is it taken into consideration, however, that other factors may determine the numerical disproportion in the children of these classes? I cannot with propriety discuss before a non-medical audience the psychology of cohabitation as practised among the poor and the well-to-do, but in my association for a considerable numbers of years with the population served by the Lying-in Hospital I am fully convinced that methods of contraception such as have been publicly taught by members of the birth control leagues are of no avail, as they cannot be made use of in an intelligent manner. Unfortunately, in all these teachings the burden of proof is always placed upon the wife and insufficient attention is extended to the husband. Personally I cannot understand why women in particular, who are interested in extending the "great light" to their poorer sisters, should fail to take into account the husband as a factor in the situation, and I can see nothing more than the cultivation of a spirit of license, if the adoption of the advocated measures were generally possible.

Let us next take up the question of the prevention of conception in families where disease on the part of the father or mother seems to show the necessity for avoiding further pregnancies. As physicians we must acknowledge such necessity in cases of tuberculosis, heart disease, venereal infections, and other constitutional and mental disturbances. This contention is admitted and does not require further discussion. Physicians are given full power to deal with this class of cases as they think necessary, but why should this admission be made an argument for complete abolition of

restrictions that are now placed upon the public dissemination of contraceptive measures? Women afflicted with advanced cardiac disease must not only be restricted as to their procreative faculties, but the sexual act itself is a source of danger in such cases. Similar instances might be cited to include other mental and physical diseases, but why should this serve as an argument in that larger class where no physical or mental contraindications to pregnancy exist and to whom such advice is to be given that they may indulge freely the exercises of their passions without the consequent responsibility. The claim is often brought forward that a large number of abortions would not be done if a better understanding of birth control methods were prevalent among our people. I desire to ask your close attention to this statement. I believe that if statistics could be gathered from the so-called professional abortionists, it would be found that their clientele is ordinarily limited to women who are unmarried or who have no desire for children, and that only a small proportion of cases comes from mothers with families. Is it fair, therefore, to employ this as an argument for the more widespread adoption of birth control information? It is also claimed that the bearing of three or four children is about all that the average woman can stand, although it must be a matter of common experience among all physicians that many women who have but one child are more seriously damaged in their bodies than many who have given birth to a half dozen or more children. We also find that with the advances in the obstetric art and the proper care of the patient before and after labor, that the complications attending childbirth are greatly diminished. The growth of maternity hospitals and the constantly increasing number of women who look for expert obstetrical care has had its reward in the decreased mortality and morbidity of childbed. The number of children which any woman

can bear is entirely a question of individuality in so far as the medical aspects of this question are concerned. Unfortunately, the care of the pregnant woman has not been given a sufficient amount of thought and attention by the medical profession as a whole. It is a class of work that the average physician may do as a matter of expedient or necessity, but his recognition of the fact that the care of the pregnant woman constitutes one of the most important branches of the practice of medicine will soon accomplish a great deal in overcoming the fear in the minds of so many women as regards childbirth. The claim has often been made by birth control advocates that the dissemination of contraceptive measures has resulted in a diminished mortality and morbidity rate in certain countries, among which Holland is always held forth as a shining example. I will not weary you with a review of the statistical information which has been adduced, but I would call your attention to certain facts in judging the same. Is the resulting improvements which has been referred to the result of the adoption of birth control methods, or does it follow the better care which has been developed during the past few decades for the woman who is pregnant, for her confinement under circumstances that shall cause the least wear and tear on her organism and, as relates to the offspring, the results of the various activities which have made for better babies, including improved housing conditions, a better milk supply, cleanliness and similar factors? We can leave it to the health authorities, the social workers and physicians to give an answer to this question.

We must also bear in mind that social conditions in Holland and the United States vary widely, their population is practically homogeneous, ours is mixed, theirs is comparatively small, ours is enormous. The control of measures such as those advocated is possible

in a more or less paternalistic government, it cannot be carried out in a democracy, and, finally, the time during which the Dutch Malthusians have exercised their functions extends over a period of only about twenty-five years. Let us consider what a century or more of birth restriction would bring forth in its results on the birth rate of Holland.

In this connection we may give a moment's attention to certain brief statistics gathered nearer home. If we examine the vital statistics of the state of New York for the years 1906-1915, we find that the infant mortality in 1906 was one hundred and forty-eight per thousand births, and that during the succeeding ten years there was a steady decline in the mortality among infants until it was reduced to ninety-nine per thousand in 1915. During this same period the number of births had increased from approximately one hundred and eighty-three thousand to two hundred and forty-three thousand and the number of deaths at all ages from one hundred and forty-one thousand to one hundred and forty-six thousand. In other words, the rates from a thousand population of births and deaths in New York state were in 1906, 21.8 births and 16.8 deaths, whereas in 1915 the births were 24 and the deaths 14.5 per hundred population. This most favorable condition in our own state is deserving of comment, and to what can we attribute this change? Is it brought about by decrease in the number of children in the individual family as the result of contraceptive knowledge or can it be more sensibly and sanely ascribed to the factors already referred to in the previous paragraph? I do not believe that even the most enthusiastic advocates of birth control methods can claim that in New York state alone during the last decade their efforts have produced such a successful issue.

In addition to the purely medical aspects of the

birth control propaganda, there are others of an economic and a moral nature that might well be taken up in this connection. The economic factors cannot be safely described by a physician, as his opinion is apt to be guided by the impressions of his immediate environment and he is likely to be misled. Every physician sympathizes with those families among the poorer class who find themselves engaged in the constant struggle to make both ends meet and to whom the frequently annual visit of the stork is not an event of joy. Yet the latter is not a condition that holds universally in every poor family, and we frequently find that only one or two children will grace the households of the poor. Can we hope to limit the size of the larger families by the teaching of contraceptive knowledge as advocated? As I have already stated, I do not believe that we can and the so-called "birth control" clinics which have been established for the purpose of reaching this particular class of people must be regarded as a source of danger and a menace to the community. The privileges which they propose to extend will soon become abused and the supposedly "reliable" information will be distributed broadcast without question as to its deleterious physical, moral and mental effect. In but few instances apparently have proper medical arrangements been made to determine the necessity or the safety of their employment.

The moral aspects of the question involved in the birth control propaganda do not usually come within the province of the physician. Every physician, however, has undoubtedly observed the moral dangers that attend the continuous practice of contraceptive measures. We also know, and this statement may appear a very harsh one, that fear of conception has been an important factor in the virtue of many unmarried girls, and that many boys are likewise kept straight by this means. Will not the indiscriminate distribution of birth

control literature that is certain to follow any relaxation of legal restrictions such as those proposed, lead to an increase of immorality that will be difficult to counteract? Moreover, the freedom with which this matter is now discussed by the press and the public must have an unfortunate effect on the morals of our young people. It is particularly important at the present time to keep such knowledge from our girls and boys, whose minds and bodies are not in a receptive frame for such information.

In connection with the moral aspects involved we may well direct our attention to the rather noteworthy support which has been given to the "birth control" propaganda by radical socialists and also the anarchists. Among these people we find rather elastic conceptions regarding the responsibilities involved in the marriage relation, and although their appreciation and support may not be desired by the reformers who are honest in their intentions toward the "birth control" propaganda, yet this unmasked-for support constitutes a serious factor which cannot be readily put aside. The anarchists have even taken it upon themselves to distribute "birth control" literature under the sanction of their officials without any discretion as to whom such literature will reach. Although this phase of the situation may appear exaggerated, nevertheless we must not lose sight of the extreme danger involved in the same.

I desire to refer only briefly to certain legal aspects of this question, such as the modification of certain restrictive features in the penal code of New York state, which, however, can be more effectively discussed by the well-qualified reader of a later paper. But I want to say that it is my belief, based on personal observations, that the restrictive laws which now prohibit the dissemination of contraceptive literature are a blessing to the community at large. The "Birth Control League of the United States" specifically declares

in a prospectus that "to classify purely scientific information regarding human contraception as obscene, as our present laws do, is itself an act affording a most disgraceful example of intolerable indecency." One marvels how any well-balanced mind could have studied the subject and arrived at such a conclusion, for we find on examining the pamphlets which have received the stamp of authority by this self-constituted band of reformers, that they are a mixture of arrant nonsense, misinformation, false reports, and in addition, in some cases, seditious libels on the medical profession. These publications are not scientific and in most instances have been compiled by non-scientific persons, and if their circulation is to be in no way inhibited they may soon be found on every news-stand and in other public places. As we find numerous proprietary articles recommended within their pages, it is not improbable that the manufacturer of the former will soon make use of them in advertising his wares. Efforts to impress the public with their scientific character need hardly be dignified by further professional comment, and yet they are a source of such potential danger that as physicians we must lend our assistance in doing away with what is essentially indecent and obscene. Are we, therefore, as physicians morally justified and should our professional conscience permit us without comment or attempt at reproof to allow the indiscriminate dissemination of dangerous propagandist literature written largely by more or less incompetent individuals and in whose aid a valuable state law shall be practically emasculated? Shall we permit the prescribing of contraceptive measures and drugs, many of which are potentially dangerous, by non-medical persons, when we have so jealously guarded our legal rights as physicians against Christian Scientists, osteopaths, chiropractors, naturopaths and others who have attempted to invade the field of medical practice by a short cut without sufficient preliminary training such

as is considered essential for the equipment of every medical man? Will we not by mere acquiescence favor the establishment of another school of practice, the "contraceptionists," "birth controllers," or call it by any other more euphonious name, if as physicians we do not raise our voices against the propaganda which is spreading like a slimy monster into our homes, our firesides, and among our young people? To all those physicians who have perhaps heedlessly lent their aid, a warning cry to stop and consider what it all means should be given. This must not be regarded as a matter of family limitation alone, it is a question whether one of the most sacred and important faculties with which man is endowed shall be governed by the teaching of a propaganda founded on untruth and misinformation. As to the possibility of family limitation with reason there may perhaps be little question, consciously or unconsciously, it is now and always has been practiced by married people, largely by one means, that of restraint. The claim can hardly be made that either party to a marriage is ignorant of this information. Circumstances may arise in an individual case, such as frequent childbirth with the possibility of a deleterious effect on the mother, or other factors, where there is need of contraceptive measures other than that referred to, and if such knowledge is required for sound medical reasons, every physician is or should be prepared to deal with the problem much more safely and satisfactorily than a non-medical person, trained nurse, social worker or self-constituted reformer. The law as it now stands gives to the physician the necessary power. His interview with his patient is a privileged communication and will never be reviewed by a court of law. Another fact to be borne in mind is that the practice of the professional abortionists will be largely increased rather than diminished by the dissemination of birth control methods, as he or she will then have the means which will be readily seized upon to extend

their practice among the clientele which has been accustomed to patronize them.

In conclusion, we may well ask, what is to be done? What shall be the attitude of the medical profession in regard to this question? Shall we listen to the unrestrained harangue of the reformer who may have but little conception of the medical aspects involved and who does not realize the final result? Shall we lend our approval to the spirit of license which the development of such sentiments will naturally bring about? What shall we as physicians do? We know our duties and limitations and powers in this matter and we must exercise them as our individual consciences dictate, bearing in mind not only ourselves and our patients, but the relations of both to the community at large and to the race. We must study the circumstances carefully in each instance and after due inquiry give our consideration only to honest cases among married people. We must counsel these patients as the occasion demands and free at the same time their minds from the nauseating slush which now characterizes the subject and has probably contributed to their hysterical and false interpretation of the same. Numerous public expressions also show that we are evidently misinterpreted by the laity as to our attitude. I have already stated, and clearly I hope, that we cannot object to contraceptive measures in certain necessary cases and it is only to the unrestrained dissemination of so-called information regarding the prevention of conception by irresponsible and equally ignorant individuals, that we as physicians can and must object to, and likewise to any change in the law which would let down the bars to doubtful and irregular practices. In place of the measures advocated would it not be better to develop educational methods, either by individual or cooperative instruction, by which restraint can be taught (the husband primarily and the wife secondarily), by which license as now advocated will be superseded by moderation and common sense.

Whatever other procedures may be necessary are now within the knowledge of the physician and can be satisfactorily employed by him when the occasion arises. The value of continence is not even referred to in most of the numerous pamphlets issued by the propagandists—"there need be no restrictions (to intercourse and), we shall inform you how to avoid the consequences," is their slogan. I desire to repeat my belief that education in a broad sense will contribute more to the solution of this problem than ill-advised legislative enactments and sensational propaganda.

Whether the medical profession can aid such an educational movement will depend upon its own efforts and its attitude toward a question which occupies the minds of a great many people who are sincere and honest in the conviction and belief that something ought to be done. As physicians we cannot afford to dismiss the matter as unworthy of our serious thought and attention, for its far-reaching consequences may in the course of time manifest their effects on our national welfare and existence. In the meanwhile the public is being surcharged with the hysterical outpourings of a false and erroneous propaganda. The problem is one that for its solution requires careful deliberation. It cannot be decided by measures that result from the promulgation of a sensationalistic campaign. Let us hope that finally truth and common sense will prevail in this discussion and that the public mind will resume a sane attitude toward the question, leaving its decision to those immediately concerned and helping them to solve the problem for themselves by natural rather than unnatural means.

BIRTH CONTROL AND THE MORAL OUTLOOK¹

In perusing the numerous essays, articles and pamphlets on the subject of birth control and measures

¹ From article by Walter Hunt, F.R.A.I. *Shield*. 35. 3: 277-83. May-June, 1922.

adopted for that extraordinary function, any student of nature who is old enough to have watched the progress of the movement, and its effects upon the morality and physique of the people generally, cannot but be surprised at the gist of the arguments advanced in its favor. So startling is some of the emotional reasoning adopted by even learned advocates of the movement that one sometimes wonders if nature has been consulted, or even thought of, in arriving at their conclusions, or if the reasoners have taken the trouble to study the history of the movement as conducted in this country.

Dealing first with the natural phase of the problem. Nature appears to have definite and irrevocable laws with regard to generation, and any violations of such laws are rigorously punished even to the annihilation of a species. Naturalists are aware that all lower animals are to a certain extent protected by nature in so far as their habits are regulated by instinct, or by the presence or absence of desire, and in no other function is this more clearly manifested than in their sexual habits. With most species the procreative instinct asserts itself at a certain age, but when the female has conceived, desire ceases and she remains absolutely continent during the whole period necessary for gestation and lactation. Here an interesting question naturally arises as to what extent man is amenable to this same natural law. Evolution teaches us that man has passed through animal stages to his present exalted condition, so I think it may be safely assumed that he is more or less subject to the same law, and that any departure from such must be to his own detriment.

This phase of the subject was considered by eighteenth century and early nineteenth century physicians of western Europe, and we had such men as Sir W. C. Ellis, Sir Thomas Watson and other reliable medical authorities tracing lunacy, epilepsy, cancer, consumption and other terrible ailments to sexual excesses. The line

of argument adopted by these men was purely scientific, as their observations were concentrated upon nature, and much good was being derived from the application of their teaching. Despite the reasonableness of the doctrine, however, and the prospects for a brighter future for the race, a counter school of thought arose, with no scientific thought behind it, but as it was based upon indulgence it soon became popular and the older school was soon apparently forgotten. So effectually, indeed, was it superseded that many of the younger members of the medical faculty today know little of its teachings, yet the world was never in greater need of some such influence. Strangely enough the new doctrine was based on the teachings of a great advocate of moral restraint.

The introduction of the Reverend T. R. Malthus' remarkable essay on the *Principle of Population* was the innocent means of stirring up a fierce controversy which extended to the continent, where his theory with regard to excessive population being the cause of poverty was accepted, while his advocacy of moral restraint was vehemently denounced. To obviate the necessity for restraint, certain French sociologists suggested the adoption of various mechanical and chemical contraceptives, at the same time making very wild statements with regard to what they termed the evils of chastity. The propaganda was first taken up here by Richard Carlisle, Robert Dale Owen and a few others, who were influenced more by ideas of philanthropy than by scientific thought on the matter, and for a time the movement led but a precarious existence. About 1834 while Sir W. C. Ellis was still writing on the evils of abuse, an obscure American pamphlet—*The Fruits of Philosophy*, in which the author denounced chastity, or what he termed "unnatural continency," as the cause of so much evil—was reprinted by a Bristol printer and adopted by the Neo-Malthusians. Twenty years later, in 1854, a more daring pamphlet, called *Physical, Sexual and Natural Religion*, was written

anonymously by a medical graduate, who contended that "every man who had not a due amount of sexual exercise lived a life of natural imperfection and sin." He based his ideas mainly on the French school, and quoting from the French, declared the life of a prostitute to be on the whole more healthy than that of a poor seamstress who led a sedentary life. This latter work was enlarged a few years later, and the title changed to *The Elements of Social Science*, and eventually, after the famous prosecution, *Regina vs. Bradlaugh and Besant*, obtained an extensive vogue.

The author of the *Elements of Social Science*, page 538, declared his antagonism to nature. "It is against nature . . . we should contend; it is she who is omnipotent in the weapons of death—as of life—who has been our grand destroyer; and from her crushing grasp the most persevering and united efforts can alone enable us to escape." Surely such a vain exhortation should have excited the cautionary instincts of the more scientific thinkers of the age, especially in view of the more sober reasoning of the pro-natural school of thought. But so much more susceptible is man to the emotional passions than to reason, that, by the vast majority, the new doctrine was accepted without inquiry and without thought as to the future of the race.

It may not be generally known that as recently as fifty years ago there were still unsophisticated tribes in some of the less frequented islands of the Pacific, and in various parts of Africa, who lived in closer touch with nature than we, and whose habits of life were conducted largely in consonance with natural law. The races who practiced those customs were recognized as among the finest in the world and were famous for their remarkably sound health. Since associating with Europeans, those tribes no longer practice natural control or abstention; neither do they any longer enjoy the perfect health for which they were famous, but may now be

counted as among the declining races of the world. When the Fijian Islands were annexed by us in 1874, their ancient customs came almost abruptly to an end, and the people were told to conduct themselves as British subjects. The results were most disastrous to the native race, for men no longer slept apart from their wives, and with more frequent intercourse, both in and out of season, they no longer produced healthy children; also being visited by many epidemics of diseases formerly quite unknown to them, their numbers were soon depleted by more than one-third.¹ To an impartial observer, the epithet "pernicious" would appear to have been misplaced when levelled at abstention and should have been applied to indulgence for pleasure as advocated by artificial birth control advocates.

To refer once more to Lord Dawson's speech and his attitude to nature: "It is said to be unnatural and intrinsically immoral. This word unnatural perplexes me. Civilization involves the chaining of natural forces, and their subversion to man's will and uses. Much of medicine and surgery consists of means to overcome nature."

This is perhaps where our modern civilization has gone astray; by thinking that nature is to be chained and made subservient to man's rule we have sometimes made infractions of her law which it is impossible for nature to condone. Nature is bountiful but she is not to be chained. Whenever man adapts his methods to natural law, and takes advantage of her bountifulness, he is amply rewarded, as may be verified by the uses made of steam, electricity in the propagation of plant life, improvement in domestic animals, etc., but his success has resulted solely from complying with natural law and not by opposing it. The surgeon binds the broken limb, but he leaves it to nature to do the mending; he carves away diseased parts, and again nature does the healing, but there is no guarantee that there will be no recurrence of

¹ See my book, *Are We a Declining Race?* Chapter IV is devoted to the decline of the Fijian race.

the trouble unless the cause which is against nature, is removed, while the physician applies natural remedies and assists nature in overcoming difficulties, everything goes on smoothly, but if he advises his patient to act adversely to natural law, nothing can save his patient from suffering the penalties.

There is every indication to prove, and it is practically admitted, that artificial birth control and intercourse out of season are offenses against nature, but, if we are to judge from Lord Dawson's remarks, medicine is capable of so chaining nature that man may offend and still escape the penalties. We have no evidence in support of this. Since the popularization of artificial birth control, and incentives to free intercourse, medicine has been brought to a higher state of proficiency than at any previous time. Many new hospitals and asylums have been erected, and the number of their staffs increased enormously. Yet it might be safe to add that at no time in the world's history is it known for the people to be in so indifferent a state of health as now. It is true that in bygone days our towns were sometimes swept with plagues and other zymotic diseases, but thanks to improved sanitation, on the advice of the medical profession, those scourges have to a considerable extent been removed; but today the trouble is far worse, for people are suffering very extensively from constitutional and incurable diseases, according to recent official medical reports, about 5.8 per cent die from old age and 3.7 per cent from injuries, the remaining 90.5 per cent of deaths being from diseases of a more or less virulent nature. Ninety-four per thousand deaths in 1919 were from cancer, one hundred and five per thousand from organic heart disease, one hundred and two from diseases of the nerves and general sense, and so on through a long series of terrible afflictions which no applications of medicine seem capable of overcoming, while as many as nineteen thousand deaths occurred in lunatic asylums

in one year—1918. The sins of the fathers are also undoubtedly visited upon the children, for official reports of the examination of school children tell of tuberculous infection being almost universal, of a large percentage of children suffering from *organic heart disease, nervous diseases, decayed teeth, ear troubles, defective vision*—as many as twenty thousand London children being supplied with glasses; they also tell of *abnormal children, of neuropathic children, dull and backward children, physically deficient and mentally deficient* children in such large percentages that one sometimes wonders if we are producing any really normal children at all. What of the next generation?

In conclusion, let me repeat that the contraceptive movement was sprung upon the people of this country in a very unscientific manner, and in defiance of expert medical opinion of the time. At no time, so far as can be ascertained, has a really representative conference been convened to discuss the nature of the problem, or the advisability of the adoption, or otherwise, of so extraordinary a measure. The fact that it appealed to the emotions was sufficient for the unthinking crowd and it became popular; but the fact of its great popularity is no evidence of the truth of the arguments advanced in its favor, and unless it can be defended by the clearest pronouncements of scientific investigators its further practice should be discouraged.

NEO-MALTHUSIANISM AND RACE HYGIENE¹

We shall now turn to the effect of Malthusianism upon selection within the whole population, the different social strata being considered as units. In general, the

¹ From article by Dr. Alfred Ploetz, Munich, president of the International Society for Race Hygiene. International Eugenics Congress. *Report of Proceedings*. 1912. Vol. 2. p. 188-9. Eugenics Education Society. London, 1913.

well-to-do practice Malthusianism more frequently and more intensively than do the middle class, and the latter more than the poorer class. Since, now, the upper classes contain also racially, on the average, the best variations, at least in regard to intellectual traits, Malthusianism shows here the tendency to reduce the average ability in the population.

Just as Malthusianism affects the higher classes more than the lower, from the same causes it is practised more, on the average, by the more highly cultivated than by the less cultured. The French and Yankees decrease in number. England, Holland, Scandinavia and Germany—the principal seats of the highly endowed Nordic (Teutonic or Germanic) race—show a decreasing birth rate from year to year. Poles, Hungarians, Russians, on the contrary—the countries with strong Asiatic mixtures—have an extraordinarily high birth rate, so that they are everywhere pressing successfully against the west. The preservation of the Nordic race is thus seriously menaced.

In the struggle of the three great races of mankind Malthusianism is playing a part and it gives no favorable outlook for the white race, in its great combat for lasting supremacy, but a great handicap, especially before the yellow race which in its ancestor worship possesses a strongly effective hindrance to the spread of Malthusianism practices. Here, too, we must note that the decline of the birth rate has no natural end, while the mortality cannot sink below a certain figure. However doubtful, therefore, the harmfulness of Malthusianism may be in its effect on the single families, for the people as a whole and for our race it has without doubt a most harmful tendency, lowering the average fitness and ability, and endangering the future of our race.

If we look on all its effects we must conclude that today the spreading, unregulated and misdirected Malthusianism has a harmful effect from the standpoint of

race hygiene. We should strive to abolish it, but its abolition would, I believe, be wholly impossible. As soon as Malthusianism has anywhere arisen, it remains in the selected families a standing tradition. Mothers hand it on to their daughters, elder sisters to younger ones, fathers to sons, brothers to brothers. Even the Catholic Church has proven itself powerless against it. There remains nothing but to influence Malthusian practice eugenically in such a way that the race suffers the least possible under it, and, further, to bring about such economic reforms that the parents have an economic interest in the rearing of a certain large number of children. Today it is necessary, first, to combat the propaganda of Neo-Malthusianism. It is making its own progress only too rapidly without assistance.

On the positive side, race hygiene must strive, especially through the work of our artists—our dramatists, novelists, painters—to renew in our young men and women the ambition for advancement, the perpetuity and the increase of their family. But we must go still further, for the narrow interest of the family is, perhaps, not so much harmed by a mitigated Malthusianism. We must instil in our children greater courage to undertake the responsibilities of life, a higher patriotism, a sense of devotion to our race which must face the great combat of the future, so that they gladly prepare for an expenditure of energy beyond their own immediate and personal interest. Only then, in the decision between self-centered individualism and service toward a new generation and new forces for their race, will they decide in favor of life.

WHY-NOTS OF BIRTH CONTROL ¹

The *Century Dictionary* quotes from the *American Anthropologist*.

¹ From article *Whys and Why-nots of Birth Control*, by Maximilian P. E. Grosszmann. *Medical Times*. 50: 110-11. April, 1922.

In countries of the highest civilization which has yet been reached, armed with the resources of the best government, purest justice, truest morality, soundest economy, and most fruitful science attained by men, we find the greatest density of population, because the limits of population revolve more and more within the sphere of man's material, mental and moral freedom.

This is a very significant statement, one which throws a flood of light upon the real problem of population.

As long as we have enormous latifundia in the possession of a few large land-owners, in any country, in contrast with crowded tenements; as long as apples in the western states of America are allowed to rot in the orchards, and wheat is used as fuel, because of the inadequacy of transportation, while the high cost of living in other parts of the same country impoverishes many thousands; so long we have no right to speak of over-population. And, speaking of the millions of Asiatics who are supposed to be threatening "white" civilization: there are millions of acres of untilled land in Asia itself, in Australia, in Polynesia, not suitable for "white" populations, to which the overflow elsewhere may be diverted. What we need here is an international understanding on an anthropological basis, and it might not be outside the province of a Disarmament Conference, or a League of Nations, to discuss ways and means to bring about such a movement.

Even though this course may be said to be only palliative, or bringing temporary relief, at best, we may point back to the statement quoted above from the *American Anthropologist*—when once we shall have reached a state of real civilization, there will be no need of fear. Problems like these must be discussed internationally, not on the basis of national politics and selfish interests, but in a scientific, no less than a humane, spirit.

We might discuss the argument of economic pressure in the same manner. It is directed against the

large families of the poorer classes, in the first instance. Now, nobody can deny that there are many, too many children who ought never to have been born, who are growing up in squalor, misery, poverty, crime and degradation, whose lives were warped and cursed from the moment of their conception. Not a few die within the first year of their lives, others succumb later in childhood. Those who survive fill the gutters, the haunts of the underworld, the poor-houses, the lunatic asylums, and public institutions of all kinds. They constitute a menace to themselves and to society. Again, the mothers of these, having borne far more than their quota of human flotsam and jetsam, are dispirited, washed-out, depleted women, a tragic perversion of the glory of womanhood and motherhood.

All this is true, and one who sees the swarming multitudes of urchins in the tenement districts of any large city may be aroused to pity and remonstrance.

But here again, we have to point out the fact that these conditions, sad as they are, can be remedied by other factors than birth control only. Many thousands of these children, apparently destined to fall by the wayside, can be developed into true manhood and womanhood. It is again a matter of building up a real civilization, "with the resources of the best government, purest justice, truest morality, soundest economy, and most fruitful science attained by men."

To argue, on principle, against large families, is futile and ill-advised. We may caution against indiscriminate breeding when there is physical or mental unfitness, or when there is such economic pressure that children cannot be raised humanly in the environment into which they are born. Yet we must also realize that there are thousands of lowly families with a large number of perfectly healthy, normal, sane and promising children, strapping boys and fine girls. Examples are not infrequent when the very last born of such a happy brood have made their mark in the world.

It has been shown that the two-children system, practised in France for decades, and in the "best families" of our own country to some extent, is disastrous. It is difficult to agree with Dr. Knopf, previously quoted, when he argues that Germany, with her high birth rate, produced a weaker race than France, with her low birth rate, and that France produced "not as many, but better soldiers which withstood the onslaughts of the enemy's hordes" in the last war. France, in fact, was reported by her own statistics as being "bled white," and there were many other factors entering into the defeat of Germany.

With only two children in the family, a race would soon die out. There must be a minimum average of four to maintain a race on a stationary level. Only when the average exceeds four can we say the race is gaining in number.

If, then, we care to encourage the breeding of a resistant race, we ought to encourage the production of a sufficient number of children to meet these conditions. The so-called "upper classes" of "society" are quite derelict in their duties toward the race in this respect.

The fear, so often expressed, is that the "lower classes" with their high birth rate will soon crowd out the "better stock" with its lower birth rate. One may believe in the virtue of propagating "good stock" without accepting the dictum that the economically unfortunate represent, on account of the very fact of their low economic standing, an inferior type. But this is indeed the claim of a class of psychologists and social workers who have "tested" the "intelligence" of the "lower classes" and found them wanting. They are contrasted with the successful classes which are called the "fit," as being largely "unfit," or at least predestined by general endowments and heredity always to remain submerged.

It was refreshing to listen to Dr. Abraham Myerson's address, delivered during the conference, on "The Inheritance of Mental Disease." Dr. Myerson is connected with the City Hospital and the Psychopathic Hospital of Boston, and knows what he is talking about.

He pointed out that we ought not to speak of "insanity," "feeble mindedness," and "criminality," as if they represent units, or entities, clearly defined. These terms embrace a great number of various symptoms and conditions which cannot be summarized. We ought to talk rather of different "mental diseases," just as we speak of other diseases. He raised the question: Who is fit? and resented it that the educated class, or the successful class would style themselves fit, while they would call the "feeble-minded" laborer (so labeled, or libeled, by the application of artificial standards of measurement) unfit. This laborer is, after all, he claimed, the backbone of civilization. He furthermore showed that there are two classes of mental diseases, only one of which can be said to run in families, or be inherited. The other and larger class represents accidental diseases just as are small-pox or a broken arm. The mental diseases which we may call "hereditary" are the "functional" ones, so denominated because we do not really know much about them, except symptomatically. But even these cannot be said to run through more than a few generations of a family, mostly only two, perhaps four. This would show that many of the family charts which have been constructed by genetic research workers to show "degenerate stock," cannot be accepted on their face value.

Be that as it may—even if we agree with the views of those who insist that there is a degenerate type which ought to be eliminated from human society, by preventing its procreation: we may have to admit that the problem of feeble-mindedness and crime has been much exaggerated. With the progress of social research and

social betterment, with the advance of medical and psychologic science, many of these types will disappear. They are as much a result of our ignorance and undeveloped social organization as they are of heredity and "poor stock." We may encourage the breeding of children under normal conditions of physical and mental health, and recommend birth control where there is plain evidence of its need. But the "unfit" will largely disappear in proportion to our raising the general level of human life.

BIRTH CONTROL¹

The present agitation of the subject of birth control, which is engaging the attention of the laity and to a certain extent the medical profession, although brought forth at this time by a group of notoriety seekers who would surround it with the glamor of the so-called advanced ideas of a most progressive age, is in reality an old and often discredited practice which has appeared again and again.

The story of the decline and decay of any great nation has always interwoven with it this most damning of national vices. A nation may wax strong on the industry of its people, its sons clean of mind and sturdy of body, its daughters fruitful in their progeny and devoted to domesticity. Then comes the period of great wealth, luxury and so-called refinement. In this age the vices subordinated in the previous one by stern necessity arise and prosper, most prominent being the pandering to the passions with a distaste for the responsibility of a family. To indulge the sexual appetite and avoid its consequences birth control is suggested. This marks the era of decay. Once given over to this practice, no nation has ever been known to follow other than the road to ruin. It was so with ancient Greece and Rome.

¹ By Edward C. Podvin, M.D., New York, Adjunct Professor of Hygiene and Preventive Medicine, Fordham University Medical School. *New York Medical Journal*. 105: 258-60. February 10, 1917.

where this vice prevailed until the strength of these great nations was destroyed.

In modern times this practice has prevailed to such an alarming extent in France that for years its death rate has exceeded the number of births. During the first six months of the year 1914 before the European war the number of births in France was four thousand less than for the same period of the preceding year. At the same time the deaths increased 20,845. Thus the population of France during the first six months of 1914 decreased 24,816. For the past thirty years the French birth rate has steadily decreased, while the death rate has increased.

Let us for a moment consider what this practice would mean to the individual, aside from its effect on the nation. Man is so constituted that there are two sides to his nature; an animal or physical side and an intellectual or spiritual part. His physical being must ever be subordinate to and dominated by the intellectual. His tendency is ever toward selfperfection, the development and refinement of his entire being under the guidance of his intellect.

Among the natural appetites given to man are those of hunger, thirst, and the sexual instinct. Each has a definite and necessary purpose and each must be under the control of the intellect. The sexual instinct necessary for procreation differs in no way from the others in that its indulgence increases and intensifies it, while repression diminishes it. Therefore, any practice which would tend toward the exercise of this function otherwise than in the way and for the purpose intended by nature, namely, procreation, would stimulate and strengthen passion and thus lower the moral calibre of the individual. On the other hand, all authorities agree that the control and subjection of the sexual function is not only desirable but beneficial, and that man can reach the highest state of development, both physical and mental, without their exercise.

Since the indulgence of the sexual instinct means the strengthening of this appetite, anything that would tend to make easy and encourage this indulgence would also tend to the lowering of man to the most degrading depths. The over-exercise of this function would bring about the development of all kinds of abnormalities and degeneracy in sex matters, as it is a well established fact that those who over-indulge the sexual instinct eventually become perverts of one form or another.

Again, we are all aware that one of the greatest protecting agencies of female virtue is the fear of conception. Remove this fear and you have taken away from those of not overstrong mental faculties one of the most important natural safeguards of chastity. Also, any physician is aware that the methods advocated by the disciples of birth control are far from perfect, that in order to be even tolerably efficacious they must be intelligently carried out. Now, the very class of women for whom they are intended are the ones least likely by nature and environment to observe the prescribed technic. Thus we would have the terrible results of the false security promised by those prescriptions, and the inevitable accompaniment—the abortionist or suicide.

No more unpatriotic principle could be advocated than that which would deny to the country the citizenship to which it is entitled and which it may sorely need for its development or defense.

It would directly violate and frustrate the primary object of matrimony, which is the begetting of children, and what more natural, if we do away with the purpose of matrimony, that we should do away with matrimony itself? Free love is the natural sequence of this plan. It means the lowering of man below the level of the beast, who is guided only by instinct. Man is guided by reason, yet in the practice of birth control he would overthrow reason and give himself up entirely to the gratification of his passions.

The first and most appealing argument advanced in behalf of birth control is poverty. That children are brought into the world by people who are unable to give them the means of livelihood, and that their presence here is undesirable.

Now aside from the religious aspect, that we as believers in a Creator hold that He alone is responsible for each individual and that we are not to decide so important a question for Him, in the physical sense alone, can this statement be proved? No class of men are more conversant with the intimate affairs of the family than physicians; now let me ask how many instances can we recall in all our experience of actual suffering being due alone to the size of the family? That we have seen suffering and want is undeniable, but in how many instances was that due alone and entirely to the excessive number of children? Was there no intemperance, was there no lack of industry on the part of the parents, or were there not industrial or financial accidents due to man's carelessness or cupidity that contributed to or caused the suffering?

What do we mean by happiness and suffering, especially in this regard? I ask anyone who has an only child, or who has ever had to deal either professionally or otherwise with an only child, what is their idea of the relative happiness of that child reared with every want anticipated, and the child of the tenement who subsists on the plainest fare, but who is able to divide not only his crusts but his joys and sorrows with brothers and sisters. Happiness, as we all know, is not a matter of environment, but is a mental state, dependent entirely on the individual, and influenced least of all by surroundings. Again, if we were to review the history of those who have been of greatest service to humanity, or have really contributed toward the world's progress, I am sure that we would find that from the ranks of those born to poverty and hardships have come a vast majority of our

great men and women of all ages. How are we to decide in advance which child in years to come will be the better cared for? We are none of us gifted with the powers of foresight—not even the apostles of this wonderful creed—and the parents who decide that because today they are in a comfortable position financially and otherwise, and, therefore, determine in their great wisdom that they will proceed to have a child, may be the very ones who in a short time, by some unexpected change in fortune, are reduced to penury, while their neighbors, whose large and poorly clad progeny, at the time of their decision the familiar gossip of the neighborhood, have by a similar change been swept on the crest of a wave of prosperity to affluence or high state.

The other argument advanced is that due to the severity of labor woman is reduced to a state of invalidism, that she often gives up her health, happiness, and even life itself, through parturition. That an occasional death occurs during childbirth is patent. I am not familiar with the actual mortality statistics of pregnancy, if there are such figures. Someone with a genius for statistics has recently compiled the death rate from German measles and chickenpox, and I am sure they are on a par with pregnancy. To say that a woman should avoid pregnancy because of the rare fatalities would be equivalent to stating that no one should travel on railroads because an occasional passenger is killed. And as regards the injurious effects on the health and well-being, just exactly the opposite is the case, as every physician knows.

We need but to review our practical experiences to realize that the class of patients that are always in our waiting rooms, with every variety of complaint, real or imaginary, are the unmarried women of advancing years or the married ones with one or no children. What more constant and sorrowful picture is there than this class of women—prematurely gray and enfeebled, soured in disposition, disappointed in ambition, disillusioned, con-

firmed pessimists, gossips, and busybodies, their life a burden to themselves and an annoyance to everyone with whom they come in contact? They furnish the vast majority of the subjects operated on for floating kidney, chronic appendicitis, and any other chronic and obscure conditions which can be credited with their complaints and will justify an exploratory operation. They fill and make possible the rest cures and sanitariums and are almost the sole support of the charlatan.

On the other hand, consider what is our usual experience with the mothers of large families. In the early years of their married life we see them about once every eighteen months for confinement. We see them again quite frequently when we go to the home to visit the children while they are small. If we think that the mothers should come to our office for some special purpose or examination, we usually are obliged to appeal to the husbands and make him stay home from work to bring them. Then they drop out of our sight until we may meet them again at the climacteric period, when they come to us accompanied by daughters that look like their sisters or sons that seem like brothers. The finest physical specimens of womanhood that I have in my acquaintance at the age of forty to fifty or over are the mothers of large families. Health and happiness shine in their countenance—happiness engendered by the hopes and plans and endeavors in behalf of others—their children. Sacrifice, the great force, has refined their character, and surrounded by their progeny they are truly the queens of the earth, before whom every true and honorable man has ever bowed in allegiance and respect—noble motherhood.

That there is a justification for the control of offspring in certain rare instances nobody will dispute. The husband of a tuberculous or otherwise enfeebled wife is not alone justified but is in duty bound to exercise this control. There is no objection to control for economic

reasons if husband and wife are agreed in the matter and are able to safeguard the passions. To accomplish this it is not necessary to stoop to a practice that is degrading and dangerous, it is not necessary to pander to the passions or disobey nature's laws. There is a birth control that is absolutely reliable, no whispered formula is necessary for its execution, it does not weaken man physically or morally, it violates neither the law of God nor man—self-control.

BIRTH CONTROL AND STERILITY¹

In the study of sterility cases I have long been impressed with the factor of birth control as causing many functional cases and gradually have come to believe with Dr. Englemann, "that the avoidance or prevention of conception if possible, the premature termination of pregnancy if need be, are factors far more potential of causation of decreasing fecundity than is the progress of genetic science to the contrary." Dr. Child, in his monograph on *Sterility and Conception*, considers "all of the artifices that are used for the prevention of conception or the limitation of offspring injurious alike to morals and to physical health." He quotes the following from Dr. Goodell: "The sexual instinct has been given to man for the perpetuation of his species: but, in order to refine this gift and to set limits to its abuse, it has been wisely ordered that a purely intellectual quality—that of love—should find its most passionate expression in the gratification of this instinct. Dissociate the one from the other, and man sinks below the level of the brute. Destroy the reciprocity of the union, and marriage is no longer an equal partnership, but a sensual usurpation on the one side and a loathing submission on the other; wedlock lapses into licentiousness; the wife is degraded into a

¹ From article by Dr. C. Henry Davis, Milwaukee, Wis. Paper read before the Chicago Gynecological Society, November 17, 1922. *Surgery, Gynecology and Obstetrics*. 36: 435-9. March, 1923.

mistress; love and affection change into aversion and hate."

Birth control may be practiced without danger of conception when one or both parties are actually or potentially sterile. If both parties are virile sooner or later there is a mishap and pregnancy results. Those who merely aimed to postpone the pregnancy accept this with good grace—but all too often the woman is rushed to the abortionist while still in the hysterical stage and her life and future health jeopardized.

Birth control to be at all effective demands a considerable degree of intelligence and self-control. By virtue of this fact it can be of little value to the class of people for whom enthusiasts say it is intended. The more highly educated woman usually marries after twenty-five when she has already passed the period of greatest fertility. If she then uses contraceptives for a few years she often becomes potentially sterile and medical treatment may be required before a pregnancy will result. Furthermore, in many instances, the unnatural sex practices have made her more or less neurotic. These cases are apt to end in a sanitarium or a divorce court.

I have come to the following conclusions:

1. A long-continued prevention of conception is possible when one or both parties are sterile or potentially sterile.

2. If both parties are virile sooner or later a pregnancy will result in spite of contraceptives.

3. The use of contraceptives tends to produce functional sterility.

4. A criminal abortion is apt to result in a permanent sterility.

5. The average girl of today leads a life which tends to reduce her fertility. She will have a relatively small family even though no precautions are used, and attempts to postpone pregnancy may result in her having no children.

6. The advocates of legalized "birth control" are a menace to civilization. Sterilization is the only thing that will stop the reproduction of the subnormal and unfit. Practiced clandestinely, birth control does much harm and little good; if legalized it would in a few generations destroy our civilization and leave a race of degenerates.

BIRTH CONTROL¹

On the surface of things it would seem as if a knowledge of how to prevent the too rapid increase of a family would be a boon to over-prolific and heavily burdened mothers. There are, however, certain reasons which probably convert the supposed advantage into a very real disadvantage. An experience of well over forty years convinces me that the artificial limitation of the family causes damage to a woman's nervous system. The damage done is likely to show itself in inability to conceive when the restriction voluntarily used is abandoned because the couple desire offspring.

I have for many years asked women who came to me desiring children whether they have ever practised prevention, and they very frequently tell me that they did so during the early years of their married life because they thought that their means were not adequate to the support of a family. Subsequently they found that conception, thwarted at the time that desire was present, fails to occur when it becomes convenient. In such cases, even although examination of the pelvic organs shows nothing abnormal, all one's endeavors to secure conception frequently go unrewarded. Sometimes such a woman is not only sterile but nervous and in generally poor health, but the more common occurrence is that she remains fairly well until the time of the change of life, when she frequently suffers more, on the nervous

¹ By Dr. Mary Scharlieb, London. *British Medical Journal*. 2: 93. July 16, 1921.

side, than does the woman who has lived a natural married life.

Another argument against the artificial limitation of families lies in the fact that frequently it is not in the real interest of the wife, since by removing all fear of consequences from the mind of the husband it removes the only potent check on his desires, and thus, in many instances, it removes the wife's best protection against the slavery of too frequent intercourse.

On the moral side the case against "preventives" is strong. The knowledge of the means of artificial prevention of conception cannot be bestowed on some women and withheld from others. The methods of application and the specious arguments in favor of their use will become known to all women and girls. This is a moral wrong. We may believe in purity of intention, and we must hope that there are many women whose virtue is founded on nobility of character, on a strong moral sense, and on religious convictions, but we know quite well that a certain percentage of women and girls, even among the unmarried, need the support of what may be called an "outside conscience." Such individuals are more likely to fall into immorality if they know they can indulge youthful passions without any fear of disagreeable consequences. Some people who advocate the use of artificial preventives of conception go so far as to consider this knowledge an unmixed benefit to unmarried girls and women; indeed, one well-known non-medical advocate of artificial prevention stated a few days ago that a young unmarried woman attending her clinic had already procured abortion twice, but she was thankful to have been able to teach her how to avoid that necessity in the future!

Further, the knowledge that sexual intercourse may be enjoyed without the probability of pregnancy occurring tends to over-develop the sexual side of character in both men and women. Mankind is already over-sexed: the

absence of all restraints, such as times and seasons impose on other animals, is probably the result of the over-exercise of this gracious gift, and anything which tends still further to increase the already superabundant sexuality of man is an injury and not an advantage, both physically and morally. Can one imagine a more terrible state of society than that which is bound to evolve from the indulgence of unbridled sexual passions? The people and the nations which practice artificial prevention of conception, and who, therefore, have no restraint on their sexual passions, are likely to become effeminate and degenerate. The removal of the sanction of matrimony, and the unhindered and unbalanced sexual indulgence that would follow, would war against self-control, chivalry and self-respect.

BIRTH CONTROL AND THE PHYSICIAN¹

Corresponding to the four main motives for birth control (medical, eugenic, economic, and hedonic), there are four ways to effect the limitation of offspring. There is in the first place the lawful and even hallowed device of total abstinence from any marriage relation. A considerable part of humanity has surrounded this action with the halo of sanctity. An aureole is placed upon the head of the religious abstainer. These religious abstainers prove that total abstinence is compatible with perfect health. To be sure, the pseudo-sexologist is always on hand with a history of some priest who in a personal letter described the terrible agony caused by sex hunger he has to undergo, but because a priest with an exaggerated sex urge does suffer agonies does not indicate that sex satisfaction is an absolute necessity for everybody. Many an ambitious man suffers agonies because he cannot have a coun-

¹ From article by B. S. Talmey, M.D., New York. *New York Medical Journal*. 105: 1187-91. June 23, 1917.

try home, and many a woman pines away from grief because she cannot have her own automobile. Yet the country home and the automobile do not belong to the absolute necessities of life. The nosology of the religious celibates, whether of the men or of the women, does not materially differ from that of any married man or woman. The flippant remark about the religious abstainers housekeeper is a cheap insinuation. It may be true of some of them, but not of a majority. The writer is not a Catholic, but he was brought up in a Catholic college and in a Catholic university. His professor of Hebrew was a Catholic priest, the rector magnificent who matriculated him at the university was a Catholic priest, and he does not believe that these scientists have all violated the vows they have taken when entering the priesthood. And how about the nuns, do they also have housekeepers? The writer happened to have been an interné in a hospital where nuns took the place of nurses, and he does not think that these magnificent women who were working day and night in the cause of suffering humanity for no other remuneration except to please the Lord have ever committed an unchaste act. There are no more diseases among them than among married women, and their longevity compares favorably with that of the latter. When a certain class of sexologists, such as Marcuse in Germany and his less learned followers here, maintain that the repression of the sex urge is the cause of a number of nervous anomalies, they use the word sexuality with a certain vagueness of connotation and confuse it with sensuality.

Sensuality is destructive, sexuality is constructive. The main sufferers from sexual repression are those living in the lowlands of modern sensuality. Only those shackled by an overpowering sensuality suffer by repression.

The stored up nervous tension is vicariously dis-

charged by being sublimated or transformed into energy in the service of great social ends, such as religion, philosophy, science, art, charity, or commerce. The primal impulses are switched into other forms of expression. They find their outlet in a kind of vicarious functioning, they take a psychical channel instead of the usual physiological path. The sex energy is used in a different mode of expression. It is applied to the mental output. The brain output of a Kant, Beethoven, Leonardo da Vinci, Newton, Locke, Pope, Hume, Adam Smith, Goldsmith, Macaulay, Herbert Spencer, all celibates, was due to the sublimation of the normal desire. Such men use up their sexuality in their work, which occupies their minds and satisfies the natural cravings. Their sexuality is not repressed, it is merely directed into different paths, where it finds other forms of expression. The insinuation by the sensual pseudosexologist that bachelorhood is no proof of abstinence shows the ignorance of the dabblers in sex matters. If the scientist's sexuality has not been sublimated into other activities, why did he not marry? Extra-matrimonial relations may satisfy the sex urge, but do not satisfy the permanent mating instinct, and this instinct is, in the long run, as powerful as the temporary mating impulse. The latter is in no way a substitute for the former. Hence the only explanation for the scientist's bachelorhood is sublimation.

The best proof that prevention in the long run never really prevents is the European propaganda for the repeal of all laws against abortion. Prevention is surely the easier way; it is a private affair, not subject to interference by a third party. Moreover, destruction of conception is not in harmony with the religious, moral, and human sentiments. Still, scientists like Doctor Lion, Judge Eduard v. Liszt, Hans Gross, Professor J. Kocks, Albert Moll, District Attorney v. Hessert, the Pirogoff society in Russia, and many other scientists

on the European continent, who surely know all the contraceptives in existence better than our reformers here, are advocating abortion instead of the gentler contraception. Why do they do it? Because they know that prevention in the average does not prevent. Another proof of the failure of contraception is Holland, where contraception is not prohibited by law. There are there even societies and clinics to teach every one in need how to prevent conception. Still, in the report of Treub and Katharina von Tussenbrock, who were appointed to investigate this matter, the two investigators state that the practice of volitional abortion has increased in a disquieting way. This shows that with all their knowledge of contraception the Dutch women still become pregnant and have to resort to the destruction of the products of conception.

The decline of the birth rate, observed in every civilized country, is not necessarily due to contraception, as the propagandists of birth control wish to make believe, but may be rather attributed solely to postconceptional destruction. The number of women who, in spite of the use of all kinds of contraceptives, have not been pregnant at least half a dozen times during the twenty-odd years of their childbearing age, and after all their vain efforts to take their refuge in post-conceptional destruction, is very small indeed. But for these destructive practices there would be no considerable falling off of the birth rate.

RACE PHYSIOLOGY AND THE PHYSIOLOGICAL ASPECT¹

It is found that if the fertility of 1861 be taken as the datum line and denoted by a hundred, that the fertility around 1871 is represented by one hundred and

¹ From article Restriction of Birth Control in Relation to National Weal, by John Brownlee, M.D., D.Sc., National Institute for Medical Research Great Britain. *Lancet*. 203: 225. July 29, 1922.

three; that around 1881 by one hundred and two, and that thenceforth the decline is continual until in 1911 it has fallen to seventy-three. Now I have held and still hold that a large part of this fall in fertility is due to race physiology. The idea of race physiology is not in favor at the present moment, largely, I think, because of the neglect by physiologists of the larger aspects of life. In view of the great number of races and empires which have risen and fallen in history, the question as to whether there is a race physiology seems at least worthy of consideration. It has been advanced from the time of Aristotle, who says it is a law of nature that great men come in groups. The effect of deliberate restriction of the birth rate must be admitted, however to be of increasing importance, but I feel inclined also to consider this an aspect of race physiology; the refusal of responsibility is a mark of the decline in the vitality of the individual. The tendency to interfere with the processes of nature seems to recur at intervals in the history of society. The same neglect of the maintenance of the family is one of the charges of the Roman satirists of the empire, a change which was coincident with the decay of the empire, and to which it must be held to have had some relation.

We now go from the statistical to the physiological aspect of the matter. On this I do not feel that I possess the kind of knowledge to enable me to dogmatize, but within the range of my own observation and from conversation with many medical friends I have seen and heard sufficient to render some things probable. When a young married couple deliberately for a number of years avoid having children, it is often found that if later the desire to have children arises, the capacity to procreate no longer exists. This position has been met by saying that the first pregnancy should never be postponed. With the statement I am in complete agreement, but at present the first pregnancy is in far too many cases among the middle classes postponed.

Further, if family life is to exist with true social intercourse there should not be too much difference between the ages of the children. I can quite well understand parents limiting their families to three or four children, but in that case the interval between children would be preferably eighteen months. The ideal that a woman should bear children at long intervals during fifteen or twenty years is to me socially wrong. An only child is an admitted anomaly. Colonel Martin Flack, moreover, who has large experience in selecting the flying men for the Air Force, concurs in this; he tells me that the only child is hardly ever of use for flying. Children born at intervals of four or five years, however, are practically "only" children and in place of one anomaly several are produced. That, however, this intermittent kind of fertility exists is pure assumption. It is highly improbable that parents who considered the production of such multiple anomalies desirable would receive any encouragement from nature.

SOME FALLACIES OF ARTIFICIAL BIRTH CONTROL¹

Wise in their own eyes, those who practise artificial birth control would need but little attention from others, were it not for one thing. Convinced of the beauty, the superiority and the efficacy of their doctrine to all else that has ever been vouchsafed to the human race in the way of revelation, some of them thrust their views on all and sundry. Chiefly, perhaps, do they do so on those, who from lack of wide experience, opportunities and advantages to learn, are unable to form balanced judgments, and are most likely to be imposed upon by this very superficial remedy for our ills. It should, however, be added that there is no doubt that many advocates of artificial birth control are actuated by the best intentions.

¹ From pamphlet by Mai Edge. 23p. C. W. Daniel Company. London. 1923.

Let us now consider some reasons why this doctrine may be considered superficial.

If we look into the world of nature around us, we shall see two things apparent. Whether it be bird or mammal, sexual intercourse is for offspring, and sexual intercourse does not take place during pregnancy. There seems, also, from observation of primitive races (in a virile state, of course, not in the last stage of decay, or after long contact with the white races) little reason to doubt that a fairly high state of continence was also incidental to man. To fallen human nature polygamy may be physically sounder than monogamy punctured by prostitution, though ideally and morally polygamy is unquestionably a lower code than monogamy. Further, a decaying people, whether primitive or civilized, is generally far from this state in regard to sexual intercourse.

Let us, therefore, ask ourselves: Why did mankind in general lapse in this matter? The answer to that question seems, at least to me, as follows:—the rest of the animal kingdom have had to adapt themselves physically and mentally to their environment, whereas after man became self-conscious, he found that he had to adapt himself physically, mentally and *morally* to his environment—or perish. As to this, he has had numerous warnings. Every civilization we have knowledge of has either gone to ground from the incursions of barbarians, or, to quote the terse and delightful summary of a well-known writer, because “we breed our own.” In the first case, however, the barbarians frequently had an easy task, because the people whom they overcame were wealthy and morally corrupt. These two factors have been generally synonymous in the world’s history.

So much for the reason of man’s fall from continence in an historic sense. Let us now, as briefly as possible, try to form some idea, based on evidence we find around us, as to its personal and primary course, in man himself. Man stood once, there is little doubt, on the

same platform as the rest of the animal world in regard to continence, but when he became self-conscious, he could take either an upward or downward step. If he had done the first, he would have retained the same standard of continence as the other members of the animal kingdom. As his progeny increased, and the problem of population began truly to press, it would not have been difficult to have exercised a still stricter and more reasonable self-control in the matter and, instead of an annual mating, to have limited the mating to every few years, or to the younger adults. Moreover, probably by that time, far more so than now, he would have found those various other channels and directions into which to divert and sublimate his surplus emotion, such as art, inventions, science, music, and many other achievements.

It may here be objected that this abstinence would have been prejudicial to health, but if we observe the vastly greater beauty and vitality of the rest of creation, I think we can safely dismiss this idea as erroneous. Observe the passengers on board a ship—even the first class—and the birds which hover around. Which are more generally beautiful, full of life, energy and vitality? I think we must confess it is the birds, and that this is in no small measure due to their superior sexual habits, though, of course, not entirely. There is little doubt men's vigor, both mental and bodily, would be enormously increased and prolonged were vitality not sexually wasted.

As it happened, however, and as often happens—for man learns thoroughly, perhaps, only through his mistakes—man took a downward step on attaining self-consciousness. May we not reasonably assume that self-commenced to bulk too largely in his mind and that he became increasingly selfish? The idea which seems to have followed on this, and persisted, is that if each individual seeks his individual happiness the happiness of all is secured. That this is a fallacy hardly needs demon-

stration today. That this course of action is supported by the example and struggles of the rest of the animal kingdom is another fallacy. Animals may, and do hunt each other for food, when they require food—but they do not corner supplies, starve each other amid plenty, and spend their lives heaping up one thousand times more than they can ever possibly require. They do not consider lives devoted solely to such activities, and to personal aggrandisement, well spent. It has been left to man to make means, ends in themselves. So much for these fallacies.

Let us now think how the selfish impulse may have worked out in connection with continence—the higher apes are still monogamous. The selfish strong man, probably soon enslaved his selfish but weaker neighbor and so secured more leisure. He gained the use of intoxicants and became increasingly sensual and gluttonous. In some drunken bout or primitive religious frenzy (for the emotions of religion and sex are not far apart), he may have conceived the idea that two or more female companions afforded more self-gratification than one. It is reasonable to assume that woman played on this weakness, in the hope of obtaining a few feathers and gaining a little favor, and hence freedom from hard or irksome tasks. It is more than likely in this matter of sexual decadence, that man's idea of self-gratification and woman's idea of turning this weakness to her own advantage are the origin of all the wantonness and misery we see in the world around us today. Like all selfish mistakes—and not a few of man's mistakes arise from selfishness—it has had to be paid for:—to mention but a few things, in rape, prostitution, and venereal diseases.

Grounded on selfishness, the fall of man in regard to continence was soon in full swing. By degrees, as wealth increased, the difference between the poor and rich became more marked, but up to a certain stage (the agricultural and rural) possibly the poor man was

healthier than the rich, and more natural in his sexual relations, and therefore happier. Still on one hand were to be seen the rich man and woman, uneasy, restless, deprived of bodily work and looking down on it, yet seeking substitutes for it; overfed, yet lacking vitality on account of sexual waste and wantonness; without real or necessary work, and chiefly immersed in trifles and foibles. On the other hand were the down-trodden, overworked, and largely underfed.

With the advent of machinery this process was accelerated. It is strange to observe the Victorian age in the light of the birth controller's claim, that if you limit the number of births wealth will be better apportioned. The Victorian age increased wealth faster than human beings multiplied, though correct figures as to this are hard to get; but the poor were beaten into slums and, although the unhappiness and disease of both rich and poor were not inconsiderable, selfishness permitted no fairer distribution of wealth. Most Victorians were sure that increased wealth would mean general uplift and well being. They were wrong.

Into the immoral chaos they left behind, augmented by the war which followed it, the birth controller now steps with a new doctrine. Decrease the population and all will be better adjusted. He is likely to be as wrong as the Victorian. All economic problems rest on a personal and moral basis, and if this be crooked or unsound, no building on it will be valuable or enduring.

This state of affairs in human life is the more strange, because from time to time men like Isaiah, Buddha, Christ and Tolstoy have arisen and pointed out to mankind that the one root of their trouble is selfishness, and that if men sought righteousness (not self-righteousness) the rest would be added unto them. They taught that men should reverence the gifts of God in humble thankfulness, and practise an unselfish and brotherly kindness to one another in their short lives. But this has always

been so unpalatable a creed to those who think possessions will give them happiness, that it was soon cloaked, by all churches seeking temporal power, in a mass of unessential ritual and dogma, which first hypnotised and awed, and then alienated the bulk of their congregations, leaving selfishness rampant.

Paying no great attention to the matter of selfishness the artificial birth controller says, "halve the population and we shall enjoy a better distribution of things, and a higher standard of life." This doctrine calls for no great self-control and, therefore, is as easy and acceptable as it is superficial. In short, he is like an agriculturist who, cutting off the heads of his nettles and thistles, thereby strengthening the hidden root (selfishness) which impoverishes the soil, cries, "Mark the result."

The result of cutting off the heads of our thistles and nettles is, of course, immediate and marked, but the soil is not cultivated by such easy means, and the birth controller may, or may not, live to be amazed at its poverty.

Leaving such issues as that only children are about as happy as a thirty-year-old man would be if confined with nonagenarians, and that members of limited families are usually super-selfish and self-centered, let us now compare the birth controller's methods with other data available.

The appetite for food supports the bodily life, the sexual appetite supports the life of the race. Few will deny this statement.

In the days of the Roman emperors some were very uncontrolled in their appetite for food, and to avoid the disagreeable consequences of this and enable them to indulge their excessive appetite more freely, they made use of emetics at table. What effect this had upon their physical, mental and moral attributes we are not specially told, but they are regarded—perhaps not unjustly—as somewhat degraded. In the present day we should hardly seek to correct greediness in a child by suggesting the same measure—or practise it ourselves.

The use of contraceptives in regard to excessive sexual appetite is identical—save in one point, though that is a considerable one. The Roman emperor used his emetics to enable him to gratify his appetite and relieve himself from subsequent digestive tasks. He alone suffered through the use of his emetics, beyond such suffering as his disagreeable personality inflicted on others. The person who uses contraceptives does so to enable him to gratify his appetite and *prevent the suffering of sickly or unwanted children*, and *sometimes* the suffering of a delicate, over-taxed or under-fed woman. Otherwise the two methods of dealing with excessive appetite are on all fours. I do not know, however, how any birth controller finds that the use of contraceptives is romantic. I do not believe the Roman emperors and epicures suggested that emetics were romantic, though they accepted them as convenient. One can only gather that the birth controller who suggests such a thing is mentally or emotionally defective. The being who gratifies a healthy natural appetite is one phenomenon; the being who gratifies his palate with the calculated intention of not digesting his food is another. Whatever he may be he is not romantic.

Now, one would not have such grave cause for complaint against the birth controller if he admitted honestly that his was a desperate remedy for a very degraded state, but he does not. Without fully recognizing the personal degradation that calls for such remedies, he says "The movement will vastly uplift humanity. It's beautiful, it preserves *natural* human relationship,¹ it's roman-

¹ I venture to think that anyone who preaches the doctrine that such sexual intercourse is natural, to be encouraged and made as sensually attractive as possible, circulates one of the most intrinsically unsound and pernicious ideas the imagination of man has ever conceived, and regardless of the loss of vitality that seems must inevitably follow. That so many intellectuals do not detect the fundamental error upon which such a creed rests, makes one question their value as leaders. The purpose of most of our faculties is fairly obvious. One can use or abstain, if necessary, from using them, but if we preach that their misuse or abortive use is natural where can we logically draw a line. What is a sensualist but the mortal who carefully considers self-gratification, always seeking the joy that can come only from the spontaneous self oblivion of every object in the world except another human life? The tree and the plant bear their fruit and flowers. It is the gardener who prunes. And if we,

tic. It's one of the greatest steps toward the millennium man can make. Once halve the population, there will be a better distribution of wealth. There will be no unemployment."

Does any one *really* believe this will be so? *The smaller the family, so much the easier will it be to impose a lower standard of wages.* That may quite likely be the ultimate result, though not the immediate intention.

Another reason the birth controller gives in support of his theory is, that we are over-populated. Are we so—at the conclusion of a war that killed and maimed thousands of our best lives? Are we populated beyond our supplies? The problem seems to be quite the reverse. The countryman can see tons of fish thrown away after a big catch, though the poor in towns would be glad of it. He can see potatoes planted by digging or ploughing (in either case not exactly light work) harvested and sold for a penny a pound. He can see apples unmarketable at a penny a pound delivered, though the children in towns scramble for a trodden apple core. Why? Because it does not pay (in money) to produce food abundantly, because it does not suit the interest of the middleman to deal with it, or the interest of the manufacturer to pay his work-people in such a manner and such a wage that enables them to buy it. Frequently to produce food does not even pay the cost of transporting it, and is a net loss. You can have the industry to pick wild mushrooms for nothing, and lose on the transaction of sending them to a market town, yet people like mushrooms. In any case the wealth of food is there, and it might be enormously increased, but as some people cannot make a fortune by handling it, the food is allowed to rot, or is not produced, and people starve.

This proceeding does not seem to be the action of a reasoning being, and it is not intelligible until we turn

too, live in this world, as perhaps God meant human beings to live, we could trust to His gardening, rather than the ghastly inventions by which man seeks to mitigate the consequences of his own wrong doing, when they become too unbearable.

to our scale of values, which perhaps sheds some light on these problems. The grower of potatoes gets a penny a pound for them, and it does not pay him or his laborers to do this hard work. If, however, he invented a face powder that made women look younger, or an aperient pill for relieving over-eating, or corrupted and bemused weak minds through the press he might die a millionaire. As a popular prize fighter he might gain sufficient to live and die comfortably off. Why, even if one produces under glass the fruits of the earth, six months before they are in their highest perfection beneath the sun, one can gain enough to live on. Asparagus out of season may fetch 36s. a bundle, but in season if a so-called glut occurs, not a ls. a bundle, and newspapers can ever speak of "the ruinous record crop of potatoes." Also as regards the sums spent on spurious rubbish or an osprey to trim a hat, or a fur coat, they are often enough to keep a family for half a year, or even several families for a whole year, while the seal and the osprey are exterminated. In the face of such things, the birth controller's contention that the limitation of population will produce better distribution of wealth seems hardly likely. His measures probably would enable some people to buy more ospreys and furs and exterminate both bird and animal the faster.

Let us consider one other fact. Our selfishness has bred such a ghastly underworld of misery, vice and unemployable incompetence, that many begin to preach the new evangel of self sterilization to the poor. While industrial magnates, multi-millionaires, and so forth, point to the value of industry, thrift and success in money making, which lie somewhat beyond the grasp of these helpless, hapless off scourings of our beneficent activities. We seem not unlike a doctor, who, having neglected a wounded limb too long, suggests amputation as the next best means of saving himself trouble; after which treatment the patient may die, or at best go halt and maimed.

It is strange that so many people living under decent conditions and with most of the beauties of life within their grasp, seem unable to apprehend better ideals and conditions of life; and that those who are shocked at any breach of etiquette—the wearing of a white waist-coat when we ought to wear a black tie and such fine points—seem to feel no discomfort at living in a world of so much human misery. It is a remarkable example of our powers of self-concentration and our want of thought for others.

If we seek the cause of all this, it seems, broadly speaking, that such facts arise because God's wealth, which is given for the use of one and all, is diverted by man's system of distribution, which enriches only a few. If it is contended that under man's system, the idler is stimulated to effort by being faced with starvation, one has only to point to the man who tills and produces corn, and is by no means well off; and then to the man who gambles in differences in the price of wheat (a matter of no intrinsic worth to anyone but himself and totally unproductive, nay more, actually injurious to the general interest), who gains a fortune and profound respect. We will not refer at length to the idle drawer of dividends—like the poor he, too, is with us. The problem which confronts us is not that of feeding fewer or more people, but a quite different one. It is occasioned by a totally false scale of values, a miserable system of distribution, transport, and land tenure; discouragement of production in favor of a few and the inability of anyone to concentrate on altering this state of affairs. The problem is *not* as yet one of greater or less numbers, but a moral one, arising from the selfishness which leaves neither rich nor poor happy. Our selfishness is supported by a mass of false teaching (birth control literature is only one unpleasant example), the outcome of an immense, pompous and wearisome "wisdom in our own eyes."

The fact is that directly men get away from, and muffle themselves up from, the facts of God's book,

nature, they frequently become so foolish and go so far astray, that an honest and intelligent laborer who can neither read nor write, would only look at them in pity, and wonder how long or how soon it would be before they reaped their harvest. With regard to our civilization, this reaping does not appear to be far distant. As for distribution, if we double our wealth and halve the population, and remain as blind and selfish as we are today, despite the birth controller, the poor are not likely to be much better off or the rich happier. The real choke hold on mankind is the selfishness of man.

Mankind should recognize this, and recognize, also, that there is a choice. It is between learning self-control and unselfishness—in sexual matters as in all others—and, endeavoring to outwit the Power that created us, trying to avert the consequences of our excesses without abating them. In the case of the artificial birth controller he is but accelerating the end of beings too selfish and degraded to occupy God's generous world—while his teachings may not infrequently augment the selfishness which is bringing them to that end. But we cannot outwit the Power that created the universe. Always, now or tomorrow, the penalty is, "The wages of sin is death."

Leaving to the birth controller the impossible task of thoroughly outwitting God, what steps can we take to arrive at a really better state of affairs?

In my opinion the first is undoubtedly a moral one. It may sound childish, but if we all awoke each morning with the idea that we would consider others as much, or even half as much as we consider ourselves, and honestly tried to *act up to this idea throughout the day*, much would be achieved and much good would follow. It must be admitted that, so far, selfishness has brought but little happiness to either rich or poor.

We should do well to recognize our unique degradation in matters of sex, a degradation no other living creature shares, and to reflect on the treatment the fact of sex has hitherto received. Briefly, it may be stated

thus:—there are those who appear to think the Great Creator of the universe has been guilty of a lapse in this matter, and that it behoves them in their superior wisdom to cover it up. There are others who, unable to apprehend our degradation, regard sex as an obscene joke, and recommend the sowing of "wild oats," to be followed by matrimony *and children* considerably weakened and faulty. There are those who unnaturally deny all the claims of sex, and lastly comes the birth controller with his sterilized tame oats extolling the code approved by the emperors and epicures. All overlook much.

Finally, let us recognize birth control for the thing it is. It is no panacea for the root of our ills, selfishness. Nor is it a bringer of the millennium, but merely a dubious relief to men who have wandered far from their true path and are in desperate plight. It conceivably may be a measure to be reserved for the victims of the physical sins of others, those who suffer from hereditary disease or other weakness; but for healthy people to make means ends in themselves has rarely brought welfare or happiness and is the frequent cause of neurotic ailments and hysteria. It is not a doctrine to be lauded and recommended out of all proportion to its merits, or made more easy of access to youths of fifteen, than are a hypodermic syringe and drugs and it is certain that those who accept it blindly for what it is not, will suffer accordingly.

Therefore, if we use contraceptives, let us do so with our eyes open to their true nature, and try by wiser training and teaching to keep ever in the minds of our children that they must learn to be better and wiser than we are. I believe that, in the long run, only the physically, mentally and morally fit will survive in this world, and that the human race would spare itself much useless misery and pain by a speedier recognition of this fact. Our knowledge of what human effort has achieved for sordid ends should show us how much better our lives might be if only we had it in our minds and hearts to make them better.

CONSCIOUS LIMITATION OF THE
BIRTH RATE¹

It is common enough knowledge (little as it modifies our conduct) that we fall an easy prey to any appearance of ready-made simple devices for attaining the possibilities or for solving the difficulties and ills of life. One man is persuaded to think he can make a happy home by buying suites of furniture on the hire-system, another to trust for strength to a patent medicine, another to dream that "speeding up" spells the millennium. And the same tendency of mind is at present leading a large number of people to speak and act as though a general knowledge and use of mechanical contrivances to prevent conception from following on sexual intercourse were not only an alleviation of immediate economic and personal difficulties, which it may be, but a satisfying solution of the whole intricate problem of the relations of men and women to each other and to society, which it cannot conceivably be.

That conscious limitation of the birth rate looked at from various points of view—the social, the religious, the economic—is the subject of a great deal of writing and discussion today is intelligible. The growing self-consciousness of the race causes us to wonder and comment upon the wreckage thrown up by the tide of life; but over and above this is the fact that problems which formerly, for the most part, occurred in an acute form among the more inarticulate classes untrained in thinking and speaking and in working out new ways of life, are now pressing on a class of men and women unused to lying down and suffering without wanting to inquire into the reason why, both in a utilitarian and in a genuinely humanitarian spirit.

In this matter of birth control the immediate position of a great many men and women is this: they see the

¹ From article by E. V. Lindsay (Mrs. A. D. Lindsay) and A. D. Lindsay, Professor of Moral Philosophy in Glasgow University. *Hibbert Journal*. 22: 294-310. January, 1924.

difficulties and dangers of bringing many children into the world so clearly that they find themselves set upon limiting the number of their family; but while this determination is stronger than their desire for children yet unborn, they find that it does not correspondingly or immediately affect their sexual desire. Human ingenuity enables them to satisfy their desires under conditions, without danger of conception; but the means and conditions are often distasteful.

The problem can no longer be met by the unaided individual, and no longer altogether needs to be. For it has become general and conscious enough to set many minds at work, and a certain amount of help and direction is filtering through already to the public. The worst of it is that what gets most easily and most generally known in way of remedy is not the combined thought of the best minds (thought which is at work along different lines of advance but which has not yet matured and been reconciled into a consistent outlook and policy), it is the popular recipe for the removal of the most inconvenient symptoms.

The danger of the situation might be illustrated by what has happened in quite another field. Widespread and conscious demand by the mass of the people for some comfort and diversion in a drab life led to the multiplication of the public-house. This was an immediately producible and marketable remedy for symptoms, not the outcome of a sound constructive social policy. It led to a sadder and wiser society having to deal with the incubus of vested interests that were absorbing the money and energy needed for education and housing and other constructive activities.

In such a comparatively unexplored field as that of birth control we run tremendous risks in the taking over of ready-made devices without general and individual scrutiny. For they may, like the public-house, pass from supplying a demand to creating one, a demand that may be harmful to the individual and the state.

A scrutiny of the palliatives and contrivances at present advocated and dispensed to enable us to have sexual intercourse and not to have children does then leave a great many men and women in a divided state of mind. Many public-spirited and unselfish people welcome them for the reason already mentioned. They rightly deplore the suffering and waste entailed in the bearing of children under conditions of over-crowding and under-feeding, and they consider that there can be no greater offence against God and society than to bring children into the world for whom there is no welcome and no sufficient provision. About this point they are perfectly clear. They, therefore, hold that the general provision of preventives has advantages that outweigh the dangers of any encouragement it may give to the snatching after easy ways of life by the individual.

They see, moreover, that in judging people's motives and methods it is as unwise in this as in other departments of life to forget that we are heirs of the past. Our reason may point a present way, but the custom and tradition we inherit from past years and past generations lie upon us with a weight. We may think civilized frequency of intercourse is an error, not an improvement upon, say, the habits of certain animals that make no advance toward intercourse except at yearly times when conception is normally certain to follow; but that does not free us at once from the inherited physical habit nor from the mental outlook. For the physical act has not merely become a physical necessity, it has acquired the more potent force of a symbol, a symbol of love, and like other symbols it may come to be worshipped to the forgetfulness of that for which it stands. The rite, like the creed, may become empty of any living content, and yet remain in possession long after thoughtful minds have seen the need for revision. Yet we cannot afford to wait for any sensible reformation of our nature in patience without attempting present palliative measures. Here as elsewhere we are heirs of an encum-

bered estate and every judgment of our ways of life must have regard to this. The inquiring man or woman bearing that in mind may be glad of the spread of mechanical contrivances without holding that they are in any way an answer to questions that must be solved if we are to reach to ultimate peace of spirit, questions as to the right reading of nature and of a developing human nature.

We are coming to realize our sanatoria and our prisons as institutions we cannot dispense with at the moment, but which will be needed less and less as we learn to deal with the preventable causes of physical and moral wastage and corruption. As we give our children fresh air and light, fresh food and fresh thought, we can modify or shut our sanatoria and our prisons.

When we have learned a right way of love, we shall be able to dispense with many institutions to which we now fly in our difficulties. But at present these are still with us and give us help we cannot despise.

So much for the approving elements that are in the minds of men and women toward this question. But there are also elements of dissatisfaction and doubt.

All decent people would agree that mere pursuit of pleasure is a degradation of marriage as of other human activities, yet most of them know that they, no more than beasts or birds, have child-bearing in view as their compelling aim in marriage, however much they miss children if they do not come, and love them if they do. They marry because they love each other and desire to share each others' lives in the greatest possible degree; and the not infrequent spectacle of childless marriages that evidently enrich and enlarge the life of both partners proves conclusively that there are other uplifting and unselfish results that come from this relation apart from the bearing of children. Dogmatism must give way before the facts of life. Marriage cannot be narrowed down to these limits.

If our nature were so constituted that the bearing of children was the sole result of value and beauty issuing

from physical intercourse the race of man would long ago have become extinct. The problem we have to solve is largely due to the fact that many results of the greatest value, and over and above any merely physical satisfaction, follow from union which involves physical intercourse.

Yet if the complex whole of marriage can less and less be adequately described as the bearing and bringing up of a family, no other outcome of the physical act in marriage is so invariable and sure as child-bearing, and the constant guarding and modification of the physical act needed to prevent conception often tends to destroy other results or change them. And we may well pause before assuming that we can eliminate the most sure result of a natural process and yet retain uninjured the other more variable ones; that we can cut out the family and family life from marriage yet keep all we want of the rest that marriage means with no further trouble.

Agreement with the condemnation of the pursuit of marriage as pleasure does involve an acknowledgment of possible dangers that lie in a general use of contraceptives. For these may be and sometimes are used merely to eliminate responsibility and restraint in marriage, and so used they are evil. The restraint that has always had to be used to some extent in decent marriage is, after all, not an impoverishment of marriage but of the essence of it at its best. To be enabled to gorge without indigestion is no enrichment of life, it is not life at all in any high sense of the word, but decay. Release from restraint in marriage means deprivation both of the responsibilities and privileges that belong to living our part in that great process, the character of which is determined as much in conscious and significant restraint as in reasoned and significant activity.

The section of society in which there has for long been a general knowledge of those means of preventing conception that are now being spread broadcast is that of prostitutes and their customers. Whatever view is

taken of prostitution, the lives of the prostitutes themselves and their contribution to society are a warning against the light-hearted cutting-off from the sexual act of restraining responsibilities.

Life is a whole, and however much scientific advance involves temporary isolation of a part, the final treatment of any part of a living whole as though the rest did not exist or could be disregarded is invariably unsound. Equally unsound is the treatment of any part of life as though life were not living and changing.

If we fed and clothed children's bodies and disregarded their minds they would grow up citizens fit only for Plato's city of pigs; and, to return to a former example, the economy and health of a developing state are worst served by regarding necessary institutions such as sanatoria and prisons as a fixed perfectible solution of the ills of which they are alleviations.

Objections, in this restricted sense, may be grouped roughly as resting on grounds of truth, of economy physical and spiritual, of moral obligation and of constructive imagination. First, those resting on grounds of truth: a good many people who have taken contraceptive methods into ordinary use, if they began to think the matter out, would have an uneasy sense that they had taken them over blindly, that they did not know exactly what they were getting on these seemingly easy terms, nor whether what they got was what they wanted or meant to get; that they had never fully admitted to themselves that the full and complete experience we *cannot* and never do have with full and complete assurance of immunity from conception. Take what precautions they may, they must have in their minds a mental reservation to desire of complete union, a fear that nature may take them at their word, not at their unspoken hope of what she will let them off with, as her part of the bargain. When drugs or other mechanical devices are used, such precautions against a probable result must, for thinking and

feeling men and women, make a very considerable difference both in moral and physical values.

There is another objection on the grounds of truth. It is that the frequent and ordinary use of contraceptive methods with what they imply—the guarded and partly negative attitude toward the physical act—all tend to make the physical side of marriage loom too large and distort our view of the real nature of marriage. We falsify true proportions. This concentration on the physical act is in part explained by the simple fact that it is tangible, the factor we can clutch and lay hold of in an unimaginably complex and illusive experience, and that it has, if uncontrolled, the tangible result of children we may not desire. But by loosely talking of the part as if it were the whole, we delude ourselves into believing that if we learn to handle the part in its mutilated isolation we are finding a way of life, when exactly what we are doing in so believing is to make ourselves incapable of any completeness of life whatever. Again, it is a question of whether Caliban shall serve us or we fall a prey to Caliban.

There are also objections on the grounds of economy. It seems inconceivable that man's spirit should accept as in any way final a way of procedure, and that in the most intimate and universal way of life, that, letting alone spiritual issues, is obviously and palpably wasteful of physical forces. To repeat and repeat an act in which the most potent and vital of all man's physical powers is involved, and as repeatedly to use our minds and ingenuities to frustrate the working out of those powers in their most certain and potentially significant results must, whatever of value emerges in the process, involve a waste that we cannot permanently afford of creative energy. It is living on capital. It is as though, for lack of thought and trouble, we rested content with doing no more than locking a mill-wheel that we had no use for, while all the while we were crying out for

electric power that the stream, diverted into other channels, could be very well producing; —as if we ran a motor engine full speed always and relied on brakes alone to draw up. Have we so much in us of the compelling force of love that we can afford to use it like this? The imagination, thoughts, and standards of the race must change, and the love of men and women must work out new ways, but the consequent conscious changes of function should surely aim at emulating the economy of nature in her greatest perfection, not her lavish and wasteful expenditure.

“Love is a thing as any spirit free,” and it is certain it can never choose for its ultimate path a way that involves mechanical restriction and negation. If the old, active, and positive ways of expression and intercourse involve results that are no longer wished, love cannot rest for long contentedly in a state where every single renewal of its expression has to be adjusted and regulated with a view to a negative result.

Again, our moral obligations to each other and to society must be thought out in relation to contraceptual practices. To take first our relations to each other: it should be remembered that the “less than the whole” that results from safeguards is frequently a less that tells physically more hardly on the one than on the other of the two. For the woman, stimuli are set going on the physical plane, followed by reactions that would naturally lead up to conception and child-bearing; if the physical stimulus is given and the end prevented, there may be for her continual unmeaning physical reactions that are started and stopped short. These considerations apply especially to the first years of marriage, so that the plan of arranging for a year or two of married life with no children may tell most hardly on the woman. Or again, these interruptions of nature may tell extremely hardly on the man. Even though this inequality is in no way desired by either, and though both may be blind to it, it is there, and it works, and its spiritual effects may

never quite—even by mutual recognition and council—be removed from this region of conduct in which, more than in any other human relationship, a perfect equality of giving and taking should be known.

Apart from obligations to each other, we have to square our conduct with our obligations to the state. One of the problems human beings have to solve is, what part of their lives is their own private concern, and what is the concern of society and the state. It certainly cannot be settled by saying that actions and behavior that the state does not punish or reward is not the state's concern and can be arranged as the individual chooses with no harm to anyone. There is a large region of our lives which is in too tentative and experimental a stage to be ready for state regulation, that yet may be a great future asset to the state, something that must in time fall due to it and without which it would not go on existing. The way we live this part of our lives is not only of ultimate importance to the state, but entails great responsibility for each individual just because in it we are free of restraints other than those that we can heed or not as we will, that are made by public opinion, religion, education. It is very generally assumed that though it is the state's concern that if we have children we should observe certain regulations in the care of them, yet it is not at all the state's concern whether or not we have them, and that our duty in this respect is to ourselves only, not to our neighbors. But this is not true. It is true that it is a matter in which we are rightly left to be our own judges, and in which no restraints or inducements are offered us from outside. But it obviously does very much concern the state whether or not its citizens give birth to future citizens; and even more does it concern the state whether its citizens are moved by selfish or unselfish, by prudent and purposeful, or by imprudent and accidental motives to have families or to refrain from having them. No doubt the state (we must remember in criticizing that we ourselves in bulk are the

state) obscures the issue for the individual by seeming at present to care so very little where or how children are born, and whether or not they are adequately fed and educated when they are born, but the acknowledged shortcomings of the state do not cancel, but rather increase, the individual responsibilities of thinking people.

The state also obscures the issue by punishing abortion as a form of murder, while at present taking no notice of the practice of sexual intercourse with contraceptives. Yet if there is a sacred right lodged in the embryo cell, why is there not also in the potential cell? Why should we imagine a gulf fixed where there is in reality the finest dividing line? The thing can be reduced to an absurdity. The only dignified and great reason behind the punishment of abortion is that the state that protects its men and women has a right to ask that as they believe in the good life they shall have respect toward the continuing of that life; that their intercourse as men and women shall pay its tribute of children not merely as to the state but as to the race.

But if it is this reason that gives weight to the state's condemnation of abortion, what is its bearing upon the attitude of the state toward the practice of intercourse when conception is prevented? The state that punishes abortion would strangely encourage general instruction as to how physical intercourse may be indulged without conception resulting. It is a problem that future citizens will have to think out and solve.

There are also objections based on imaginative grounds. Without powers of imagination we can never see the true nature and full possibilities of any human activity, least of all of love. And when we use our imaginations to understand the possibilities as well as the difficulties attendant upon the working of love in the physical relations of men and women, it becomes doubly impossible to accept as final any modes of procedure that involve negation and repression and a fixed mechanism, that are not educative nor remedial of

causes but only of results, that do not offer the strength of exercise but bring the weakness of a constant mechanical support. For "he that loveth flieth, runneth, and rejoiceth; he is free."

If it be objected that in dealing with the problem of the physical relations of men and women we are dealing in large measure with a relation into which love in this ideal sense scarcely enters, the answer must be given that as to relations into which it does not enter at all these should be dealt with as abnormal cases of disease and deterioration, but that for the great majority of cases where it does enter in, though in largely varying degrees, the standard to which we shall all ultimately level up has to be set by the best among us, and by the best part of all of us, and that we have only to look at such historical instances as prison reform, abolition of slavery, the repeal of the contagious diseases act, the fixing of the Plimsoll line, to find that it is the farthest-seeing minds among us that ultimately set our standards. Imagination shows us that in determining our attitude toward these measures of immediate relief we are making our decision as to whether we choose to be like the feckless teacher or parent who concentrates on devices and leads the precarious existence of inventing a succession of them to keep children within bounds for a day, or like the true educator who looks for principles and gives a rightly subordinate place to particular means that must spring from the applying of principles to needs of the moment and die unregretted as the need passes.

Imagination rouses us to use our minds in marriage and marriage relations. "Autosuggestion" is a bad name for the powers of mind the world needs. We do not want to suggest to ourselves something that may or may not be objectively true because to believe it seems to help us for the moment. We want to combat our disabilities by knowledge of ourselves and of the world, and by an imaginative insight into powers that may become real and full grown, though now they lie latent for want of

being brought into touch with the quickening force of altered circumstances or widened sphere.

A mind alert to find help in every possible direction may show that help for some will lie in earlier marriages at the age of greatest physical fitness and vigor when physical intercourse has its most natural and fitting place, when families can be brought into a world of plain-living and started on their way before middle age has sapped strength and energy. It may hope, too, that a more enlightened state will recognize its concern in the welfare of every child born, and will be so ordered that every man and woman who is considered fit to be a responsible independent member of the state will be assured of decent work, decent housing, decent food, and decent education for themselves and their children.

The imaginatively awakened mind will also see what possibilities of help in marriage lie in the recognition and appreciation of the modern many-sidedness of the relations of men and women. The combined physical and mental attraction of lovers brings men and women together that nothing else would have brought, but they may, and often do, become not only as man to wife but in some degree as mother to child, as brother to sister, as friend to friend. A thousand things in life go to show us how many are the ways in which even physical love can make life sweeter and fairer. Why, even the sight of two friendly cows gently rubbing each other in the field, let alone the sight of a mother kissing her child or lulling it to sleep—this and much more might serve to remind us what we so easily forget, the infinite variety of expressions that love can create. The exploring of the many ways of love will free the great way of love from some of the dangers that beset it, from satiety and wrong familiarity.

Imagination again shows us, if we choose to use it, how often we increase the difficulties of relations between men and women by our blind pursuit of conduct and

habits that actively provoke what is physical in us at the very time when we are crying out at the difficulties of a surfeit of physical sensation and desire. In our unimaginative heedlessness we use affections, conventions, modes of dress, and encourage the production of literature that we should be absolutely ashamed of having anything to do with if we once faced the truth of their sole possible effect. To make elaborate arrangements for the disposal of superfluous physical sensation at the same time that we spend a large portion of our energy in its production is as wise as to gather water in a sieve, and will advance us as little.

Imagination will help us to remember what falling in love means, and so may help us greatly, if indirectly, to learn how to keep in love instead of falling out of it into something less. The kind of falling in love that is worth anything—the happy falling in love of everyday human beings—always means not only a rapture of physical feeling but an awakening and intensifying of the whole being—the seeing of more beauty, the feeling of more affection, the deepening of discernment and understanding, the widening of interest. All kinds of difficulties and obstacles may come to people in that state, but they seldom exceed the power that comes too, and they are rarely the deadening and sordid kind of difficulties. These latter come much more when people mechanically continue the physical act after it has ceased to be accompanied by any awakening or deepening of mind or heart. This they do without thought and are surprised when life takes its revenge. If they faced what they were doing it might help them as much in their love as they are helped in the physical plane by facing the fact that certain foods that at one time bring nourishment and vigor at another do the reverse, or as they are helped in religion by knowing that forms that are outgrown must suffer change. That kind of thought for those who make themselves take it does not rule by

terror of consequences. Its power is that it recalls and keeps alive in the mind a sense of higher values which belong to the whole nature, and which, once we know them, we truly feel are worth more to us than the values that hold only for isolated parts of our being.

The real desires of normal people are never in their strength purely physical. When we snatch at the physical sensation it is often much more for the sake of what it seems as if it might give than for what in experience it does give. If we learned to read the lessons of experience we should not offer ourselves the bare physical act as though it were the fulfilment of our nature, nor try and drive our body to do the work that the mind should and must do. We should not cry out for love to be full-grown and perfect while giving it no light, no air, no exercise, but a surfeit of physical food that it must die of, or disgorge in the fashion of Roman emperors. When our mind becomes the willing servant of the body (and servant the Gospel tells us he must be that will be master), we shall learn to discriminate true individual desires from inherited habits, and in seeking the fulfilment of these desires in their completeness we shall know that they will grow and change in their nature, and that we must learn as they change to find new ways of fulfilment, and that this learning of ever new ways will cost us far less than we pay in our efforts to surmount the mechanism and sordidness of an arranged performance—a playing at a mockery of life.

Some of the advocates of contraconceptual devices speak as though men and women in obtaining these obtained on moderate terms a perfect equipment for love. It is not true. There is an ideal of love that has persisted and will persist, which in its simplicity, economy, spontaneous freedom, and equality is incompatible with the mechanism, complication, waste, and inequality of these material devices.

In conclusion, we hope that even from this very gen-

eral and incomplete survey some points emerge as being worth consideration.

1. We are wrong if we think that one fixed or simple answer can be found to the questions that arise on the subject.

2. If we treat devices as if they were principles, what is meant for a time and an emergency as if it were for all time and universally applicable, we do not succeed in elevating the devices but only in degrading the life in which they are misapplied.

3. The state and the individual are losing one of the things most worth having if wasteful economic pressure, laziness, or selfishness are allowed to stop the bearing of healthy children.

4. If for good reasons we have to decide not to have children we shall be happier and freer men and women if we do not rest content with ways of avoiding them that involve a continual cutting off or undoing of what we do, but rather look for ways other than the one physical act in which our physical love can find free expression and make life sweeter.

5. That if the physical act has come to be cared for as a symbol we do well to remember that symbols can be outgrown without any diminution of loyalty toward the reality. Witness, for example, the equal sincerity of attitude toward communion that can be found in Roman Catholics, Protestants, and the Society of Friends.

6. If we cannot expect, even under good conditions of life, a perfect correspondence between the desire for the sexual act and the will to conceive children, yet if we have such a correspondence in mind as an ideal the power of mind over body will help to bring it nearer.

7. To have an ideal in our minds is often more practical than is entire concentration on the immediate and the material. It gives us our direction, which it is as important to know as is the nature of the ground we are

moving over. It helps us to keep alive to the spiritual possibilities latent in the physical.

8. Love is a part of life, and life is no determined and material thing that can be handled efficiently by machinery. To think of it so is but "malicious mockery" of that which is in its nature spiritual.

MARITAL RELATIONSHIP¹

The broad domestic relation of man and wife is woven of three intertwining strands, passion, love, and parenthood. We are not speaking exclusively of the marital relation in its strictly physiological sense. We are referring to the whole marital or conjugal relationship within the home.

Of passion or the purely physical factor in the marital relation not much need be said. Physical sex pleasure and gratification is not an end in itself. It is biologically a means to an end. It is a sense gratification which nature and nature's Author has attached to procreation to induce mankind to carry on the task of bringing new human beings into the world and thereby to provide for the propagation and continuance of the race. Were it not for this physical appeal, many would shirk the task from selfish considerations. This appeal is primarily to the selfish or self-regarding in human beings in order to induce them to take up the burden and task and responsibility of carrying out an unselfish or other-regarding office. It is shared in common by man and his humbler brethren of earth, and air, and sea.

The second element is of a distinctly higher and more spiritual order, the element of love. Passion and love are often confused. They are, however, two dis-

¹ From pamphlet *Birth Control*, by John M. Cooper, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Sociology, Catholic University of America. p. 13-23, 77-81. National Catholic Welfare Council, Washington, D.C. 1923. Copyright. Reprinted with permission.

tinct things, and in actuality may often be found one apart from the other, although they usually tend to exist side by side. Love is characterized by mutual attraction and sympathy, the desire for companionship, and tenderness of affection, but there stand out in the higher forms of love two factors that are still more significant socially, the factor of constancy and the factor of self-devotion and self-sacrifice. Love, in the sense of mutual attraction at least, has its early beginnings far down in the scale of sub-human living things. Love in the sense of constancy and self-devotion begins to appear in a rudimentary form, only rather high up in the biological scale, particularly among the birds and some of the higher mammals. Love in its full blossoming of tenderness, constancy, and self-devotion is more truly a strictly human characteristic.

In contrast to physical passion, higher human love is primarily unselfish, devoted to another, and self-sacrificing. It centers its affection, its well-wishing, and its well-doing not upon self so much as upon the object of love, the loved one. If passion is above all egoistic and self-regarding, love is above all altruistic and other-self-regarding.

The third element, the parental, covers or connotes several factors, such as the desire for and love, care, and protection of offspring, the acceptance of the responsibilities and sacrifices of child-bearing and child-rearing, and the cooperation in the divine creative act and educative dispensation. Each of the chief factors just noted has profound influence upon the character development of the parents and the atmosphere of the home relation. These factors saturate the marital relation and domestic life with the self-devoted, the sacrificial, the sacred. A word about each of the three factors in the parental element will make the point clear.

The mutual love of husband and wife finds its completion and fulfilment and final consecration in their

common love of offspring, and is sustained, fed, and further purified by their common sacrificial and unselfish devotion to and protection and care of their children.

Passion, love, parenthood—all three go to the making of the domestic and marital relation. But the three are not of equal worth judged by any wholesome human standard. Passion is primarily self-seeking, self-centered, self-regarding, egoistic. It may foster love no doubt; but it may also corrode or crowd out love. Love and parenthood are primarily other-seeking, other-centered, other-regarding, altruistic, and carry with them a subtle atmosphere of the sacred and reverential.

Moreover, the interplay of these three great factors is part of a wondrous strategy by which the selfish sex hungers of humanity are exploited and utilized, not only, as is obvious, for the good of the offspring and for the welfare of the human race, but also for the character-training, the higher development, the higher discipline, and the higher freedom of human mates. Human sex hunger is lured by the bait of sex gratification into providing for the continuance and propagation of the race. But sex pleasure and gratification serve another scarcely less important end, and are capitalized by nature and moral codes through a less obvious strategy. By tying up sex to the sacrifices and responsibilities and reverences of child-bearing and child-rearing in the marriage bond, self-regarding egoistic sex pleasure is built upon and made use of for the drawing out and cultivating and expanding of the unselfish and altruistic tendencies in our human inheritance.

Conversely, the cultivation of and indulgence in sex gratification in itself, and isolated from its natural correctives, unselfish love and devoted and sacred parenthood, stamp in and harden and aggravate man's inborn

selfishness and egoism, first of all in the great field of sex itself, and by irradiation in much of the rest of human life and human activities. And few realize how deep-lying and far-reaching sex and parental impulses are. Fatherhood, motherhood, marital and parental love, protection of the weak, filial affection, brotherly love, and, probably, by extension, neighborly love, all arise out of this one cycle. Delete these things from human life, and how little worth-while remains. Poison the stream at its source with the poison of selfishness—will these higher things escape the taint?

Finer human nature intuitively condemns solitary vice, unnatural vice, and incontinence between the unmarried. Is not one, perhaps more or less subconscious, source of the intuition the fact that these moral aberrations isolate passion from love and parenthood? They tend of their nature to deflect the streams of human character and conduct from purer unselfish channels into starkly selfish channels. They strip sex passion of the normal controls and correctives and counterchecks placed upon it by nature and the God of nature and leave it shorn and naked in all its degrading and degraded grossness and unloveliness.

Artificial birth control tends likewise to isolate sex passion from its natural controls and correctives, love and parenthood. It reaps the pleasures of sex while at the same time evading the normally consequent sacrifices and responsibilities of sex.

Contraceptive practices eliminate from the marital relation prospective acceptance of parenthood, and only too commonly eliminate parenthood itself from the home or reduce it to near the zero point. The element of the sacred that ordinarily hallows marital intercourse disappears where there is no question of cooperation in the divine creative act nor of acceptance of the sacrosanct office of parenthood. The evasion moreover of parenthood means as well the evasion of the character-

building and character-sustaining sacrifices and responsibilities that parenthood entails. Contraceptive practices in eliminating the parental element from the marital relation, tend, in so far as they go, to eliminate from the marital relation the sacredness that elevates sheer sex passion in marriage and at the same time to eliminate from the lives of those who practice them the stimuli to unselfish altruism that offset the stimulus to selfish egoism given by physical sex gratification.

There still remains or may remain love. Will it suffice in the long run and among the great masses of men and women to sustain the higher and finer currents in the marriage institution? Is love in its higher and finer sense at all universal? And how often do we find it, even in the home, scarcely more than tingeing grosser and more calculating elements! And how often does it descend to a level hardly, if at all, superior to the level of naked passion! But even were its higher type more nearly universal, would this higher type itself stand intact in the long run?

Love has not "just happened." Love is a growth. It has grown and been bred into life in response to a vital biological need. The biological function of love is not merely to attract the sexes to each other. Love in its higher human sense would have had no great biological purpose unless there had been offspring that needed long-enduring bi-parental care.

Love in its rudimentary form of mere sex attraction as found among lower sub-human sentient forms of life does indeed fulfill only the purpose of attracting the sexes to each other until sex mating takes place. Such rudimentary love as exists in the lower animal scale is mere sex attraction. No self-devotion or constancy is needed, for no prolonged care of offspring is needed.

Eliminate the child from family life or tend so to eliminate him by contraceptive measures widely practised among great masses of humanity, and you thereby

impoverish the soil where love grows and dry up the very seed and roots of love itself. No doubt but that the deadly effects will not always make themselves apparent at once in every individual life. They will not come suddenly and dramatically like a bolt from the blue. Love-force will maintain itself, in some measure at least, as a psychic or social inheritance from countless generations of child-bearing and child-rearing ancestors. The process of love-growth in the race was slow. The process of death will likewise be leisurely perhaps. The mills of life, like the mills of the gods, grind slowly, but they grind exceeding small.

We may sum up the foregoing discussion as follows: Three distinct elements go to make up the marital relationship—passion, love, and parenthood. It is the latter two that lift up and ennoble that relationship, that foster the altruistic impulses, and that consecrate the conjugal union. Contraceptive practices tend to eliminate immediately and in the lives of those who use them, the sacred and sacrificial and self-devoted elements that are part of the parental phase of home life and of marital relations. In addition they tend, if not always and immediately in the individual case, at least in the long run and racially, to eliminate the altruistic elements that are associated with the love phase of home life and marital relations. Eliminate these two sets of correctives and controls and hallowers of home life and marital relations, and you have little left but gross sensuality, naked sex passion, and sex gratification, stripped of all its loftier associations and concomitants.

Contraceptive practices have this in common with solitary and unnatural vice and with incontinence between the unmarried, that they all isolate or tend to isolate sex passion from love and parenthood; that they concentrate or tend to concentrate attention and desire upon selfish sex gratification alone; that they dethrone

love and parenthood and enshrine physical self-regarding pleasures in the central and dominating place of personality. May we not then justifiably put them all on the same moral plane, or rather brand them all as of the same order in the moral abyss? Is Bernard Shaw's characterization of contraceptive practices as reciprocal masturbation too brutal? Was St. Augustine using language too strong when he referred to contraception as making a prostitute out of the wife and an adulterer out of the husband? Yet only recently one of America's ablest gynecologists, Dr. Howard Kelly, whose theology no doubt differs considerably from that of St. Augustine, used almost the same words: "All meddling with the sexual relation to secure facultative sterility degrades the wife to the level of a prostitute." Such language is unquestionably vigorous, to say the least; but, apart from the reflection it implies upon those who may, in good faith and without awareness of the similarities between birth control and other sex aberrations, practice contraceptive measures, can we, in view of the considerations advanced in the foregoing paragraphs, look upon it as mere metaphor?

One further point before we pass on. Let the spring poet continue to pen his lyrics to romantic idyllic love. Thank God, there is much of it in human life. But, on the other hand, we need no deep delving into the psychology of sex and no vast experience of the baser realities of life to know that sex passion in the man only too often masquerades in the domino of love.

Women, particularly the unmarried, being as a more general rule less drawn by the grosser physical side of sex than by its higher psychic and emotional phases, often do not realize the absorbing and overpowering physical drive that sex so commonly exerts in the masculine life. They do not realize how large physical gratification bulks in the man's sex psyche and how easily the physical side of sex may eclipse and over-

shadow love. They do not realize that man is apt to be so much more polygamous and inconstant in his impulses. Neither do they realize by what an easy decline love can descend to a purely physical plane and reverence be no more—unless the man see in the woman the mother or prospective mother of his children.

Remove motherhood or prospective motherhood from the home, or tamp it down; do away with the maternal element in the marital relation, and the way is all too often made straight and smooth for the man to look upon his wife as primarily a thing instead of a person, as primarily a mere instrument for satisfying his animal passion, instead of looking upon her as the honored, revered, and cherished mother of his children. The descent is not from the human to the animal plane. The descent is from the human to the sub-animal plane.

The Catholic Church in taking her stand for normal relations within the marital bond is standing not for some minor ecclesiastical regulation. She takes her stand for the preservation of the inner sanctities of the home life and for the maintenance of all those higher and loftier and nobler sentiments and affections and relationships which distinguish the home from the barn-yard or the house of prostitution.

In many matters that concern morality and human welfare, the acquiescence in and approval of exceptions to a general ethical or social standard of conduct is a first break in the dam. Through such a break, small though it be at first, the devastating floods of mischief pour in progressively increasing volume. There are, no doubt, exceptional cases where, for instance, the vendetta, or lynch law, or polygamy, or infanticide, or outright slander, or deliberate betrayal of confidence might promote individual or collective welfare, even under civilized conditions. Admit, however, such exceptions as ethical, and you open up a first fissure in the solid masonry that holds back the impounded waters,

the first small fissure that widens and widens until the destroying flood sweeps down the valleys below.

Such wedge action, as we may call it, tends to be operative particularly where, on the one hand, human interests and hungers of high driving power urge for satisfaction, and where, on the other hand, there prevails no impartial moral standard or unbiased tribunal to determine whether, in view of deeper and broader considerations of human welfare, the more egoistic interests and hungers should be released and satisfied or else inhibited and controlled. The actual decision and course of action tends to be along lines suggested by the egoistic interests and cravings themselves rather than along lines demanded by altruistic ethics. The individual human animal is a proverbially poor judge in his own cause.

The sinister wedge action is unmistakably apparent in the matter of artificial birth control. The consistently progressive decline in fertility and the birth rate among those sections of our modern western culture that have adopted the theory and practice of contraception is a matter of common knowledge and has been dealt with in the preceding chapters. Masterful interests and cravings, unchecked by uncompromising standards of conduct or by competent impartial tribunals, have already brought about gravely anti-social and dysgenic results that are deplored even by most thinking contraceptionists themselves.

To admit contraception as under some circumstances ethical and at the same time to counsel "moderation" and adequate fulfilment of responsibilities is worse than playing with fire. It is starting a conflagration. The evidence jumps at us from every fence corner. Such a program might conceivably work out in practice with some other race on some other planet. But we are concerned with our own race on this our own planet, and no sociological fact rests on a firmer

observational and statistical basis than the fact that practically and in reality the groups that admit and practice contraception, for whatsoever reason and in whatsoever exceptional situations, do not practice it in "moderation," nor have we a single workable suggestion that offers a ghost of a hope that we can ever get them to practice it in "moderation." The wedge, once allowed entrance, pierces ever deeper and deeper.

The Catholic position that holds artificial birth control as admitting no exception does unquestionably call at times for self-mastery of a high order, but, on the other hand, it is the one position that can adequately and in practice safeguard individual and collective welfare. It may and does involve in exceptional cases an unselfishness that borders upon the heroic, but, if through exceptions the wedge be permitted entrance at all, in the end the very foundations of the home will be split asunder. It may and does involve sometimes real sacrifice on the part of the individual, but the well-being and higher interests of the many are thereby protected. It may and does involve in certain instances some immediate hardship, but in the long run human welfare is incalculably promoted.

Birth control hurts human welfare most obviously by leading to under-population and extinction where it is practised. But it hurts human welfare perhaps even more profoundly in subtler and less obvious ways. In its essential tendencies, it eliminates from marital life the very elements that throw about that life the mantle of the sacred and the reverent. In the long run, it undermines higher love itself. It thus tends to break down the loftier reverence and love between husband and wife. It isolates physical sex gratification from its normal unselfish accompaniments and correctives, centers attention upon the self-regarding phases of sex, and helps to enthrone selfishness and flabbiness at the very heart of character. It reduces the marital relation

to a level not superior to or different from the level of solitary vice and extra-marital indulgence. It robs the child of the natural education that comes from growing up as one of many equals in a normally-sized family. In a word, birth control tends to destroy the finer flower of human character, the higher functions of family life, the loftier sentiments of human mating, and the inner sanctities of the home.

AGAINST CONTROL OF BIRTHS¹

Your argument for the control of births commands respect, as do most of your opinions, through its evident integrity of motive and the courageously sincere effort at some human solution of human problems that dignifies it. Yet it is founded upon an assumption which is repugnant to many, and I think, unworthy of you. It follows the premise that man is first and last an animal, and that his chief instinct—the animal impulse toward reproduction—must be not only permitted but encouraged. Or rather that the sexual instinct is to be considered in itself an end.

If, as you and others hold today, society is so to arrange itself as to permit sexual intercourse without the natural result which is the one end of and only justification for such intercourse, our civilization will seem to have returned, indeed, not to the animal plane from which it has progressed, but to one still lower. For even animals feel the urge of desire and permit its gratification only at those seasons which nature has decreed propitious for the bearing of young.

The old idea of the necessity of indulging man's passional nature is passing. We are learning today that this necessity is a myth; that man may and should be as continent as woman; that far from devitalizing him,

¹ By A. B. L., Montclair, N.J. *New Republic*. 2: 184. March 20, 1915.

the control of his sex impulses—for various physiological reasons—results in renewed vigor and strength.

There is but one object for sexual intercourse—the creation of new and healthy human beings. To remove this object is to reduce the relation of men and women to one of simple lust. The fact that this condition exists among the “well-to-do and educated” is no argument for helping to spread it among the “poor.”

By all means let us have fewer and better children. But let us try to do it through a different sort of education—both of poor and well-to-do. Instruction which is designed to help a human being to clearer self-knowledge and better self-control, to a realization of his relation to succeeding generations, is essentially constructive and cumulative in effect. The results of spreading a knowledge of the methods of avoiding conception cannot, in the long run, compare with the moral and spiritual as well as physical and economic results of a widespread and systematic and sustained effort to arouse in men an understanding of sex impulses and a realization of their power to control them.

Among the people from whom *The New Republic* would lift the burden of unwanted and unfit children, the men are for the most part responsible for conditions unspeakable. They are unawakened, uncontrolled, animals. *The New Republic's* remedy leaves them no less animals. It is by arguments such as this for control of births that marriage—in a growing proportion of the community—has been degraded from the highest of human relations to a condition of legalized vice.

RIGHT AND WRONG¹

That the complexity of the problem is one of the most important in the field of intellectuality can be dem-

¹ By Edward J. Menge, M.A., Ph.D., M.Sc., Marquette University, Milwaukee. Extracts from chapter on Birth Control in his *Backgrounds for Social Workers*, p. 72-95. Copyright, Richard G. Badger, Boston, 1918. Reprinted with permission.

own reasoning power by virtue of this Supreme Being and just in so far as one uses it, does one approach that Divine Ideal for which man was put upon this earth, and which it is his end to attain—his final goal.

But it is not necessary to go to the Scriptures for those who accept a Supreme Being and do not accept the Bible as an inspired work. The whole subject can be based on what is called the natural law. This means in this case, not that it is an offense to control any natural instinct or subject, as some writers seem to think, such as to cut one's hair or shave, but, *that one who performs an act must be willing to abide by the laws, which nature shows to be there by having established a penalty as a consequence of the act. This is the point to be remembered. One may control nature all one wishes, but if one notes in nature a penalty when one of her laws is broken, it follows that if he who performs the act is unwilling to pay the penalty nature demands, he by that very shirking of responsibility is breaking that first principle from which we obtain any validity for responsibility, and consequently he is bound, little by little to cast aside other principles as well. For, if one is unwilling to abide by the consequences of his own act, how can he in the name of reason expect others to trust him, for, trust is certainly engendered by our belief in the individual's willingness to be held entirely responsible for his every word and act.*

Now what about the utilitarian viewpoint? This, as has been explained, when summed up means that *whatever gives pleasure and does not injure the individual nor the race is right and should be done.*

It is a sort of pleasure-pain theory. It pleases the individual who uses contraceptive devices to prevent conception. This is self-evident or it would not be done, but, as far as the writer knows, there isn't a single writer of repute who accepts the pure pleasure-pain idea of right and wrong, aside from the act's value to the

race; and not only that, but, all insist on the greatest quantity of pleasure to the individual or race in the long run—not on the immediate pleasure. Somewhere, if we remember correctly, Spencer himself has said that this utilitarian idea only holds good for optimists. That is, unless one be sure that the majority of human kind can always be trusted to do what is right, one cannot even accept this utilitarian viewpoint.

In the first place the whole utilitarian idea of right and wrong *assumes* that people know what is best for themselves regardless of any knowledge on the subject, but any person with the least bit of intelligence knows that this is about the most absurd idea possible. We know that it was an inherent something which has made the child in ages past come through life in fairly good condition regardless of the ignorance of our mothers. We read a great deal about the old-fashioned mother, but throwing all sentiment aside, we know that our mothers certainly were hopelessly ignorant when it came to bringing up children. They mothered their children, they overfed them, and killed them, because they assumed that mother-instinct without knowledge would take care of the baby. They kept them bundled up, they gave them little air, and if nature didn't know so much more than mothers did there would be mighty few of us here today even to discuss the matter.

It must be further borne in mind that when it comes to sex matters, as some one has said, "nearly all men are liars." That is, there is no one living who knows much about this particular thing because most people shield themselves from what they feel need not be known, though the very thing they fail to mention may be the cause of the difficulties with which they are suffering. This is the reason that medical men cannot learn much regarding this particular matter. And it requires hundreds of men, observing hundreds of authenticated cases, before we can build any acceptable

state) obscures the issue for the individual by seeming at present to care so very little where or how children are born, and whether or not they are adequately fed and educated when they are born, but the acknowledged shortcomings of the state do not cancel, but rather increase, the individual responsibilities of thinking people.

The state also obscures the issue by punishing abortion as a form of murder, while at present taking no notice of the practice of sexual intercourse with contraceptives. Yet if there is a sacred right lodged in the embryo cell, why is there not also in the potential cell? Why should we imagine a gulf fixed where there is in reality the finest dividing line? The thing can be reduced to an absurdity. The only dignified and great reason behind the punishment of abortion is that the state that protects its men and women has a right to ask that as they believe in the good life they shall have respect toward the continuing of that life; that their intercourse as men and women shall pay its tribute of children not merely as to the state but as to the race.

But if it is this reason that gives weight to the state's condemnation of abortion, what is its bearing upon the attitude of the state toward the practice of intercourse when conception is prevented? The state that punishes abortion would strangely encourage general instruction as to how physical intercourse may be indulged without conception resulting. It is a problem that future citizens will have to think out and solve.

There are also objections based on imaginative grounds. Without powers of imagination we can never see the true nature and full possibilities of any human activity, least of all of love. And when we use our imaginations to understand the possibilities as well as the difficulties attendant upon the working of love in the physical relations of men and women, it becomes doubly impossible to accept as final any modes of procedure that involve negation and repression and a fixed mechanism, that are not educative nor remedial of

causes but only of results, that do not offer the strength of exercise but bring the weakness of a constant mechanical support. For "he that loveth flieth, runneth, and rejoiceth; he is free."

If it be objected that in dealing with the problem of the physical relations of men and women we are dealing in large measure with a relation into which love in this ideal sense scarcely enters, the answer must be given that as to relations into which it does not enter at all these should be dealt with as abnormal cases of disease and deterioration, but that for the great majority of cases where it does enter in, though in largely varying degrees, the standard to which we shall all ultimately level up has to be set by the best among us, and by the best part of all of us, and that we have only to look at such historical instances as prison reform, abolition of slavery, the repeal of the contagious diseases act, the fixing of the Plimsoll line, to find that it is the farthest-seeing minds among us that ultimately set our standards. Imagination shows us that in determining our attitude toward these measures of immediate relief we are making our decision as to whether we choose to be like the reckless teacher or parent who concentrates on devices and leads the precarious existence of inventing a succession of them to keep children within bounds for a day, or like the true educator who looks for principles and gives a rightly subordinate place to particular means that must spring from the applying of principles to needs of the moment and die unregretted as the need passes.

Imagination rouses us to use our minds in marriage and marriage relations. "Autosuggestion" is a bad name for the powers of mind the world needs. We do not want to suggest to ourselves something that may or may not be objectively true because to believe it seems to help us for the moment. We want to combat our disabilities by knowledge of ourselves and of the world, and by an imaginative insight into powers that may become real and full grown, though now they lie latent for want of

theory thereon. All we know now is that thousands of women have cancerous growths and thousands of others have serious difficulties after they have been married for some years. Natural acts do not injure, in so far as we know, if not overdone. The eyelid closes over the eye many times a minute throughout our entire waking life, and yet there is no friction that causes difficulty unless a foreign substance that irritates be injected.

We have shown how voluntary birth control would wipe out our families of brains and intellect—our families in whom the strains run that have contributed all there is to our civilization and how it will allow the few remaining ones by virtue of their numerical minority to be ruled by a majority of brutes, imbeciles, insane and criminals. We know what effect example has on children. We have shown in our first chapter that unless during the plastic period of life the examples and principles of a virtuous life are instilled they cannot come afterward; but, what are we to say when seeing everywhere about them the great numbers of subnormals living the most degenerate life—these people, many of them, to borrow a phrase from Dr. David Starr Jordan—have the intellect of a goose and the morals of a hog—what, we ask, is to give the child that backing in his trying to live a moral life when all about him is seen the majority doing just the opposite of what he has been trained to do, and when he likewise has been taught that majorities rule? In other words some of the writers for birth control actually sink to this intellectual level when they say that birth control is practiced by multitudes now, and argue from this that because many do a thing it is right to do it. Will not the average child, even when born with average intelligence, seeing the lack of all moral standard about him, not be influenced by such an absurd as well as degenerate viewpoint? It means that it will

make of even the intellectual few, except those with an almost superhuman will power, and a genius for clear and accurate thinking, degenerates also, as it will and can lead only to that type of morality, which believes crime consists in being found out, and not in its committal. To this type of person murder will not be wrong.

We have the claim constantly made that the birth of fewer babies would tend to make these babies better. That sounds very interesting and there is only one point that we can bring against it, and that is that it isn't true.

And now for the weakest point in the discussion, but probably one as frequently used as any. It is interesting to note that the editor of the very magazine that contained the excellent article by Mr. Mallory from which we have quoted, should have used this argument in a previous number of his journal, namely, that in view of the fact that two-thirds of the medical men at a New York meeting voted against the advisability of giving promiscuous instruction so as to teach people how artificially to restrict their families, and a record of these same physicians showed each had less than two children—that because these men did not practice what they preached they were wrong in their preaching. How any one with two-thirds of the average intelligence, cannot see the difference between *a standard of right and wrong*, and what *men do that is wrong*, is beyond understanding. In accordance with a doctrine of this nature, every man, because he himself does not live up to the laws both human and Divine, ought to teach that these laws are wrong, or at least suggest they don't exist. Anyone who cannot understand that there may be *many reasons why a certain effect is brought about—that a dozen different men may have performed the very same act, but every one of them with a different motive*—is not deserving of mental consideration.

REVOLT OF WIVES¹

For untold generations an insidious hypnosis, a two-fold obsession, has possessed human beings: *viz.*, men need immense sex-activity; marriage is the normal and legitimate field for it.

Women have in the main followed the pace set by men, and have regarded the sensualities of marriage, for which in many cases they have learned a measured complaisance, as the sacrificial fires of their love and devotion. But the negative morality of women is slowly dying, an initiative impulse is manifesting in her, a morality not less moral because it is active and positive. With this strong, fresh, healthy, and wisely loving impulse, women are to lead men and other women out of their destructive sex-confusion, are to awaken them from the lotus dream which benumbs their great creative powers, physical, intellectual and spiritual.

A pseudo-humanitarian suggestion for limiting births is now under discussion. There is no doubt that every high human feeling of mercy and of purity should lend its aid to such control. But the remedy proposed, the spreading of the knowledge of preventives, is based upon the same twofold fallacy of extreme sexual necessity and marriage as its natural expression. There could be no more fitting contribution to the debased idea of marriage than official or professional sanction of any compromise or device whatsoever for preventing conception. The half has not been told by conventions, committees and boards; for the silent married women who dare not compare notes, and the coarse-grained married women who know no better than to do so, and the degenerate married women who crave the frightful corpse of love they carry, are not computed. These poor

¹ By Florence Wyman Richardson, St. Louis, Mo. *New Republic*, 3: 122-3. June 5, 1915.

lives should indeed be lifted from their misery, whether incessant demand means incessant childbearing or not. But organic treatment is called for, not a superficial treatment of symptoms. Only eradication of the cause will avail—the destruction of the root-evil which is no other than abnormal, inordinate, unsane sensuality, primarily of men. The one possible cure for the whole evil is continence. The simple logic of cause and effect is obvious. In every instance there should be at the very least entire willingness to meet the effect of the cause: “that should not be touched the fruit of which is not desired.”

Beyond all question the abnormal claim of the senses has been a chief cause of delay in the development of the feminine sex. Now, however, women are waking up to facts. Through women the human race is to learn the high import of sex, though it be at a high cost of struggle and suffering for both women and men. Only with deepest love can the uncompromising mission be accomplished. A sure conviction is stealing in upon the consciousness of woman that she has misconceived her duty to man, that her usefulness to him does not lie in supplying the demands of appetite. Her duty to him, to offspring, to the race, and to herself is, by all righteous means, even by failure of that supply, to change the character of the demand. Shaking off the thrall of his teaching and of the world obsession, she will first learn and then lead him to learn that the generative function is for creation through complete and comprehensive passion, passion on all planes, which is the fruit of continence; that it is a cosmic force, the use or abuse of which is a solemn responsibility; that use is occasional and rare, that frequency is abuse; that the non-creativity of sensuality is proved by the failure of offspring to make any substantial advance beyond parents as the generations pass; that parents are deliberately wasting substances which should go to the in-

crease of their own bone, muscle, blood and brain, and to the like endowment of their children; that these children are only "minor works" and not full creations, and that the case is made as bad as possible for them by the sensual atmosphere subtly bred in the home by over-sexed parents, and as subtly felt by the younger members of the family.

Women are beginning to feel that if marriage is not relieved of an impurity which is essentially that of prostitution, it is not good enough for them nor for the daughters they love. A deep revolt is growing not only against excessive childbearing but against its cause. "What is the ruin and degradation of one sex cannot be the necessity of the other" applies to the married woman equally with the prostitute and the white slave victim. Social workers cannot hope to reform conditions until they "throw down the gauntlet to the whole horrible thing," striving to redeem marriage also from the terrible misapprehension under which the sacramental institution droops and dwindles like a lily sullied and weighted with slime.

The revolt of wives is coming. It means revolution—to the end of evolution. Some phases will take on the aspect of retrogression. No concentrated and acknowledged outbreak will characterize its progress. A quiet, pervasive, persistent, and, where women are wisest, a gentle and loving force, it will slowly press its relentless logic and its inspired beauty upon the world.

ATTITUDE OF THE CHURCH TOWARD BIRTH CONTROL¹

By the church we mean all the leading branches in this country—Roman, British, Nonconformist, Jewish.

¹ By James Marchant, secretary of the National Birth Rate Commission, and the Cinema Inquiry, director of the National Council for the Promotion of Race Regeneration, etc. *In Birth Rate and Empire*, p. 165-75. Williams and Norgate. London. 1917.

Their attitude when they have faced the problem of the declining birth rate has differed in important particulars, but on the whole they have been opposed to the use of all artificial means of prevention. The Roman Church through the confessional and the trained priest, has questioned, guided and censured her communicants without flinching; she has not been ashamed or squeamish about handling an unsavory subject, even of speaking boldly upon it from her pulpits whenever the occasion demanded it. Generally speaking, she has borne consistent testimony—uncompromising opposition to any interference with the natural birth of children. And she has inculcated reliance upon her sacraments and teachings to foster and maintain that self-control which is the most desirable form of birth control. She is often blamed, we think unfairly, for advocating an unlimited birth rate, that is to say, as many children as nature will allow, regardless of the financial and physical resources of the parents. We have not discovered any trustworthy evidence to prove that that is her correct attitude. Undoubtedly she takes up a hard position against so-called Neo-Malthusianism, but it does not follow that she, therefore, advocates improvident marriages and reckless reproduction, as her opponents aver. She admits perfect continence in marriage, but she never allows the gratification of desire which forestalls results. She sees that this crucial subject vitally concerns her own stability, authority and progress in the world; and she is not going to be starved of children without exerting the most determined effort to avoid it. If this nation is to become Roman Catholic again, she wants as many as she can obtain, especially from Catholic parents. And even if that object is but a dream, she needs more children to hold her own and to extend and strengthen her comparative influence. We may, if we are so minded, regard this as an example of the astute far-sightedness and centuries-old patience of Rome, which plays a long game.

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

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

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

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

The Conference expresses most cordial appreciation of the services rendered by those medical men who have borne courageous testimony against the injurious practices spoken of,

and appeals with confidence to them and to their medical colleagues to cooperate in creating and maintaining a wholesome public opinion on behalf of the reverent use of the married state.

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

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

B. Considerations as to Conjugal Duty

1. The first principle seems to be that the right and normal view of married life, intrinsically and apart from pressure of conditions, such as we shall speak of in the next paragraph, is that the sexual instinct and the course of nature bounded by care and self-discipline should be recognized as of God's ordering, and the blessing of children, be they few or many, welcomed as from Him.

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

3. There have, however, always been cases in which prudence, or other forms of duty, call for exceptional conduct; and it is strongly and reasonably urged that modern conditions of life in a country like ours have greatly enlarged the number of such cases. The health or strength of the wife may be unequal to the bearing of more children; the conditions of the home may give no hope of their decent housing; or poverty may make it apparent that they could not be maintained and brought up. In some cases such considerations as these warrant an anxious desire that the number of the family should not be increased; and it is necessary to consider whether there is any right course to be adopted by those who may rightly feel this desire.

4. It seems in this connection important to insist upon the principle, essential to the Christian character of marriage, that it is subject throughout to conditions of reasonable and conscientious self-restraint. Marriage does not mean the exchange of a state of self-control for one in which no control is needed. So to treat it, as it is to be feared many do, is not Christian, but grossly sensual; it is altogether lacking in due consideration

for the wife; it is the unspoken cause of much which is now felt and said on the side of women about the relation of the sexes. All marriage, and especially prolific marriage, demands of the man that he should go for certain periods without intercourse; in cases of special fertility, a considerable portion of married life may have to be lived in abstinence. In many a case of the wife's ill-health, such abstinence may be prolonged or even permanent. Christian chastity in married people means the power to bear all this without injury to the wife or sinful indulgence with others. Such chastity will by some be found exceedingly hard, but it is entirely consistent with health; and it is to such a case that Christians should apply to the full their reliance upon God's grace earnestly sought by faith through prayer and sacrament. It seems to most of us only a legitimate application of such self-restraint that in certain cases (which only the parties' own judgment and conscience can settle) intercourse should be restricted by consent to certain times at which it is less likely to lead to conception. This is only to use natural conditions; it is approved by good medical authority; it means self-denial and not self-indulgence. And we believe it to be quite legitimate, or at least not to be condemned.

C. What We Condemn

In direct contrast or opposition to the first principle (referred to above, B. 1), it is now claimed by many that where, for reasons already given, there is desire or need to limit the family (or even to avoid parenthood), recourse is allowable to drugs or appliances which profess to give security against any results from intercourse, and, therefore, allow indulgence without fear or restraint.

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

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

1. It is condemned, we believe, as unnatural by healthy instinct in men and women. A society in which it is practiced will lose delicacy of feeling and the refinement which is not the exclusive property of any particular class, but comes of keeping the natural instincts of modesty and reserve untarnished.

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

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

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

5. In the course of our inquiry, evidence has come to us that, besides the practices which we have been considering which are intended to prevent conception taking place, there is a wide-

spread use by women of drugs taken after conception to destroy the embryo in the womb. About this no language can be too clear or strong. Whether it is effectual in destroying the life of the embryo or, as often happens, only weakens and impairs the vitality of the infant when born, it is a grievously sinful attempt to destroy the life which God has given, from which the conscience of every woman ought to turn away in horror.

D. What We Counsel

We believe that the counsel to be given to Christian husbands should be to have no dealings with these methods; to behave with full consideration to their wives as to the due intervals between births; to make, if necessity urges, such choice of times as we have referred to above; but then, if it should be God's will shown through nature that their family should be large, to recognize this as part of their appointed duty, and to accept the conditions of frugality, restraint of pleasures, and the like, which it imposes.

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

In the case, however, where the man, in spite of the wife's repugnance and persuasion, insists on using improper means, we do not think that the woman's conscience should be burdened by the sense of sin, or of unfitness for the Lord's Table, so long as she keeps herself honestly clear of any willing compliance in the matter.

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

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

land and that she, too, is alive to their increasing importance.

The Jewish Church occupies a noteworthy position, because motherhood and family life have been held in highest esteem by the whole Jewish people from ancient times to this day, and her leaders resolutely discountenance everything which would tend to degrade them or to break their continuity of family histories. The Chief Rabbi, in his evidence before the Birth Rate Commission, said, "Among the Jews the use of preventives is strongly condemned as unclean and demoralizing. The only exceptions that could ever be allowed are where there is danger to life; this consideration overrides almost all moral rules. Every male Jew is bidden to marry and have children. A widower with less than two children must marry again. Childlessness is regarded as a misfortune or a disgrace. Marriages of persons physically or mentally unfit for healthy parenthod are severely forbidden. The welfare of the next generation is the object chiefly kept in view."

RACE SUICIDE ¹

To the writer who asserts that some kind of birth control is necessary because housing is scarce nowadays, Gilbert K. Chesterton answers in this wise:

Consider that simple sentence and you will see what is the matter with the modern mind. I do not mean the growth of immorality; I mean the genesis of gibbering idiocy. There are ten little boys whom you wish to provide with ten top-hats; and you will find there are only eight top-hats. To a simple mind it would not seem impossible to make two more hats; to find out whose business it is to make hats, and induce him to make hats; to agitate against an absurd delay in delivering hats; to punish anybody who has promised hats and failed to provide hats. The modern mind is that which says that if we only cut off the heads of the two little boys, they will not want hats; and then the hats will exactly go round. The sug-

¹ From article Race Suicide and Dr. Bell, by Anthony M. Benedik. *America*. 26: 30-1. October 29, 1921.

gestion that heads are rather more important than hats is dismissed as a piece of mystical metaphysics. The assertion that hats are made for heads, and not heads for hats, savors of antiquated dogma. The musty text which says that the body is more than raiment; the popular prejudice which would prefer the lives of boys to the mathematical arrangement of hats; all these things are alike to be ignored. The logic of enlightenment is merciless; and we duly summon the headsman to disguise the deficiencies of the hatter. For it makes very little difference to the logic of the thing, that we are talking of houses and not hats. The fundamental fallacy remains the same; that we are beginning at the wrong end, because we have never troubled to consider at what end to begin.