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BIRTH CONTROL REVIEW

BIRTH CONTROL IN ASIA

By SHERWOOD EDDY



An Answer to Professor Carver

By Henry G. Alsberg



Do Parents Desire Children?

By Herbert Aptekar



The American Medical Association and Birth
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Telephones—Bogardus 0286 0287

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BIRTH CONTROL REVIEW

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*This smaller summer issue has necessitated the omission of some of our usual features
News Notes, Readers' Letters, Answer Box, etc These will be resumed in the September
issue, which will be the customary thirty two pages*

Editorial

THE eighty-first annual session of the American Medical Association was held in Detroit last month, from June 23rd to 27th. Over 5,000 physicians attended. An analysis of this number shows three general groups which might well be expected to be interested in Birth Control: the group practicing General Medicine, that devoted to Obstetrics and Gynecology, and that concerned with Diseases of Childhood. We have read the reports of the special sessions in these three departments with great care, looking for some expression of opinion on Birth Control. There are papers on *Heart Disease in Pregnancy*, on *Tuberculosis and Pregnancy*, on *Diabetes and Abnormal-sized Infants*. Nowhere is there mention of Birth Control. At least some of the 2266 physicians in these three groups must at some time in their practice be faced with the necessity of (a) giving contraceptive information, or (b) withholding it. Either the pregnant woman with heart disease should or should not have more children. It is obviously a medical question. But perhaps we have been looking in the wrong place for a discussion of Birth Control. We turn to the address of the President, Dr. M. L. Harris, of Chicago. He speaks of the trend towards socializing medical care, of the menace of the proposed Public Medical Service Association of England. We read the report of the Committee on the Cost of Medical Care, and the fundamental principles enunciated by it. *The personal relation between physician and patient must be preserved. Medical service should include systematic and intensive use of preventive measures.* Here we have it. But nothing is said about the weapon, ready to hand, for preventing inherited disease, over-crowding and malnutrition, for lowering maternal and infant mortality. We read about the sessions of the Committee on Medical Education. There will be something here about the fact that contraception is not taught in the majority of medical schools. There is nothing. The Committee on Legislation and Public Relations objects to the restrictions of the

Volstead Act. It says nothing about the restrictions imposed on contraceptives. Nowhere in the ably presented report of the session, published in three consecutive numbers of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, is the subject of contraception touched upon. It is time for the leading medical association of the country to tell us what it thinks on so controversial a subject.

ABOUT twice a year we are given spectacular proof that Birth Control information is urgently wanted and not easily available. Some newspaper writer gives the name and address of the League and we are deluged with letters asking for help. In mid-July, Dr. Lulu Peters, whose health column is syndicated in the Scripps-Howard papers, made the following open answer to "Mrs. G."

I regret that it is against the law to give information such as you desire, otherwise I would gladly do so. In the large cities there are now clinics where proper information is given. If you will write to the Birth Control Association, 152 Madison Avenue, New York City, they may be able to put you in touch with some such clinic.

The letters are still arriving at the rate of about ten a day. They are so uniform in content that one almost forgets the personal tragedy behind each bare and stumbling statement. We quote from one letter, and emphasize the fact that it is not an *unique*, but a *usual* story.

I need Birth Control so bad. Will you put me in touch with some clinic? My story is the same old one. A broken down woman with too many babies. Am 30 years old. Mother of five children. Was married only sixteen months when my first one came. Sixteen months again, one came. Thirteen months, another. Eleven months, 24 days, another. Between the second and third, I had a mis-carriage. Our daddy works for \$30 a week, but it don't start to keep us. I am sick all the time. Is there any help for me? Its killing me by degrees. My youngest has rickets. "

Not the least disturbing fact is that many of these letters come from large cities, where

clinics are well established. The pernicious secrecy that surrounds Birth Control information must be abolished. The public has a right to know that safe, reasonably sure and inexpensive contraceptive methods exist. It should know where these methods can be learned. The woman who wrote the letter quoted above is a needless sacrifice to ignorance and her children and husband are sacrificed with her. Such things need not be

THE 1929 birth-rate is estimated as 19.1 per thousand, according to Dr. T. F. Murphy, chief statistician for the Bureau of Vital Statistics. Forty years ago the American birth-rate was 32 per thousand. In 1923 it was 22.7, in 1927 it was 20.5 and in 1928 it was 19.7. Dr. Murphy frankly and unhesitatingly lays this steady decline to the wider knowledge and use of Birth Control information. So far, so good. But, unfortunately, for any permanent good, our restrictive legislation acts as a dysgenic force, which keeps the lowered birth-rates in the upper and more desirable classes, and the high birth-rates of former times in the classes that are less desirable from the point of view of heredity, both physical and mental. Economic conditions over which we have no control have made small families an asset. Hemmed in by prudishness and legal restrictions, the enterprising few will continue to limit their families, the middle class will employ haphazard methods that are often unsuccessful and injurious to mother and child, and the least desirable element in the community, kept in ignorance, will show the highest birth-rate. The solution is obvious. Make safe, sure Birth Control methods available to all, without legal restrictions and without false taboos.

CHURCH support for Birth Control continues. The Central Conference of American Rabbis, meeting in Providence at the end of June, reaffirmed their resolution taken a year ago in favor of Birth Control (See May, 1930, REVIEW for full text). Simultaneously, the South California Methodist Conference, meeting at Long Beach, passed a resolution in favor of Birth Control on June 30th. The resolution urges that "in the interest of higher domestic morality, state

and national laws be changed to make the giving of information on scientific methods of Birth Control by licensed physicians to married couples legal under specified circumstances." Prominent ministers in England continue to endorse Birth Control, the latest being Dr. Barnes, Bishop of Birmingham. Dr. Barnes comes to the point when he says, "the silence or uncertainty of Christian teachers in regard to new moral problems has lowered the prestige of the Christian tradition." The Church sees more and more clearly that Birth Control is here, and here to stay. It must take a stand one way or another on the subject. And, to its great credit, it is taking its stand on the side of common sense, of humanitarian feeling, and of social and racial betterment.

Readers of the REVIEW will be interested to know that *The Churchman*, an Episcopal publication, and the oldest religious journal in America, and *The Indian Social Reformer*, liberal weekly of Bombay, carried quotations and lengthy editorials on the special Church number of the REVIEW.

ARULING made on July 8th by Corporation Counsel Ettelson of Chicago provides an entering wedge for a more liberal interpretation of legal restrictions on contraceptive information. The legality of drug stores distributing printed matter about a contraceptive device was questioned by the Commissioner of Health. Mr. Ettelson handed down an opinion stating that the municipal code prohibits only the distribution of such literature in or upon the streets or sidewalks, or in park or public property. The circulars would clearly come within the classification of articles declared by Congress to be non-mailable, but there is no law, federal, state, or municipal, which directly prohibits the distribution in *drug stores* of the circular in question. The interpretation of law changes continually and this ruling may be taken as an indication of the trend of public opinion on Birth Control. But the entire legal situation needs clearing up. That a circular may be distributed in a drug store and not on the street in front of the drug store is obviously absurd. That it may be distributed but not mailed is illogical.

Birth Control In Asia

By SHERWOOD EDDY

Sherwood Eddy, well known publicist, author of "Sex and Youth" and member of the National Board of the Y M C A, surveys the Birth Control situation in the Orient from personal observation.

DURING the past year my work has taken me around the world through a score of countries in Europe and Asia. I would have liked to have had time to study the laws and methods regarding Birth Control in every land but other duties prevented this. With one possible exception I did not find a single government or country with a fully enlightened and informed modern policy on the subject of Birth Control. Russia, although radical on the subject of abortion, seemed to be uncertain and groping on the question of Birth Control, feeling its way toward a future policy by the method of trial and error. One doctor claimed that the net annual increase in Russia's population was three and a half millions, contrasted with only two and a half millions for all the rest of Europe combined. Russia is the one country with almost unlimited room to expand, at least in Siberia, and it is possible that the government might wish to encourage the growth of population for future military purposes of defence. The doctors seemed completely open-minded though not always informed on the question.

In Turkey, thinly settled and with no immediate population problem, I found certain medical missionary doctors progressive and up to date.

INDIA NEEDS HELP

India was desperately needy and backward for two reasons. First, because of the changeless, conservative and reactionary ideas and customs of a social order, paralysed by the sanctions of certain ancient religions which cling to child marriage, the prohibition of remarriage of its 27,000,000 widows, etc. And second, the medical training given its modern doctors by their Anglo-Saxon teachers. Owing partly to the puritan elements of this people, and to the past neglect of sex education, caught in the vicious circle of continued prejudice, most of the British medical colleges fail to train their doctors in modern scientific knowledge and technique

at this point, just as American medical colleges do. The result is that many of them carry their prejudice, or ignorance, or at least their timid conservatism into the medical training of their colonies and dependencies abroad. This is especially serious in India. With an over-crowded population of 330,000,000, backward both in agriculture and industry, in the poorest country on earth, with an average per capita income of \$27 a year, or a little less than 8 cents a day, India has a birth-rate of 32.20 per thousand and a huge death-rate of 30.59, compared to a death-rate of some 12 per thousand in England. Each year seven and three-quarter millions are born, and seven and a third millions die. The people of India have roughly about twice the death-rate and half the length of life of the West. The suffering of the women is incalculably great.

When I spoke to educators and other audiences regarding sex education I found the married men deeply in earnest, asking for the latest scientific information and methods for their wives. But in no single city were the doctors, with the exception of a few individuals, prepared to meet that need. Again I found the more advanced medical missionaries, especially some women doctors, the chief hope of the situation. In the Madras presidency I discovered the first sign of the beginnings of a modern movement. I called upon one Indian leader with thirteen small children, little more than a year apart in age, and with one wife already dead, and found him a thorough convert and enthusiastic supporter of the Birth Control movement.

Several hundred liberal minded educated men, chiefly Hindus, have formed a Neo-Malthusian League. They have issued a valuable series of pamphlets in English on the theory and technique of Birth Control. This is perfectly legal. Backward as Asia is, I have found no country in the Orient and none in the Occident with such obsolete, medieval, backward legislation on this point as the United States.

In Madras I spoke in the medical college to doctors and medical students on the subject of Birth Control, with the Surgeon General in the chair. One or two doctors were prepared to meet the needs of their patients but almost no Indian women were seeking their aid. The Vice President of the Neo-Malthusian League, Sir Vepa Ramesam, a judge of the High Court of Madras, is the most ardent advocate of Birth Control that I found in all Asia. I know scarcely a man in public life in America or England with his courage and fearless advocacy of this deeply needed reform. He lectures all over his province, issues literature, and seeks to form public opinion on the theory and practice of Birth Control.

CONDITIONS IN CHINA

I found China on the whole about as backward as India. Here the silence of Confucianism has engendered an aversion to sex education and frank facing of the problems of marriage. As in India the religious theory and practice of seeking a son to carry on the family line and to perform certain ceremonies for the benefit of ancestors has resulted in the habitual custom of women having the maximum number of children. China has probably an even greater death-rate than India but there are almost no statistics of any kind available. A large proportion of children die during their first year. Although stronger than Indian women, many mothers are suffering from too much child bearing. The need is appalling. In Shanghai we met a group of doctors and social workers for a conference on Birth Control. An organization was formed and a beginning will be made in Birth Control clinics for the poor. There were however no modern appliances available that could be discovered in the entire city, save of an inferior variety. In Peking however, in the thoroughly modern Union Medical College we discovered the first completely up-to-date practice and equipment that we had found on the whole mainland of Asia.

Both in the Philippines and in Korea we lectured on Birth Control in the principal medical colleges. In the former about two hundred doctors, medical students and nurses were present. About nine-tenths of the population is Roman Catholic but as the leading men, including doctors, were Masons it meant a liberalism that was not afraid to advocate or practice this reform, which the hierarchy could not control.

Japan, as in most other things, was the most ad-

vanced and enlightened country in Asia on the question of Birth Control. A meeting with doctors and social workers revealed the existence of 68 Birth Control clinics in Tokyo alone, and restricted but growing medical practice in modern technique. It will not grow fast enough however to solve Japan's pressing problem. With a crowded population of more than 64,000,000 and only 15.8 per cent of her soil that can be cultivated in these beautiful but economically poor volcanic islands, the population has an average annual increase of 902,781. There are only 674,522 Japanese subjects residing abroad in the entire world. They cannot be induced to settle in large numbers in Korea, Manchuria or Formosa and they are excluded from many of the more favored portions of the world so that there is no hope of adequate emigration. With a million men unemployed, poor in almost all essential raw materials, a low standard of living for both her agricultural and industrial labor, and with growing labor troubles, Japan will be soon forced to face her population problem in earnest. Already public opinion is changing. I found editors, intellectuals and social workers prevailing in favor of scientific Birth Control. Many referred to the visit of Margaret Sanger to Japan, which had greatly stimulated the movement. She would find today a much more tolerant attitude on the part of the Government and a gratifying advance of this great reform movement so deeply needed in Japan.

JAPAN MUST ADOPT BIRTH CONTROL

As there is no hope of emigration lessening the pressure of population on the means of subsistence, the growing consumption of foreign foodstuffs, the increasing pressure of economic want and social discontent may force the government to be one of the first to adopt a completely modern attitude to scientific Birth Control. This seems the only alternative to economic and social catastrophe. Japan's birth-rate has increased to 33.6 per thousand. Her death-rate has decreased to 19.8. Her population is now doubling every forty years. The size of the average farm in Japan is only two and a half acres. Forty-six per cent of the farmers are tenants with an average monthly income of \$39.58 for a family of seven. The tenant ends the year with an average debt of \$259.90. His per capita cost of living is \$80.16 which is one-fifth of that of the American farmer. Social discontent is increasing both among farmers and laborers. Many

students and labor leaders are turning to Communism as a panacea. But ground between the upper and nether millstones of increasing competition and increasing poverty, Japan will be forced in this decade to try to solve her population problem. She will be the first modern self-governing nation compelled to face the issue between food supply and population in all its grim reality.

Apart from this one progressive country, with the exception of the work of a few enlightened doctors and social workers, we found almost the whole continent of Asia in ignorance of and in deep need of the Birth Control movement. For myself, I return to America more than ever convinced of the value and absolute necessity of the Birth Control movement both in the Orient and the Occident.

An Answer to Professor Carver

TO THE EDITOR

I HAVE just finished reading Professor Carver's amazingly interesting article in the last issue of the REVIEW, entitled "Occupational Congestion." Never have I seen more poignantly illustrated the superiority of the specialist and expert over the untrained and uncoordinated generalized citizen. For such as Dr. Carver have been created foundations and graduate departments and psychological tests and statistical machines and two volume researches into the mysteries of population, over-population, under-population, eugenics and Malthusian laws. Mothers and fathers, especially of the poorer and less differentiated masses, your problems are on the eve of solution. A Carver has come to judgment!

Let him speak for himself. "One might perhaps question whether there are too many farmers or not. He might affirm that there were simply not enough other people to buy farm products." So the seventy million or more Hindu peasants, always on the verge of starvation, and the twenty million or so American farmers, always under the grim shadow of their mortgages, should cease being farmers and presently go off and be bank presidents. Professor Carver recognizes, of course, that the average Hindu peasant and the average American farmer are probably too old to adapt themselves to a new way of life. But he hopes for the next generation. He simply tells it not to be born. Occupants of over-crowded occupations should cease to over-crowd such occupations by having less children, and occupants of under-occupied occupations (doctors, lawyers, engineers, bank presidents and successful film-stars) should have more children. Thus will an equilibrium, much to be desired in a well-ordered democracy, be established. For, says this learned gentleman: "The general impression that unskilled

laborers have larger families than skilled laborers, and that skilled laborers have larger families than business and professional men, has been statistically confirmed by several studies." The Professor cites a list, which really, as a by-product, proves how expensive it is to establish a fact that the general public already knows without any investigation at all. The Professor does not think that the fertility of the poor is due to their poverty, but that their poverty is due to their fertility.

On this point the charwoman who works in our apartment differs with the Professor. She said that she and her husband are so poor already, that a few more children don't add to their difficulties much, especially as they can be put to work early. She also mentioned the intervention of Father Flanagan in their more intimate family affairs, which necessitated a choice between a large family and asceticism, to which latter she seemed opposed. I then questioned her on Dr. Carver's next proposition. I said: "Mrs. Ryan, why is it that so many of the children of you poor people turn out to be day-laborers and truck-drivers. Why don't more of them become bank presidents?" I am still washing the soap-suds out of my eyes.

Yet—"In an exceedingly valuable study recently made on the 'Social Origins of American Business Leaders,'" Professor Carver states, "it has been shown that the unskilled laboring classes did not produce their share of business leaders, that business leaders are the children of business and professional men in larger proportion than the number of business and professional men would account for on the general theory of probabilities." But do not misjudge the Professor. He is not recklessly casting aspersions on those of a lesser breed. Perhaps, after all, it may not be their fault that they don't

become bank presidents or stock gamblers, but restrict their activities to crap games and penny ante. He says "This still leaves in doubt the question as to whether the better chance of a conspicuous business success on the part of the son of a business or professional man is due to heredity or the better opportunities for education and training? One feels that Carver inclines to the heredity theory, but it would require probably a good many monographs to establish that generalization. We suggest that he see a few multi-millionaires and get them to subscribe a fund for such a study as will once and for all confirm the momed classes in their hereditary rights.

I think it may be easier to persuade the masses to the Professor's theories than the upper classes. It may be possible to persuade them to have smaller families. Does that mean, necessarily that there will be less chronic unemployment, less fear of poverty and suffering? We leave the Professor to fight it out with the Marxists. They are as fond of his sort of truism as he, and love statistics to prove that black is black and white white, even better than he. In any event, the problem of the poor settles itself. They die off when there are too many of them. Or, if they drag on in suffering and in want, Congress can always draw a red herring of an investigation of communist propoganda across the path of our humaner feelings. The over-supply of labor is not very important if the police are well fed and the press well in hand. As for the farmers and the over-supply of foodstuffs, Professor Carver could perhaps be persuaded to lecture to them and tell them that if they produced less foodstuffs and the Russian and Indian and Hungarian and Roumanian peasants (who would be lectured to by local Carvers) produced less foodstuffs, and grew more hothouse grapes, then the price of foodstuffs would rise and the price of hothouse grapes would fall until every American and Hindu and Russian and Roumanian and Hungarian household would pay more for ordinary foodstuffs and consequently consume more hothouse grapes. And if this didn't work out, the peasants and farmers would be asked to expose their surplus babies on the mountain-tops. Then the supply of farmers would drop, and the price of farm products would automatically rise.

No, Dr. Carver's main difficulties will be with the upper strata, the two-and-a-half children fam-

ilies. He tells us that if we had more business leaders, then they would get us more business, and that then there would be more work for all. I interviewed my friend Hawlinson's wife on this subject. Hawlinson is the director of publicity for Gokum Toilet Soap. Gokum Toilet Soap is made up of exactly the same ingredients as Hokum Toilet Soap and a dozen other toilet soaps. But through Hawlinson's excellent work, the sales of Gokum Toilet Soap have doubled even in this bad year. The Hawlinsons have two children. Mrs. H. is forty, but has the figure of a girl of eighteen, and the complexion of a woman of thirty. Her hair is carefully and permanently waved.

"My dear Henry," Mrs. Hawlinson drawled "What sort of nonsense is this that you're telling me? You know that we never wanted any but Alice Junior was more or less in the nature of, well—unexpected. Do you know what it costs to give children a decent bringing up, and the proper connections, so that they can get decently started in life? I want Alice to marry well. And Junior must be able to begin where his father leaves off. Roger earns about fifty thousand a year, and that hardly keeps us going. I tell you, I shall not feel free until I see Alice in her own duplex and country house on the shore, and Junior with a seat on the Exchange. The professions? Goodness, they are frightfully over-crowded. There are too many doctors and lawyers as it is. And for big business you need so much capital. Why, the only people that can afford to have large families nowadays, are the working people. They can wear overalls and things, and their children can just go out and be mechanics or truck drivers or chauffeurs. Why our chaffeur, Charles, gets fifty dollars a week, and in the summer a place for him and his family, and free vegetables. And they get all our old clothes, mostly just as good as new. Really, they haven't any responsibilities at all, no front to keep up. Maybe that's why they have six children."

Professor Carver should interview members of the classes furnishing our business and professional leaders. Then he will see the real difficulties in increasing the population of the less crowded occupations.

Sincerely yours,

HENRY G. ALSBERG

Do Parents Desire Children?

By HERBERT APTEKAR

Anthropology sheds interesting light on this question Mr Aptekar here follows his general survey of Birth Control in anthropological perspective (July issue) with a consideration of a specific question

IN Western Australia there are primitive groups who perform totemic ceremonies in order to secure a plentiful supply of children, but in South-eastern Australia during hard summers babies are roasted and eaten. In ancient Rome *proletarius*, meaning "child-producer," was once a term of honor, but later childlessness became a tradition of the noble class. In the United States it is customary for the wealthy to have few children, but in Stockholm the rich have larger families than the poor.

How, then, shall we answer the question whether parents desire children? An analysis of anthropological data may prove of value. Let us begin by noting manifestations of the desire for children.

Expressions of a deep-rooted desire for children may be universally noted in custom and belief. For example, among the Yukaghir of Siberia sterility is a punishment and a sign of disfavor on the part of dead relatives. A barren woman asks the help of a shaman, who descends to the realm of the deceased, and persuades the soul of a dead relative to enter the woman's body in order to become reincarnated. Among the Baganda of Africa a married woman is expected to show signs of pregnancy shortly after her marriage. Here, the medicine-man orders a married couple who do not have children to come to him with a male goat. He kills the goat, and cuts out the genitals. These he gives to the woman to cook. When she has done this, he mixes herbs in the liquid, and sends the couple to some place where a wild banana tree is growing. The husband stands on one side of the tree, and his wife on the other, and they drink some of the potion. It is believed that this ceremony will produce the desired child. The Andamanese take great pride in pregnancy. When a stranger arrives among them he is always shown a woman with child, who proudly projects her abdomen. The Akamba regard a pregnant girl as the most eligible spouse, "exactly as if she were a cow with calf." Among the Nandi it is essential for a girl who desires to be married to have previously conceived. Transylvanian Gypsy women who have just been married,

eat grass from the grave of a pregnant woman at the new moon, or drink water into which their husbands put glowing coals, in order that they may have children. In Bosnia sterility is explained as being the result of intercourse with a demon. In Japan it is the result of sinfulness. In Equatorial Africa women will not bathe in water because they are afraid of becoming sterile.

Such instances might be multiplied indefinitely. Fetiches are used to cure sterility, marriage ties are revoked on account of barrenness, the position of woman is dependent upon her having children, the man with a large family acquires social standing. There are few primitive peoples among whom the birth of a child is not the occasion for rejoicing, festivity, and elaborate ceremony. These ceremonies are usually penetrated by diverse psychological currents, but they indicate, among other things, genuine desire for children. In the provinces of Kiangsu and Chekiang in China, three days after the birth of a child the family presents red boiled eggs to relatives, friends, and neighbors. Often two thousand eggs or more are given away. This presentation of eggs is a token of the family's hope that its children will be as numerous as the eggs that have been given away. The Inland Igbirras of Northern Nigeria ceremoniously shave the head of a child seven days after it is born, and friends of the family bring presents of food, drink, money, and clothes. Similar ceremonies are almost universal.

These, then, are some of the expressions of desire for children by their primitive parents. For the purposes of this discussion it is important that we note two facts. First, *they vary from group to group, or in other words, they are moulded by specific cultural environments*. Pregnant Andamanese women proudly project the abdomen, but this custom is by no means universal. It is characteristic of Andaman culture, but not of other groups. Second, *they are a cause as well as an effect of desire for children*. The example from Japan, where sterility is considered a result of sinfulness, well

illustrates this point. Will a Japanese woman capable of bearing children permit herself to be scorned as a disreputable person by not having them? She will have children, and she will *desire* to have them.

I have referred to these customs and beliefs as expressions of desire for children. This customary way of thinking of them emphasizes their effectual character, and completely disregards their causal significance. However, this is perhaps not the first instance in which a word has caused us to lose sight of reality. Take, for example, the traditional explanation of the desire for children. This desire, we have been told, is due to the "instinct of self-preservation." Behavioristic writings have done much to discountenance the use of the term "instinct." But disclaiming prejudice in this case, what do we explain by attributing desire for children to the instinct of self-preservation? Can we make anything more of this mystical entity than what Dewey calls "the truism that life is life, that life is a continuing activity as long as it is life at all?" Are we not, in the last analysis, simply saying that parents desire children because they desire children?

However, this traditional explanation is not without a germ of truth. With all its mystical connotations, it does emphasize somewhat a biological fact. And a biological fact — the fact of procreation — must be the basis of any explanation of this wish for offspring. Procreation is primarily biological, it may be described as social only in a secondary sense. Animals live their lives and reproduce, but not as social beings—in the sense that we apply the term to man. Without this biological fact of procreation, its psychological concomitants in man — desire for children, and desire to avoid having them — would be nonexistent.

Both of these antithetical desires, however, are social, that is to say, they are culturally determined. A neurological basis for desire is, of course, presupposed, but particular desires are social in character. Both of these desires may exist simultaneously in the psychology of the individual, and whether one or the other predominates is largely a matter of cultural circumstance.

For instance, in Torres Straits abortion and infanticide were formerly very widely practised, but recently these usages almost completely disappeared, largely, because of the fact that it became profitable for parents to have large families. Sons can now always find plenty of employment, which means luxuries to the parents, and daughters are

valuable because they are sold in marriage to the highest bidder. The significant fact about this case, is, of course, that a twist in cultural circumstance altered the prevailing attitude of parents so that they now desire children to a greater extent than ever before.

Similarly, the dependence of these antithetical desires upon the character of particular cultural elements may be seen in cases where one sex is preferred rather than the other. On Banks Islands because descent is reckoned through the female side, and because girls command a large bride-price, the natives prefer them to boys. But in India, where only sons have power to present offerings to dead ancestors, boys are fervently wished for, and a man without a son will for this reason adopt one.

DESIRE SPRINGS FROM CULTURAL MILIEU

We are thus brought to see that not only manifestations of the desire for children may be culturally cast, but that the desire itself, in positive or negative form, may be moulded by a specific cultural milieu. In fact, even a cursory examination of ethnographic data reveals both the positive and negative desire in the most diversified cultural settings. Primitive groups in North America, Africa, New Guinea, Australia, and elsewhere fervently desire children, but also practice abortion and infanticide extensively. And as a consequence of the cultural disparateness of groups in these areas, the causes of desire for children are culturally distinct, as are those of desire not to have children.

But we may go a step further. Numerous conflicting elements characterize all cultures, and the individual usually assimilates these conflicts *in toto*. It was stated above that desire for children and desire to avoid having them may simultaneously exist in the psychology of the individual, and that whether one or the other gains predominance is largely a matter of cultural circumstance. Now, in cultures consisting of a host of conflicting elements, will not the conflict of these two desires in the individual be intensified, unless the conflicting cultural elements are totally distinct from desire for children?

Suppose that I, as an individual in our own culture, which doubtlessly contains more conflicting elements than any other, am very fond of children and should like to have a large family. I realize, however, that I cannot at once be a worthy father and do many other things I should like to do. My income is not large. I have just read *Mankind at*

the Crossroads, and *Standing Room Only*, which warn me of the dangers of over-population. On the other hand, I have read *Whither Democracy*, which makes me feel that perhaps I am the sort of person who ought to have children. I know something about Birth Control. Do I not desire to have children, and not to have them, and does not a cultural situation intensify this conflict?

But the situation is not the same with all individuals. Even in primitive cultures, which on the whole are much simpler than our own, and where one individual is subject to essentially the same cultural influences as all others, not every individual has the same native equipment or life experiences, that is to say, the same temperament.

However, in speaking of cultural and individual differences as they pertain to desire for children, we must not overlook the fact that there is also cultural and individual similarity. Culture is not an entity that can be completely separated from human beings. It is rather built upon certain human psychological drives, and serves to satisfy human needs. The drives culture is built upon are common to all men, and as a result certain basic elements are common to all cultures everywhere. Children are a source of joy to human beings, this is tantamount to saying that children are a source of satisfaction for certain psychological drives. It does not, however, imply a *natural* or *instinctive* desire for children. The *joy of children*, then, inheres in the parent-child relationship, and as a consequence there are manifestations of desire for children from the rudest to the most advanced cultural levels.

But what of the desire not to have children? Do we similarly find through psychological and cultural variability a constant undercurrent? Children are everywhere a burden as well as a joy. The degree to which they are burdensome is, of course, largely dependent upon economic factors, but it cannot be denied that even under the most favorable economic circumstances they are to a very great extent impedimenta. In fact, in our own society, where standards of living vary immensely, it is usually more difficult for parents with an income of, say, five thousand dollars a year, to rear a family of average size, than it is for those with an income of half as much. As a consequence, then, of another factor inhering in the parent-child relationship, *the burden of children*, we also find from the rudest to the most advanced cultures manifestations of the desire to avoid children.



And no person who knows methods of Birth Control can enter the State of Colorado

—Courtesy of "Judge"

Knowledge of Birth Control Must Be Spread

IN this matter as in most of our social problems, we can only go forward and not backward. There is no use of bemoaning the good old days, when educated women, on the average, bore their fifteen children as regularly as did the uneducated. The birth-rate has gone down in every civilized country of the world and it will go lower before it strikes bottom. Not even the imperial power of Mussolini is able to resist this universal tendency. Berlin, the capital of a nation that has been famous for large families, has now the lowest birth-rate of any large city in Europe. The population of England is almost stationary, the same is true of France and if the populations of these countries were to decline still further there should be no occasion for tears. The population of France is nearly ten times as dense as California and few economists would deny that its greater density is a partial cause of its lower standard of living.

The only danger then from the falling birth-rate which we are witnessing on a world-wide scale is that the rate will not fall as rapidly as it should among the less fit. There is no calamity so destructive nor so irrevocable as the deterioration of our racial stock. Any other evil we can overcome, this one we can only endure. For this reason the dissemination of Birth Control information is the most worthwhile enterprise in which public spirited citizens can engage. Their efforts will leave behind them as an eternal monument, a finer, stronger and more intelligent citizenry.

GLENN E. HOOVER

Book Reviews

GRANDMOTHER BROWN'S HUNDRED YEARS, 1827-1927, by Harriet Connor Brown *Little, Brown, and Co., Boston* \$3 00

THIS book was written by Grandmother Brown's daughter-in-law, Harriet Connor Brown, who, after the celebration of the old lady's 100th birthday, sat by her wheel chair, and took down the story of her century of life with loving and sympathetic understanding

We see, through the eyes of a woman 100 years old, who was born when John Quincy Adams was President, who saw the passing of twenty-five of our chief executives, and lived to vote for Herbert Hoover, the picture of life before the era of our industrial development, when almost everything used was made in the home or raised on the home acres. As a child she saw the horse "Queen" driven through the house hitched to the back-log and the men of the family rolling it with crow bars into place on the hearth. The crane still hung in the fireplace, the dutch oven was heated for the week's baking, the churn splashed and the spinning wheel whirred busily. She watched the growth and development of every kind of transportation, saw the machine age take much of the traditional "woman's work" out of the home, and spent her last years in a house centrally heated, with electricity, modern plumbing, and a radio, with motor cars rushing by and airplanes overhead.

Hers is the story of a life spent almost entirely within the family circle, a life of ceaseless, unremitting toil, rarely relieved by recreation. Even as a child she rose at five o'clock, and later in life by the light of a candle which she herself had dipped and molded, "with a wick as thick as your little finger," hung in an iron candlestick on the back of her chair, she sewed or knitted until late at night.

As a bride of eighteen she cooked, washed and kept house not only for her husband and herself, but for three boarders. Her first four children were born in Ohio and then, although her husband had a prosperous general store and was doing well, he decided to buy a farm in Iowa and move there. Selling his business and all their household belongings except one "cherry dresser" and a "big roll of Brussels carpet" which they took with them for the new home, they started a weary twenty day trek by

river steamboat and team to the farm where they spent the next fourteen years and where their last four children were born. Grandmother Brown was never happy there, she tells us "I was never reconciled to it. The drudgery was unending. The isolation was worse. Such a way of living is hard, *hard*, HARD."

There she lost two of her children, the adored little Lottie and the baby girl who was so delicate that for two years she was carried everywhere, as was the fashion of that day, on a pillow, and never learned to walk or talk, although Grandmother Brown says "she understood everything I said to her." There her last child was born and she comments on his arrival "The eighth child in a family is, of course, no novelty. This one did not seem needed at all. Then, of course, our boys were farmer's sons, and knew something about stockbreeding. They knew that the little baby I had lost, the year before, had been born to a mother who was too tired to nourish her offspring properly. They naturally did not want to see a repetition of that experience. I felt that they regarded the last baby as an unwelcome addition to the family circle. But Will looked him over very kindly. 'I wonder if these little hands will ever milk a cow', he said. We had so many to milk just then." After the birth of this child an attack of puerperal septicemia made Grandmother Brown an invalid for several years. Undoubtedly it was this period of enforced idleness which prolonged her life.

Her biographer says of her "Chiefly, I think of her as a mother", and while it is true that her whole story is inextricably bound up with those of her children, many will think of her first as a woman whose capabilities were great but whose life did not allow her to use them. Grandmother Brown was modern in spirit—always willing to try new things, although she harked back often, as old people do, to the "good old days" when so many things were better than they are today. Although almost a feminist "I never was a suffragette" she tells us "I never wanted to vote, would rather not", adding quaintly, "I thought that if there was anything men could do by themselves we'd better let them do it." In explaining the secret of her long life she says that it was her good inheritance that kept her going but that "down to the time Herbert was born

I worked too hard That wasn't right, especially at childbearing time I began that pretty young too I am less than twenty years older than Will (her eldest son) and in twenty months there was another baby "

"Birth Control? Babies more widely spaced? Yes, that should be so Just think! I was washing, ironing, cooking and having babies too That was too much "

We are happy to know that, in the sunset of her life, she traveled and that not only her family but the whole state of Iowa honored her at the celebration of her 100th birthday The country owes much to such women Her life was hard but she strove unceasingly to keep her ideals and to pass them on to her children She had a sense of beauty and order, she loved nature,—all life interested her and she had an appreciation of all that was best and finest in it She tells us of a narrow life, but a clean and true one If one's heart aches with sympathy for her and for the millions of women who still tread the same hard and narrow path, one can be happy in the thought that millions more have won their freedom and that all life is fuller and richer because of it

P B P HUSE

PORTRAIT OF A CHINESE LADY, by Lady Hosie *William Morrow and Co, New York* \$5 00

“PORTRAIT OF A CHINESE LADY” by Lady Hosie is a book of exceptional charm On the strong thread of her friendship with a high caste lady, the author has strung a rosary of shining beads of Chinese life and character, all attractively readable Now and then in her narrative a bead is added, showing that not all the Chinese are thinkers of noble thoughts and doers of kindly deeds — thus saving the character of the book and admitting that the people of whom she writes are human beings, responding to the same impulses and guilty of the same excesses that are common the world over

In these days when, because of the dethronement of the “gods of things as they were” in China, there is a gladiatorial thumbs down on the Chinese and an expressed and guided determination to let them stew in their own juice, what Lady Hosie has written may well serve to soften the hearts of those occupying seats of judgment If such can be induced to begin the story, there will be little danger of their laying it down unread

To many the delineation of Chinese outlook and thought will be as startling and as new as the information that only a limited percentage of the people of China have ever seen a bowl of rice

The making available of *Portrait of a Chinese Lady* as a book of reference and study to students and others interested in world affairs would be of inestimable value, and possibly far-reaching consequence

D O LIVELY

ASIA REBORN, by Marguerite Harrison *Harper, New York* \$4 00

CHINA'S MILLIONS, by Anna Louise Strong *Coward-McCann, New York* \$4 00

IN spite of their suggestive titles neither of these books touch on the population problems of the Orient They tell of the spiritual awakening of the near and far eastern races since the world war, and of their coming together on the common ground of opposition to an exploiting Occident *China's Millions* develops the Far East's effort to throw off the West in greater detail, and brings it up to the very moment Yellow antagonism to the whites is not feared by these authors The rebirth of Asia is, in their view, not an effort to impose a worse civilization on a better, it is not an effort to impose anything whatever on the West It is simply an effort of the East to obtain time and freedom for true assimilation with the West

China, and the same is true of the rest of the East, has, in the words of Miss Strong, “glimpsed European civilization and knows that it must either absorb it or be destroyed by it It is fighting for the future of a race which until now has not cared to have a future ”

This is a splendid ideal Our only wonder is how far a glut of people and a shortage of food as yet unknown to the West, will handicap the spiritual and political efforts of the New East to skip over the intervening stages and pass directly from mediaevalism to the modernism of tomorrow

MARY SUMNER BOYD

SO YOUTH MAY KNOW, by Roy E Dickerson *Association Press, New York* \$2 00

THIS book is intended to give young men an understanding of the mechanism and biological facts of sex and also a point of view regarding many different aspects of the sex life One can take no

exception to the actual material presented. The author bases his statements on the best scientific data available and his point of view is universally forward-looking, tolerant, and understanding. He avoids the pitfalls of prudery and tiresome preaching without yielding one degree of his high ideals.

I would question, however, the advisability of including in such a volume the first section which tries to be technical and yet popular and must be somewhat confusing to the uninitiated. The young man who is puzzled about questions of intimacies — petting, attitude toward girls, whether future mate or not, and many other similar problems which confront the young man of today, will certainly not derive very much benefit from a rather dull discussion of hormones, chromosomes and embryonic development of the fetus. To be sure, this is all legitimate knowledge but it is really aside from the major purpose of the book, and to my mind at least, detracts from rather than adds to its value.

The great prominence which is given to discussion of venereal diseases and the great detail with which etiology and prognosis of syphilis and gonorrhoea are treated seem also to be unnecessarily detailed in so brief a volume.

The sections on petting and on self-control, engagement, etc. have much to commend them. They have the happy faculty of giving the whole subject of heterosexual development a joyous and happy aspect, robbing it of many of the elements of virtuous gloom which are present in so many other books of similar nature. This, it would seem to me, is the main function of the book, which it fulfills adequately.

MARION M. MILLER

YOUTH, by Elizabeth Sloan Chesser, M.D. *Dutton & Company, New York* \$1 00

DR CHESSER has undertaken too much in *Youth*, a small book of 112 pages. This statement may be readily understood by a glance at the table of contents of her book. For example, such chapters as "Youth in Rebellion", "Conflicts between the Generations", "Problems of Education", "Health in Adolescence", "When Youth is Unhappy", "Food in Adolescence", "Self Expression", "Love and Marriage", "Hygiene of Marriage and Birth Control", and "Young Mothers of Today" should be covered with that many pages each.

Dr Chesser contradicts herself in her statements. In the preface, she remarks "the ignorance

of most parents with regard to the training of young children" is deplorable but in her final chapter, she concludes "young women of today are very capable, very intelligent, and are efficient mothers."

"In considering the hygiene of marriage something must be said about Birth Control." She is in favor of Birth Control, but points out that often "young wives are definitely estranged if they are asked to utilize precautions which are difficult, disagreeable, and often painful to apply." She further asserts that the "second serious reason against Birth Control at the beginning of married life is the risk of sterility as a consequence of prevention of conception." This statement is fallacious. According to Dr James F. Cooper, careful observation has made it possible to conclude that "contraceptives *per se* are not a cause of sterility." Dr Chesser sums up "young couples will do infinitely better if they leave the consequences of their mating to nature at the beginning of married life." All of this the reviewer does not agree with.

Even with its faults, the book is an interesting one, for it gives an American the British point of view. It is written in a chatty manner that makes for easy reading.

JAMES R. CURTIS

BOOKS RECEIVED

POPULATION, LECTURES ON THE HARRIS FOUNDATION, 1929, by Gini, Nasu, Baker and Kuczynski. *University of Chicago Press, Chicago* \$3 00

MARRIAGE, PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE, by Ralph De Pomerai. *Richard R. Smith, New York* \$4 00

OUT-GUESSING THE STORK, by Galen Starr Ross. *Straight-Stuff Publishing Co., New York* \$1 00

AN ANTHOLOGY OF REVOLUTIONARY POETRY, edited by Marcus Graham. *Published by the Editor, West Farms, N. Y.* \$3 00

CENSORED, by Ernst and Lorentz. *Jonathan Cape and Harrison Smith, New York* \$2 75

HEREDITY IN MAN, by R. Ruggles Gates. *Macmillan Co., New York* \$6 00

NO BED OF ROSES, by O. W. Macaulay. *Co., New York* \$2 00

PARENTHOOD DESIGN OR ACCIDENT? By Michael Fielding, with preface by H. G. Wells. *Noel Douglas, London* 3s 6d

English Pamphlets

Of interest to BIRTH CONTROL REVIEW Readers

These pamphlets may be ordered through the REVIEW

TEN THOUSAND CASES, Preliminary Notes on Various Technical Aspects of the Control of Contraception, based on the analysed data from ten thousand cases attending the Pioneer Mothers' Clinic, by Marie C Stopes *Mothers' Clinic for Constructive Birth Control, London* 6d (20 cents)

A sequel to Dr Stopes' analysis of "The First Five Thousand" published in 1925. Interesting statistical data is given. Of the 10,000 women attending, 9,912 were married, 5 were unmarried and already mothers, and 83 were engaged to be married, 142 childless women sought help in securing pregnancies, a study of 787 cases shows failure in 21 cases, and a failure of 0.52% is listed for the entire 10,000, 3,164 of the entire number of women showed deformities and lacerations. In this connection it is pointed out that the number of difficult cases, women with injuries, has more than doubled in the second 5,000 cases, showing that though, with England's lack of legal restrictions, the normal woman may be able to secure advice with ease, the abnormal type is in need of expert clinical service.

A listing of methods recommended by Dr Stopes' clinic makes this pamphlet technically unavailable in the United States except to physicians and medical students.

REPORT ON THE CONFERENCE ON GIVING INFORMATION ON BIRTH CONTROL BY PUBLIC HEALTH AUTHORITIES *Published by the Conference* 6d (20 cents)

A full report of the speeches made at the Joint Conference held on April 4th, and briefly reported in the May issue of the BIRTH CONTROL REVIEW. The National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship, The Society for the Provision of Birth Control Clinics, The Women's National Liberal Federation and the Workers' Birth Control Group co-operated in organizing the Conference. The addresses and discussion following each address are reported in full. The English custom of speaking freely and well from the floor at public meetings helps to make the report interesting reading. An

imposing number of Public Health Authorities and other organizations officially represented at the Conference is given.

THE BIRTH CONTROL MOVEMENT IN ENGLAND *John Bale, Sons and Danielsson, London* 6d (20 cents)

A concise and well written history of the Birth Control movement by Mary Breed and Edith How-Martyn. The authors trace the movement from its inception in 1789, when the Rev. Thomas Malthus published his famous "Essay on the Principle of Population." They describe the work of Francis Place, and Knowlton, the Bradlaugh-Besant trial of 1877, the formation of the Malthusian League, and the opening of clinics. They evaluate the attitude of the medical profession, of research projects and of the books and magazines devoted to the movement. The present situation is clearly defined. There is no legal restraint on the teaching of methods of Birth Control in England. In practice, however, the doctors and nurses attending the state-supported Maternity and Infant Welfare Centres are prohibited from giving such advice. As a result the poor, who cannot afford to go to private doctors, are kept in ignorance. In summary the authors state "It cannot be sufficiently emphasized that the present demand endorsed by all serious Birth Control workers is that

The Ministry of Health and Public Health Authorities should recognize the desirability of making available information on methods of Birth Control at their welfare centres to married people who ask for it."

COMMENTS ON BIRTH CONTROL, by Naomi Mitchison *Criterion Miscellany, No 12* *Faber & Faber, London* 1s (30 cents)

A meaty pamphlet discussing with wit and charm an aspect of the Birth Control situation not usually touched upon. Mrs. Mitchison considers some of the emotional and psychological drawbacks of contraceptives, and the effect of the substitution of deliberate forethought for the impulsiveness and haphazardness of earlier generations. While unquestionably advocating Birth Control, she raises a question that is at once arresting and provocative.

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Volume IV Proceedings of the Sixth International Birth Control Conference, 1925

Birth Control Review, December, 1929 issue

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