

OCTOBER, 1922

25 CENTS

# BIRTH CONTROL REVIEW

WELCOME HOME TO

MARGARET SANGER

MEETING AT CARNEGIE HALL

NEW YORK CITY

MONDAY, OCTOBER 30, 8 P. M.

*Come and Hear Her Story*

Official Organ of  
THE AMERICAN BIRTH CONTROL LEAGUE, Inc., 104 Fifth Avenue, New York City

# BIRTH CONTROL ORGANIZATIONS

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## IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES

ENGLAND—Malthusian League, President Dr C. V Drysdale, 124 Victoria St, London, S W 1  
HOLLAND (1885)—De Nieuw Malthusiaansche Bond. Secretary, Dr J Rutgers, 9 Verhulststraat, Den Haag. Periodical, *Het Cellukkg Huisgezin*  
GERMANY (1889)—Sozial Harmonische Verein Secretary, Herr M Hausmeister, Stuttgart. Periodical, *Die Soziale Harmonie*  
FRANCE (1895)—G Hardy, 29 Rue Pixerecourt, Paris. Periodical, *Generation Consciente*  
BOHEMIA CZECHO SLOVAKIA (1901)—Secretary, Michael Kacha, 1164 Zizhov, Prague. Periodical, *Zadruhy*  
SPAIN (1904)—Liga Espanola de Regeneracion Humana. Secretary, Senor Louis Bulffi, Calle Provenza, 177 Pral. la, Barcelona. Periodical, *Salu y Fuerza*.  
BRAZIL (1905)—Seccion Brasilena de Propaganda Secretaries, Manuel Moscosa, Rua d Bento Pires 29 San Pablo, Antonio Dominguez, Rue Vizcande de Moranguapez 25, Rio de Janeiro  
BELGIUM (1906)—Ligue Neo Malthusienne. Secretary, Dr Fernand Mascaux, Echevin Courcelles  
CUBA (1907)—Seccion de Propaganda. Secretary, José Guardiola, Empedrado 14, Havana.

SWITZERLAND (1908)—Groupe Malthusien Secretary, Valentin Grandjean, 106 Rue des Eaux Vives, Geneva. Periodical, *La Vie Intime*  
SWEDEN (1911)—Sällskapet for Humanitar Barnalstring. President, Mr Hinke Bergegren, Vanadievagen 15, Stockholm, Va.  
ITALY (1913)—Lega Neomalthusiana Italiana Via Lamarmora 22, Turin. Periodical, *L'Educazione Sessuale*  
AUSTRIA—Der Bund gegen den Mutterschaftszwang. Johann Ferch, President. Wien, XV/1 Gablengasse 31. Periodical, *Sexual Reform*  
PORTUGAL—E Silva, Junior, L da Memoria, 46 r/2, Lisbon. Periodical, *Paz e Liberdade*  
AFRICA—Ligue Neo Malthusienne, Maison du Peuple, 10 Rampe Magenta, Alger  
JAPAN (1921)—Voluntary Parenthood League Baroness S K. Ishimoto President. 10, Hinokicho Akasakiku, Tokyo  
INDIA (1922)—Hindusthan Janamvash Sabha (Indian Birth Control Society), Delhi. Honorary Organizer, Professor Gopalji

## THE BIRTH CONTROL REVIEW

104 FIFTH AVENUE

NEW YORK, N Y

VOL VI OCTOBER, 1922 No 10

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Published Monthly Subscription price \$2.00 a year,  
foreign countries and Canada \$2.25, postpaid.  
Bundle rates \$14 per hundred

Entered as second-class matter March 11, 1918, at the post office  
at New York, N Y., under the act of March 3, 1879

Issued on the first of each month.

Address correspondence and make checks and money orders  
payable to THE BIRTH CONTROL REVIEW

English Agents W T Edgar & Co., Ltd., 51 & 52 Chancery,  
London, W C 2.

NOTICE—When requesting change of address, give both old and  
new address.

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# THE BIRTH CONTROL REVIEW

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE AMERICAN BIRTH CONTROL LEAGUE

Four Steps to Our Goal—Agitation, Education, Organization, Legislation.

MARGARET SANGER, Editor

VOL VI

OCTOBER, 1922

No 10

## Editorial

NO ONE TOOK very seriously the suggestion that emanated from the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice, that a committee should be created with powers of censorship over manuscripts submitted for publication, and that only those which were approved by this committee should go into print. The suggestion met with instant opposition from newspapers and periodicals of high standing. Hundreds of men whose names are honorably known in the scientific and literary world, voiced their disapproval of a proposal which, if it had been carried into effect a hundred years ago would probably have prevented the appearance of Darwin's "Origin of the Species", and of hundreds of other books which laid the foundation for modern scientific and religious thought. The disapproval was so vigorous, that the idea of such a press censorship seems for the present to be dead. It received something like a funeral oration when Magistrate George W. Simpson, on September 12, handed down his decision in regard to three books published by Thomas Selzer. These books had been seized by the energetic Secretary of the S. P. V., as in violation of the law against obscene literature. One of these books—"A Young Girl's Diary" was reviewed in our columns last April. It was highly commended in reviews in other periodicals of the highest standing, and it certainly threw much light on the psychological injury done to young girls by the lack of proper sex education. In commenting on the three books complained of, Judge Simpson said, "I do not find anything in these books which may be considered obscene. On the contrary I find that each of them is a distinct contribution to the literature of the present day. Each of the books deals with one or another of the present phases of thought."

WHAT WOULD have happened to these books if the manuscripts had been submitted to the Censorship Committee? There can be little doubt of the answer. To quote from a comment on the subject in Collier's Weekly: "The censors would be only human and liable to make mistakes. Their identity would be known, and whenever they O. K.'d a manuscript that some people thought improper—and there have been people who took that view of any love story—they would be targets for violent criticism as soon as the book appeared. Naturally they would always want to be on the safe side. They would "draw the line" most conservatively—and this is a field

where a line can't be drawn, each case must be judged by itself." For the present, the idea of a censorship committee is dead. But it is never safe to assume that there will be no revival. For lack of vigilance laws have been passed that already curtail grievously our liberties. We are cut off by our obscenity laws from distributing information which would enable parents to exercise intelligence and choice in regard to the birth of their children. Excellent books on this subject are in circulation in England, but debarred from the United States. A recent book which ought to be in the hands of all social workers and thoughtful parents has now been added to this list. This is Ettie A. Rout's "Safe Marriage", much of which would come in the same class with many Government publications put out during the campaign for the checking of venereal disease. But Ettie Rout sees venereal disease only as a part of the great question of social purity and she is convinced that this question is bound up with that of responsible parentage and Birth Control. Because she treats the whole of the question rather than a part of it, her book comes under the prohibition which forbids the circulation of such literature, which holds our mothers in darkness and misery, and condemns so many children to come into the world only to suffer and die.

THE BIRTH RATE in France continues to fall in spite of much noisy propaganda in favor of large families. The figures for 1921, published in July, were most discouraging to the propagandists. The total number of births in excess of deaths was only 117,083, as compared with 159,790 for 1920. Such an increase, on a population of twenty millions, means that the number is practically stationary, especially when it is recalled that the figures include the recently recovered provinces of Alsace and Lorraine, where the birth-rate still approximates more nearly to that of Germany than to that of France. In September, the National Alliance for the Encouragement of Larger Families issued some more statistics. They were for the ten largest cities of France, and covered the first half of the present year. During this time, in these ten cities, 48,528 children were born. The number for the corresponding period of 1921 was 53,551, showing a decrease of 5,023. If the same proportion holds for the whole country, and for the twelve months, there will be 80,000 fewer children born in France in 1922 than in 1921. It is very evident that the strenuous campaigns of the militarists have

been entirely ineffective in raising the birth rate. People will not have children in response to exhortations from above. Neither do they increase their families in order to gain medals, decorations or cash bonuses. When methods of prevention are thoroughly understood, parents will act according to their own judgement in this intimate matter, and no Government can compel obedience to its command, "*Faites des enfants*". And the parents will be influenced, not by considerations of the comparative advantage to a country of stationary or growing populations, but by the advantage to their own immediate families of having one, two, or more children.

It is usually taken for granted that it is bad for a country to be stationary in population, and that "healthy growth" is necessary for national welfare. This is an extraordinary conviction in view of the fact that all the countries of Europe, until the latter part of the eighteenth century, had practically stationary populations. It is natural for a new and developing country, as for a young individual, to regard growth as a sign of health. But the adult, who becomes larger and heavier, does so usually at the expense of health, and at the expense also of activity and efficiency. Much might be written to prove that the stationary population of France represents the ideal for all fully settled nations, and that—not only for the sake of international peace and security, but also for the welfare and happiness of the people—the country that merely maintains its numbers is likely to be the most healthy and prosperous. It will also be in the best position for self defense, because it will not have an undue number of dependents and ineffectives to carry, if it is called upon to devote its resources to the repelling of aggression. Such considerations, however, will never have much weight in deciding the actual course of events in regard to population. When once the power of Birth Control is in the hands of the parents of a nation, the question of stationary or increasing population will be decided not in the Halls of Government but in the homes of the people. All that Government can do will be indirect and not direct, and a militaristic policy, or any policy unfavorable to the welfare of the mass of the people, will defeat itself. The heavier the burdens the Government lays upon the people, the fewer will be the children of the nation, and, without children, a nation cannot devote itself to military aggression. France seems already to afford proof of this assertion, and the other countries of Europe, which have suffered so bitterly from the Great War, are following in her footsteps, and opposing to militarism the Birth Strike.

THIS MONTH WE present several articles from ministers of religion who see Birth Control a means towards human improvement. We feel that these articles are peculiarly timely in view of the action taken on Birth Control by the Protestant Episcopal Convention at Portland, Oregon. The bishops and clergy misunderstood the aim of Birth Control when they stigmatized it as "involving grave dangers to physical health as well as moral innocence, and threatening the future of the human race." An answer to this pronouncement is given by Dr Goldstein, Rev F W Betts and Dr Coffee.

## News Notes

WHEN THIS ISSUE of the REVIEW went to press Mrs Sanger had not returned from her long tour of the world, but her arrival in America was immediately expected.

A committee, with Mrs J B Vandever as chairman, is planning to have an educational Birth Control booth at the Physical Culture Exhibition to be held at Madison Square Garden, October 23-28.

INDIA—A REPORT of the first six months of work has been received from the Indian Birth Control Society. The Society was extremely anxious that Margaret Sanger should visit India after she left Japan and China and it was a great disappointment to Professors Gopalji and Shastri, when she found it impossible to make time for a lecture tour there. Such a tour would undoubtedly have been of great value in spreading the propaganda, but in spite of the disappointment, the Indian Society takes its place bravely in the international movement. The report reads as follows: "Indian Birth Control Society was started at Delhi on Tuesday, 31 January, 1922, through the single handed efforts of Professor Gopalji, M Sc of Delhi University. For more than a year he gave it an anxious thought before giving it a practical shape. The anxiety was perhaps the keenest at a time when Messrs J O P Bland and Lothrop Stoddard were inviting the attention of devoted Birth Control workers to Asiatic population problems at the First American Birth Control Conference, New York, 11-18 November, 1921. It was a silent but sure sympathy of thought, as Professor Gopalji learnt about the holding and proceedings of the American Conference sometime in March 1922, three months after the start of Indian Birth Control Society. Inscrutable are the ways of Heaven, which men appreciate more as they get their more glimpses.

"Now, Indian Birth Control Society is rapidly progressing. Its activity is directed in interviewing the cultured and the illiterate for sounding their views and suggestions, arranging informal talks and formal lectures from time to time, distributing free leaflets and pamphlets in English and Indian languages, conducting a Birth Control Reference and Circulating Library, recommending book sellers to encourage and push the sale of Birth Control literature and above all meeting the real need of the people for practical information, with the help of a few medical friends and through the courtesy of the Malthusian League, London, for kindly sending their Practical Birth Control Leaflet to such as need it. The Society requests every person interested in the movement to do his mite. But oh! ours is a huge task. It is an uphill struggle against superstition, ignorance and false enlightenment. Of all places in the world Birth Control is needed most in India. Only the nobility of the cause nerves us. We heartily thank our co-workers abroad for the keen interest they take in the working of our Society."

According to the circular attached the name of the Society is "Hindusthan Janamvash Sabha", and its objects are to "further the principle and practice of Birth Control with a view to rationally control population, effectively check

race degeneration and materially advance race regeneration" It looks to the formation of local branches, and the calling of an annual Indian Birth Control Congress As fees, it is suggested that each member contribute one one thousandth part of his annual income, a suggestion that would indeed put members on an equal basis Such an arrangement of dues also makes it possible for the poorest to join—people to whom a dollar in dues would be an impossibility

**CHINA**—The following extract from a letter, dated Shanghai, July 31st, written to the BIRTH CONTROL REVIEW by Mr T P Wong, gives some account of the progress of the movement for Birth Control in China "It may be of interest to you to know," writes Mr Wong, "that soon after Madam Sanger visit here, a B C League was organized in a similar line as yours in New York, and the first book translated is "Family Limitation" already out from the printing office about 10 days ago, and is now on sale in one of the biggest Chinese Educational Book Store of China"

**A** LETTER, DATED August 10th, and received September 11th, from Principal A G Butchers of the John Mc Glashan College of Maori Hill, told of the formation of a Sex Education Council in Dunedin, New Zealand "We have succeeded," writes Principal Butchers, "in securing the support of the majority of the medical fraternity, and some of the younger medical men and women are very keen, but they have to proceed carefully The new professor of bacteriology, Dr Hercus, who is a young man of outstanding ability and enthusiasm, will be able to do a great deal in connection with a course of lectures which he delivers annually on Public Health He has promised to include in the course in future lectures on Eugenics and Birth Control"

August 18—The Honolulu Birth Control League voted in favor of presenting a bill to the legislature providing for the sterilization of the feeble minded, insane, imbeciles, lepers, and habitual criminals of the felon class A committee to draft the measure was appointed with Judge Sanford B Dole as chairman

## Control of Parenthood as a Moral Problem—The Case For and Against Birth Control

*A Paper Presented at the International Birth Control Conference*

*By Sidney E Goldstein*

**B**IRTH CONTROL, or the control of Parenthood, is a scientific problem, it is a legal problem, it is an economic problem, it is also a moral problem Because it is as much a matter of morals as of economics and law and science it comes within the range of religious discussion and must concern all ministers and every man interested in the establishment of ethical standards and the development of their implications No one of us can escape the duty to study a program so world wide in its sweep, and to declare ourselves upon a movement so elemental in its appeal, a movement that some men welcome with hope in their hearts and others condemn as a menace to our social and spiritual welfare

Many ministers of both the church and the synagogue believe in progress, in the furthering of social programs, in the construction of a new social order But it is evident to these ministers as well as to scientists and social economists that we must lay hold of forces more fundamental and potent than any we now widely exercise if we are to create on earth a Kingdom of God Havelock Ellis reminds us that during the last one hundred years we have advanced through several stages in the improvement of social life, and he tells us that the next stage cannot fail to take us to the very source of life itself, lifting us above the task of purifying conditions and laying upon us the higher task of regulating the quantity and raising the quality of life at its very source" This is the task and the meaning of the new science of Eugenics It is also the meaning and the task of Birth Control Birth Control is pledged to relieve the world of much unnecessary misery, but its highest purpose is to give men some measure of con

trol over racial development and human destiny It insists that the new knowledge coming to us concerning ourselves, almost incredible in its promise, must be placed at the service of the creative spirit of man, and employed in the shaping and the ennobling of posterity

**F**EW MEN ARGUE against the application of this teaching to the different groups included within the general term of mental defective For from these groups, it is manifest now, come the largest number of the unhappy host that swarm into our reformatories and prisons, our homes for the vagrant and the wayward and the insane These men and women, young and old, represent a tremendous burden in both cost and care, much more serious than this, however, is the fact that they constitute a constant source of danger in our communal life It may not be possible to eliminate mental defectives altogether from human society Defective children may be born now and then, because of conditions that we cannot control, to even the healthiest parents But this we can do We can prevent the defectives from bringing forth abundantly and peopling the earth after their own kind We can agree that the birth rate of the defective now living, the feeble minded, the epileptic, many of the insane and the criminal whose criminality is due to a deep seated and transmissible cause, shall be controlled and cut off The right to adopt this procedure comes clearly within the police power of the State, and it is probable that the courts of our country will in time rule that no individual is invested with either the legal or moral right to impose unbearable burdens upon the

community through unrestrained and reckless reproduction of defective children

Doubt comes not when we discuss the defective but when we turn to Birth Control among those who are physically, mentally and morally fit to become parents. Before we consider the case for and against Birth Control, however, let us acknowledge what we know to be the truth: that large sections of society are everywhere consciously and deliberately limiting the birth rate. This is not a matter of personal opinion, it is a statement based upon close observation, special investigations, and a study of the vital statistics of civilized countries. These statistics prove that the birth rate in England and on the continent and in America has fallen steadily since 1877, the year in which Charles Bradlaugh and Annie Besant were tried not only in the court but in the press and in the homes of London. The verdict in this case is written not in the records, but in the fact that the birth-rate in England has dropped from 36 per thousand in 1877 to less than 25 just before the war, and in the fact that a similar story is told in almost every State in Europe and in America. The question today is not: Shall we control the birth rate? The question now must be framed in this way: Is the control of parenthood wise and right? Shall the knowledge that is now in the possession of some sections of society be extended to all? By "extended" I do not mean, let me emphasize, indiscriminate and promiscuous distribution of information. I mean the scientific instruction and education of men and women, married or about to be married, by licensed and expert physicians and nurses.

**THE ARGUMENTS** against Birth Control sum themselves up in four sentences. First, Birth Control leads to race suicide, Second, Birth Control is contrary to the law of the State, Third, Birth Control encourages immorality, Fourth, Birth Control violates the commandments of God. What validity and value have these arguments? Do they rest upon the solid foundation of fact? Those who speak of race suicide point as a rule to the large number of wealthy women who are without children. It is true that many women of the wealthier classes do not have children, but it is also true that these women are more conspicuous than representative of womankind and that their childlessness is not altogether a matter of regret. If there be women in whom the maternal instinct is so weak or perverted that they would rather fondle a puppy dog than cuddle a baby, we should not grieve but rather be grateful that some child has escaped the mistake of choosing such a mother. There is only one answer to be made to those who claim that Birth Control leads to race suicide. It does not. In Holland, Birth Control has been taught the people with the sanction of the government for over forty years. The birth rate has fallen, it is true, from 37 per thousand to about 28, but the excess of births over deaths is still about 15 per thousand. This does not seem to prove that the people of Holland are bent upon self extermination through Birth Control. The population of this, as of every country, is composed, we must remember, not of those who are born, but of those who survive.

The second argument is that Birth Control is contrary to the law of the State. This is true. It is contrary to the law of almost every state in the Union for licensed physicians and nurses to instruct married men and women and those about to be joined in wedlock in methods of contraception. But who made these laws found upon our statute books? It is not generally known but it should be that both the Federal and the State laws that make impossible the cautious and judicious and scientific distribution of knowledge are traceable directly to the activities of Anthony Comstock, a man who manifestly suffered from a morbid moral sense, if not with a well recognized form of dementia. The laws that this man succeeded in having introduced into our codes do not reflect, I am convinced, either the belief or the practice of the majority of intelligent men and women. They do not express the safe and mature judgment of many scientists. They are contrary to social welfare and imperil the progress of the race. These laws must, therefore, be reinterpreted or re-written or repealed. And it is the constitutional right of every citizen, though the police may not know it and some district attorneys may not have learned it and some judges may have forgotten it, to urge a revision of the law when we believe the law is obsolete and obstructive of the highest good. No legal tradition can be allowed to curb or cripple a movement that means improvement and progress of the human race.

**THE THIRD ARGUMENT** is that Birth Control encourages immorality and desecrates marriage. The burden of proof rests upon those who advance this argument. It is for them to prove that there is more immorality and a lower standard in married life in America and England and Holland today than there was forty or fifty years ago. Nowhere have I found even an attempt to prove this contention. To say that Birth Control leads to immorality among the unmarried means only one thing. It means that the morality and the chastity of women is based upon fear. No fouler indictment could be framed against the virtue of womanhood. Women are virtuous not because they fear the consequences of sin, but because they reverence the right. No knowledge that we can place in their hands will shake the foundation upon which their ethical life is built. To say that Birth Control leads to a desecration of marriage is to assume that there is more immorality and lower standards in small families than in large families. I have taken considerable pains to study the moral standards in families both large and small, and I do not find that the standards in small families are lower than those in large families. On the contrary, I frequently find that in families in which there are many children, all of them herded into a small home, there is neither the time nor the room nor the privacy that is necessary for the cultivation of the finer sentiments and the sanctities that we associate with married life. The holiness of marriage does not depend upon conception, it does not depend upon contraception, it depends upon the sense of consecration that a man and a woman feel who come together to live in the spirit of an exalted ideal of love. When this sense of consecration is present no shadow of immorality

can enter the temple of married life, when it is absent nothing can save us from destruction

**THE FOURTH ARGUMENT**, the one that is expected to silence all opposition, is that Birth Control violates the commandments of God. There are some ministers of religion, I know, who speak as if they had received a special and privileged divine communication. No such message has come to me, nor have I ever seen a message that bears within itself the evidence of being an authentic mandate from the Deity on the subject of Birth Control. There are certain commands in the Bible, of course, which men quote against us. The most formidable is the ancient command "Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth." It is well known to those who read the Bible and do not merely quote it, that this command is found in the Book of Genesis, at the beginning of the ninth chapter, and that it comes immediately after the story of the flood, when there were just eight people living upon the face of the earth. Men must forgive us the heresy if we appeal from the God of this ancient myth to the Deity we worship in our own generation, the Deity who speaks through the long ages of evolution and whose mysterious message science is slowly translating into the accents of the human tongue. This Deity teaches, we are certain now, a doctrine not contrary to our own. He reveals the significant fact that the lower down we descend in the scale of life, the less limitation we find placed upon the spawning process. The higher we rise through the stages of animal development, the more restricted, the more controlled becomes the power of reproduction. In other words, a deeper understanding of world forces and world development leads us to conclude that in Birth Control we are merely giving sight and intelligence in human society to what in the rest of nature is a blind and groping impulse.

**WHAT NOW IS** the case for Birth Control, what are the arguments that have convinced so many men and women that Birth Control is a legitimate and necessary social movement with deeper moral and spiritual implications? The first argument is the child. No one can study child life in large families and not realize the danger to childhood. The statistics gathered by the Children's Bureau at Washington show that the death rate among children in families in which there are eight children and more is two and one half times that in families in which there are four children or less. In large families more over, it is impossible for each child to get the tender care and thoughtful supervision needed if they are to be equipped for a serviceable career in the complex life that is ours today. How often older boys and girls in trouble tell us the same story. I did not get much care when I was little, how could I? There were too many of us. Fathers and mothers do not mean to neglect their children, but when they have too many crowded about them in their home, they cannot give to each child the study and the stimulation and the guidance that each one requires. It is because we love little children that we want to guard them against the dangers that develop in large families and that make tenderness and devotion and fulness of love on the part of parents almost impossible.

The second argument is the mother. No one outside doctors and nurses and those associated with hospitals can know the terrible price that women pay for their own ignorance and our indifference. Too many and too frequent confinements undermine the strength and health of mothers and lead too often to premature and preventable death. Here and there women may survive large families and have their pictures published in the papers. The fact that they appear in the papers proves that they are exceptions. But not only do women suffer and die prematurely because of unwise spacing of children, they die for another and a more tragic reason. They die in numbers now unknown because they realize their own and their children's distress and attempt to destroy the new life that has begun to develop within them. When we know that women with four and five and six children feel that they cannot go any further, and that they would rather walk into the very valley of the shadow of death than bring forth another child, what right have we to withhold from them the knowledge for which they plead? Woman is no longer either the property or the sport of man. She has freed herself from the serfdom of the centuries. She has won for herself many rights, and one of the most sacred is the right of voluntary maternity. Women have every reason to rejoice in this right, for voluntary maternity means a longer life for mothers, it means a continuance of the precious influence of the mother in the life of her children, it means that the mother will have the time and the strength to cultivate those powers that are peculiarly her own, and that, when cultivated, introduce into the world a richness and fragrance and beauty without which we would be deprived of some of our rarest treasures.

**SOCIAL WELFARE IS** the third argument. Twenty years and more in social service teach me that families often become a liability and a burden solely because they grow too large and increase too rapidly. My studies show that many and many a family slips down to the line of need and destitution for the simple reason that too many children are born to parents who have a very limited working and earning capacity. If you ask me how many children are "too many," I answer frankly that no man has a right to have more children than he can adequately feed and clothe and educate. I believe that it is not too much to say that an excessive number of children acts as a heavy weight upon our whole wage earning group. In sections of the country where child labor is allowable, children enter the mills and the factories and the mines not only to be destroyed by conscienceless exploiters of childhood, but to compete with and to lower the wages of their elders. In every section of the country they make it difficult for wage earners to rise to a higher economic level, as they should, to attain new standards of living, as they should, to enjoy the advantages of more leisure, better education, fuller development of mind and spirit, as is their right. The great mass of workers the world over will free themselves much more speedily when they come to see that ignorant and irresponsible procreation only impedes their own advance.

The fourth argument is national and international peace.

(Continued on page 206)

# A Christian Attitude Towards Birth Control

*A Paper Presented at the International Birth Control Conference*

*By Frederick W Betts*

I AM NOT a propagandist for Birth Control. These are the first words I have ever written on this subject for publication. I am a Christian minister. I shall be sixty five my next birthday. On November 1st, I shall have completed thirty three years as pastor of my present parish and church. I did preach a sermon last Mothers' Day on "Motherhood as a Profession". In this sermon I urged that motherhood is, after all is said, the noblest business to which a woman can consecrate herself. But I also said that in order that motherhood may be a profession for women in any profound and satisfactory way, it must be voluntary and not involuntary. A newspaper reporter in the congregation that Sunday smelled a sensation in my remarks, asked for my notes, and published an abstract of my sermon. Such is fame, as ordained in newspaper headlines. I am first of all, above all, a minister of Jesus Christ. I have few illusions about my own faith. I despise the self righteousness of pietists. But I count this ministry my chief joy and blessing in life, except my wife and children, and I am supremely interested in trying so to interpret the Gospel as to make it an inspiration for righteousness.

Yet here I find myself most emphatically out of sympathy with much that passes without question in official and ecclesiastical Christendom. It is an increasing conviction in me that official Christendom is unable or unwilling to face reality regarding some of the most vital matters of conduct and morality. There is an artificial, manufactured public opinion in most ecclesiastical circles, that silences the slightest deviation from the conventional codes. A good illustration is the divorce question. God knows I want men and women to lead pure lives. But God also knows the difference between cant and the eternal truth about life. Official Christendom goes on its way, insisting upon "no divorce", without the courage or the candor, or the honesty to face the miserable truth. How any human being who has made a study of the facts, can find anything in the present state of morality in those countries, where the Church has been able to promulgate "no divorce", to encourage us to go that way, is one of the puzzles of human logic and intelligence. I heard a keen observer and traveler, speaking on another subject, remark of a certain country, from which he had just returned, that rumor there credited the whole population with being ninety per cent afflicted with syphilis. I do not charge this to the church. But in that country there is no divorce, and I submit that from that country we have nothing of importance to learn about how to solve the problem of sexual immorality. There are conditions of human existence inside of what we insist on calling the sacred precincts of the marriage vow, that are as base, as bestial, as degrading as any state of sexual promiscuity that ever existed among barbarians. Why not face the facts? Why go on forever deluding ourselves and salving our consciences by passing codes and prohibitions that are

unworked and unworkable? The reliance of official Christendom upon divorce laws to cure the sexual evils of society is one of those pathetic delusions which mark the history of ecclesiasticism.

This brings us directly to the problem of Birth Control, for this is part of that piece of mind and way of thinking, that has often vitiated and defeated the real influence of the Gospel. I believe in children. I believe in motherhood. I believe that the healthy, married woman who deliberately avoids motherhood is a short sighted fool who is usually preparing for unhappiness. Children and motherhood are the crowning glory of every real home. But, I repeat, and repeat again that motherhood is a blessed state and woman reaches her beatification in motherhood only when the act is voluntary, joyous, the free expression of the deliberate choice of those who must suffer the travail and pain of child birth. Shall we then make it possible for every woman to decide for herself whether she shall become a mother? What a shocking thing to put this choice within the reach of all! What awful things will happen when women are allowed to decide that issue which is the most important in their whole lives! What sexual looseness may we not expect as the result of such information!

WHAT SOLEMN nonsense is all this to one who is familiar with the facts. A few years ago I headed a committee that was the means of wiping out the "segregated district" of a large city. We rounded up at one time over two hundred inmates of the "parlor houses" of this district. These women entertained an average of ten men every week, but none of them ever had any children. I had a friend who was a minister of a great marble church on a beautiful avenue. His Sunday school was preposterously small. I asked him why. He answered that it was not fashionable to have children in that neighborhood. I have a church that has been wonderfully faithful to me in every good work. I wish every minister could be blessed with such a people as I have ministered to for over thirty five years. In that time I have married many of my young people and their children. There have not been five divorces among all my people in all that time. There has been a very high average of happiness in our family life. My people are not childless, but as my attention is called to it, and as I make a careful survey of them all, I discover that the average number of children among all our families is less than two for each home. Are my people unsexed? Are they celibate? Have they denied themselves sexual joy? I do not believe this. They have simply practised Birth Control.

The problem simplifies itself as we proceed. Our ecclesiastical brethren, who insist on condemning any general spread of information or education concerning Birth Control, do



not seem to understand that half of society is already familiar with the thing they would deny them. Almost certainly the vast majority of the people to whom these brethren minister are practising Birth Control. If the ministers themselves and their wives are not practising it, they are either celibates or eunuchs. This does not lessen my respect for them, but it does raise the question when are we to out with this hypocrisy which makes so many professional moralists a laughing stock for honest men who face the facts of sex relations courageously and candidly. The immoral, the self indulgent, the prudential, the intelligent are, most of them, practising Birth Control. Even the moral and the decent are most of them in this class. It is the same old story. We deny the poor, the ignorant, the knowledge which we use. For ten years I have been in charge of the work of a group of public spirited men who furnish money for working among the children of the poor. It is among the poor that we meet this problem of Birth Control at every turn. What little they know about this, and what little they practise of it, filters into their minds through the sluices of society or the miserable practise of cheap abortionists. I am not so certain of my own infallibility as to undertake to settle this problem, but a few things are clear to me. Sexual desire is elemental. When nature and God made man, they staked the perpetuity of the race on the potency of this desire. So elemental is it that all that time and that teaching and that literature devoted to its repression and denial are wasted. Sexual desire laughs at codes and smiles at the ignorance of moralists who are unwilling to reckon with it intelligently and patiently.

**A**S BETWEEN THE whispered insinuation, the corrupting breath, the rotten sources of secret information, such as multitudes depend on now, and a careful, patient, open education concerning Birth Control, there is but one choice for those whose morality is real and not conventional. Let us have light. Let us have our instruction and information in broad daylight from those educators and doctors who do not deal in the poison of evil suggestion or insinuation. When the critics of Birth Control convince us that they are not practising what they condemn in others, we shall have more confidence in their advice. But not even that would convince us that the present system of Birth Control, based as it is on what information stewes up from the gutter, out of licentious minds or from remedies confidentially dealt in by medical quacks, is preferable to some method of information that comes from untainted sources.

Again I say that motherhood is the noblest profession of womanhood. The woman, who under decent circumstances denies herself this responsibility and this experience, is denying herself the joy and blessedness which, in spite of pain and care, have crowned womanhood as divine in Mary and in all the consecrated mothers of the world. But motherhood can bring this joy, this crown, only when it is in an ecstasy and not a cursed martyrdom. Morality and religion have everything to gain and nothing to lose by getting back to reality, beginning with facts, and building codes and

ideals, on the freedom, the choice, the glad desire of womanhood which finds in motherhood the finest and divinest expression of its own personality. The world needs every child that is born of such an experience. The others it can get along without until they too can be born right.

#### PRESS CLIPPINGS

**TOKIO, AUGUST 26** (Correspondence of the Associated Press) —The question of how to dispose of Japan's surplus population, ever present with the Japanese Government, is more acute than ever this year owing to the large increase in unemployment. There is room in the Japanese colonies and in Hokkaido, the comparatively new agricultural country on the northern island of that name, where the soil and the climate are much like that of Northwestern America, and where cattle, cereals and fruits are successfully grown.

The majority of Japanese who wish to leave the main island of Japan, in spite of these advantages, are always seeking assistance to do so. In addition, the Government and the colonization companies are faced with the fact that in the countries bordering on the Pacific the Japanese immigrant is unpopular, and they have to look elsewhere for new homes for their people.

At a recent conference of officials of the home, foreign and agricultural departments, it was decided to encourage migration to Hokkaido and other outlying portions of the empire and to ask for a grant to assist emigrants to go to South America, which is regarded by officials as the most suitable destination for them. —*New York Times*

**PORTLAND, ORE., Sept 15**—The House of Bishops put itself on record this afternoon as against Birth Control. This was a feature of a report by the Joint Commission on Home and Family Life presented by Bishop Moreland of Sacramento, Cal. It is one of the few reports which so far have gone through without discussion.

"This commission," said the report, "heartily indorses the warning uttered by the great Lambeth conference of Bishops in 1920, gathered from all over the world, against the practice of means for the avoidance of conception as involving grave dangers to physical health, as well as moral innocence, and threatening the future of the human race."

"We make our own the words of the Conference Committee as applying in particular to the United States. Where family life is dishonored, wedded unfaithfulness lightly regarded, parental responsibility neglected, filial respect and obedience slighted, there, we may be sure, society is rotten at the core. We tremble for the future of a State or nation where lax theories concerning domestic life gain ground. Even laxer practice will certainly prevail."

"The remedy for the frightful dissolution of the marriage tie going on in America and its inevitable consequence of race suicide is to be found in Christian training alone." —*New York Times*



MAYBE IF THEY DIDN'T HAVE SO MANY OF THEM MORE OF THEM WOULD TURN OUT BETTER"

—By courtesy of Collier's The National Weekly

## The Cry of Oppressed Motherhood

*Letters from Mothers Who Suffer for Lack of Knowledge*

Again we present to our readers a small selection from the many letters that continually come to us from women enslaved to involuntary motherhood. Willing motherhood sets woman on the highest pinnacle of bliss, and entitles her to the honor paid her by painter, sculptor and poet. But motherhood forced on a woman against her will, her judgement and her conscience degrades her body and soul and inflicts on her the torments of the damned. What right has Society to decree that woman shall not free herself through reason and knowledge from chains which debase and degrade the high function, committed to her, of carrying on the life of the race? The nation needs her cooperation to solve the problems of race deterioration and the multiplication of the unfit. She is ready to give her aid. In the name of the unhappy mothers of this Free Land, and for the sake of future America, we ask the help of every reader in the work of making legal and accessible the knowledge of Birth Control.

My dear Mrs. Sanger

I have just finished "Woman and the New Race," and was so interested in its vital message, I could not stop reading until I had completed the book. It is certainly a message to the thinking women of America to urge more just legislation

and to teach our less fortunate sisters. I have always been a firm believer and advocate of Birth Control, but, alas, I have not the essential knowledge. I understand the sexual functions thoroughly, having studied advanced biology, but have never received the desired information about contraceptives. I am absolutely opposed to abortion, from a moral standpoint, but I feel that it is every woman's right to limit her family by preventing conception.

I am a college woman and the wife of a teacher. We have two lovely boys, aged five and two years. I do not feel that we will be able to give more children the college education or the business advantages that we desire for them,—a teacher's salary is notoriously small. We have the means to care for our two comfortably, and I have sufficient time for their proper care and training, but, with more, the outlook would not be so bright and my home, now so dear to me, might become a place of drudgery. So I have joined the thousands searching for a reliable safeguard against unwelcome babies.

I am a member of a woman's civic organization and a study club, and will be glad to use my small amount of influence with them, for the purpose of better legislation regarding contraceptive information.

My dear Mrs Sanger

I was married on February 12, 1919, and my first baby was born on January 12, 1920. The second one was born on March 25, 1921, and now I am living in constant fear that there will be one every year. Where or how can I obtain information as to a harmless and certain means of preventing conception? I sent for your book, "Woman and the New Race," in hopes that I would get some help, but of course, got none. One of the magazines, I think it was Pictorial Review, printed a paragraph stating that the New York Federation of Women's Clubs is working for the repeal of that law which prevents us getting that information. When will we know whether or not they are successful?

I was born and brought up in New York City and how I wish that I could have attended that clinic in Brooklyn!

I am the oldest of a family of eight, and my husband also comes of a family of eight. We don't want that size family ourselves, because we've seen the drudgery, the striving to make ends meet, that such a family brings. Everything is so high now that even the two we have make it difficult for us.

We are not what you would call poor but I never waste a cent. I have bought no new clothes since I was married, and my husband has bought only one suit, so you can see it isn't because we are selfish or extravagant that we don't want any more children. It is because we really can't afford them, if we are to give these two a better education than we had ourselves.

When I look at some of the large families in my neighborhood and see their untidy homes, I shudder. Yet it is impossible for one pair of hands to do all the work required. I have no leisure now, and my feet are so tired at night that I'm glad to fall into bed. That isn't living! When I think of having any more babies, I feel as if death would be preferable.

My dear Mrs Sanger

Just today I received your book "Woman and the New Race" and already have read practically all of it, but am as much at sea as before. Both my husband and myself heartily agree with your ideas, but still we are as helpless as before.

We have all the children we can care for now, in fact we have a new baby boy only four weeks old, who was ordered and a mighty welcome guest, but to add another child to our family would not be giving our children we have now a fair chance, as our financial income is limited.

We are a wonderfully happy family and without the slightest trace of disease anywhere. We wish to continue to be happy and I feel sure that a little personal advice from you will make our happiness everlasting. Won't you be kind enough to write me, giving me enough specific scientific information that I may prevent further conception until at such time we can afford another baby in our home.

Dear Mrs Sanger

A friend sent me your book *Woman and the New Race* and I can't resist writing to you and asking for information and advice. I am the mother of three fine children, the oldest just passed four years, the youngest thirteen months, and I am several months pregnant with the fourth. I have had good health, but I feel it failing and it worries me. We are very poor and cannot afford to hire proper help at confinement times, and it is very hard to get help here. We have to work hard and long hours so we have little or no time to spend training our children, and when I think of my own life—the twelfth child in a family of thirteen raised in poverty and ignorance, I feel that I would use any means to prevent bringing more children into the world to be raised as I was raised. I want to do what is right, but if I cannot find a contraceptive I will practise abortion if it kills me. So won't you please help me?

Dear Mrs Sanger

I saw an advertisement of a book on Birth Control and I sent right away for a copy. It is a Godsend to me. I am a mother of nine living children. I have suffered untold agony, not only at childbirth but while carrying them. My doctor knows how I suffer these last years and he has said that if I keep on having children so fast it will kill me. I have asked him to help me, but he will not do it. I work very hard during the day and nursing a four months old baby at night nearly kills me. I am just as tired when I get up as I am when I go to bed. We are nothing but poor people, and are not able to take care of these children as they ought to be cared for. Please tell me what to do.

Dear Mrs Sanger

I have read your book *Woman and the New Race* and heartily approve every word in it, and after much hesitation have decided to write to you personally. I am a member of a family of twelve children, and we are every one victims of tuberculosis. One of my brothers and three of my sisters have already died from it. I have been married two and a half years and my second child is three months old, and very weakly, being sick all the time. I lost my oldest at 14 months old, and I don't believe my baby will live that long. I dearly love children, but I don't believe it is right to bring little diseased children into the world to suffer and die, beside I am very weak and don't think I can stand to have many more. I kept my husband away from me for six months when my first baby was born, and have kept him away since my last came, but I can't keep him away from me always. If I tried it would cause discord, perhaps separation. I love my husband and I want to treat him right, and he is awfully good to me and we could be very happy if only we knew how to prevent having so many children. My doctor told me I could not stand to have another child for several years, but still he wouldn't tell me how to prevent it—only to stay away from my husband, and you know that is almost if not quite impossible. Mrs Sanger can't you find some way to help me. I am poor but I would give anything I possess to know some safe and sure way.

# Consumation—The Story of a Woman's Soul

By Percy Norwood Stone

**S**TREET SMELLS pushed their heavy way through the single inadequate window. From the hallway came the indefinable but disgusting air of a house with limited plumbing. Inside the room they clashed, then mingled with the odoriferous steam from a pot of boiling cabbage. The combination was a perfume nauseating to nose governed stomachs unused to tenement attack. To persons olfactorially accustomed to the scent it was—and is—the aroma of home. On days when no cabbage was spreading its fetid incense, onions or garlic proved a sufficient substitute. Cooking smells, blending unwholesomely with the thick atmosphere of hall and street identified the room for habituated noses.

Before the boiling cabbage stood a woman. Her hair was flat and drab, as any hair would be if weeks of housework were not interrupted by washing. The hair was dirty—unmistakably dirty. Two unmated bone pins kept most of it away from a damp face, though stiff bunches regularly slumped from her forehead over her eyes. Her body was graceless. A soiled blouse, held in front by three buttons still clinging where once there were eight, was intended to be a covering for the grayed underwear that showed its ribbed harshness through gaps below her breasts. A torn petticoat was fastened under the exposed bottom of the blouse. Through a tear in this skirt appeared an old corset string gartering her stocking just below the knee. Her shoes were replicas of those seen shriveling to hardness on a street neglected by the garbage man.

The woman's face accorded with the monotone of her body. Sweat had moistened it, but the regular wiping away of the perspiration—an operation which included shoving back the sticky sprouts of hair from her eyes—failed to make it clean. Sunken eyes, unlighted by any hope, weak, drooping mouth—the mouth and eyes showed spiritless resignation, although occasionally they struggled into a short lived, pitiable determination.

The ebullient cabbage and sputtering meat were presently drowned out by the wail of an infant. The woman, turning her head, looked at the baby lying on a blanket in the corner of the room closest to the window.

"Annie," shouted the woman into the darkness of the hallway.

But Annie didn't answer. The woman shoved the frying meat away from the flame. With almost one movement she opened her waist at the top—the only place it had been closed—and wiped away the sweat from her face as she turned to the baby. She lifted the child, pulled her breast above the loose, gray undershirt and let the infant suck. The resulting deglutition made crying impossible, so the woman, with the babe hazardingly held under one arm, pulled the meat back to the fire.

**A** MAN CAME IN. He looked towards the stove, his eyes for what was cooking there, not for the nursing mother. He said nothing.

As dinner was being placed upon the bare table not far from the stove, three children came into the room. They were dirty from the streets where they had been trying to play. They talked a bit among themselves, but said nothing to their parents. Nor did their parents say anything to them, except when the mother told Annie, the oldest of the three, to put the baby back on its blanket.

There had been a quarrel that morning between the man and woman. The children always refrained from conversation on days that started that way. The quarrels were frequent, generally being suspended in the same masculine monologue.

"Get to hell out o' here if you don't like it," the man had said as he picked up his lunch bucket and went out of the door. The woman had not answered. She had listened to that remark dozens of times. All clashes, it seemed, ended just that way.

Flies glutted themselves on the bread and on the cooling fat from the meat. They were undisturbed except when one of the grimed hands reached for another thick slice of bread. The meat had all gone at the first helping—the father taking most of it before the others reached with their forks into the black pan.

Occasionally during the short meal the woman looked at the man as though she were about to speak. But she said nothing. Nor did the man. His only noise was an animal sound as he suctioned in his food. Finished, he pawed his mouth, cleaned a diseased tooth by the use of his fore finger, and moved his chair to the window. His form there blocked most of the opening. The children, having done their bit in cleaning the dishes, went back to the street. The woman changed the single cloth that was wrapped about the baby, washed the one she had removed, and sat at the table.

"Let's go to the movies," she finally said.

"Too damned hot," was his answer.

**A**CROSS THE FILTHY COURT below the window a young girl was getting ready to keep a date. The reality of the picture he saw was more interesting than the movies. More interesting, too, though no more real, than the view behind him. He pulled his chair back from the window just a little that he might not attract the gaze of the disrobing girl, so reminding her of the unclosed blind. While his interest was centered on the sight before him, the mind of the mother was elsewhere, though, in a way, they pondered on the same human question.

"Just like I told you last night, we can't have any more kids." The woman interrupted the phantasy the man was dreaming.

"And just like I said, what did you marry me for?" was the man's retort.

"If you was the woman, standing for what I've stood for, you'd think the same like I do"

There was no spirit in the woman's voice, no more than there was in the slouching body that sat limply at the table

"There ain't going to be no more babies for me You can do what you please There ain't going to be any"

"Aw, you're nutty"

The girl across the way had finished her toilet The man turned to face the woman In the dusk he could hardly see her The darkness took away the unattractiveness and left just a woman to be shaped and clothed by imagination

"You're nutty And I'm getting sick of this talk And the way you act, too It ain't a picnic for me to work and then hear your crabbing all night Shut up"

The woman did shut up It was a quarter of an hour before she said

"Well, there ain't going to be no more"

The man's mind had drifted back to the girl across the court, now gone to keep her date He didn't like the interruption He wouldn't have liked any interruption from the woman

"Aw, for Christ's sake, lay off that You make me sick You married me didn't you? And you knew what it meant, too, didn't you? I guess you knew too much There ain't no use belly aching about it If you don't like it here, get to hell out If there's much more of this noise, I'll get out myself"

**T**HE CHILDREN CAME up to go to bed They unfolded a blanket, spread it on the floor, and naked lay down The man knocked the ashes from his pipe, took off his clothes and pulling the bed close to the window spread himself out on it The woman sat at the table, looking at her hands

Somewhere in the dusk, hanging on the wall, was a marriage certificate The glass in front of it was fly specked and dusty In recent years it had missed the careful attention given it before Marriage had become too much of a reality for this printed proof to arouse any pleasant interest But the woman's eyes were raised from her hands to stare through the dark at the spot where hung the parchment

There were but two things that came to her mind One of them was continuing on as she was The other was suicide More and more often of late the thought of ending her life had come to her The bestial life under which she was suffering urged her on An inherent fright of the unknown fought the suggestion She knew but little of religion It was not that which held her back. Instead, some instinct always intercepted—an instinct that revolted against self destruction There was no conscious thought of the children already born Gone was whatever maternal instinct she might have had in the struggle following her marriage six years before There had been seven children born Three had died She wanted no more She felt certain that suicide

would end it if ever she were pregnant again Even fear of death would be conquered by that There was no love for her husband There never had been much A youthful animal, tired of clerking in a dry goods store, she had married the first man who asked her Romance had been short

"Come on to bed," her husband ordered

"I think I'll sleep here at the table," she answered

The bed squeaked as he sat up

"Like the devil you will Get off your clothes and come here" There was a threat in every word

"I won't do it," she said slowly in a dull voice

"You won't, huh? We'll see about that"

His bare feet struck the floor with a thud The woman stood up behind her chair He walked up to her snarling

"We'll damned soon see Get over there

Without emotion she said "No"

The children on the floor quieted from their tossing and listened The man lit the gas They looked

"Turn over, all of you," he snapped

They turned their faces to the hot wall

The woman didn't cower She just stood where she was, unresisting, unmilitant The man grabbed her by the arm and pulled her to the bed

"Now, damn you, undress and get in there"

She did There were no sobs, no words

Sometime later, when the man was asleep, the woman got up She felt her way in the dark to where she kept the big knife She found it She lifted it to her breast Then she dropped her arm The courage wasn't there For the first time since her husband had forced her to bed, she sobbed She sunk to the floor, buried her head on her arms and wept For fifteen minutes her naked body shook on the floor Then she forced herself to rise She walked slowly to the bed, lay down and slept

**W**E STOPPED to see Adam Yonolovic, who lives on Cusick Street It is a nice clean frame house, and old Adam himself, who is sixty years old, was sitting out on the porch, smoking a clay pipe

He called his fifteen year old daughter Anna, who keeps house for the family of seven children, and she invited us in Last year Adam had his arm smashed in the mine He received compensation for four months, and then was told he would have to go back to work He couldn't move the injured arm, so he had to get a job in the breaker, just like the little boys who begin there

"Sometimes I think I'll be following my mother to the insane asylum where she is put," Anna said "When my father brings home just \$13 in two weeks how can I get along? We had a few hundred dollars saved, but with my father sick and all, now we got nothing Gee, I was going to go to high school and everything, but it's all I can do to keep the kids dressed good enough to go"

The baby of the family is now four years old, and besides the seven living children there are six who died as babies —Sketches of Striking Miners' Families, *Daily News*, Aug 16

# The Church and Birth Control

By Rudolph I Coffee, Ph D

THESE LINES ARE written before the Protestant Episcopal convention has convened in Portland, Oregon. They are penned as a reply to newspaper statements that strong action will be taken in condemnation of Birth Control at the conference. Our question is why should men and women there assembled go out of their way to stultify the church and brand its leaders as hopeless reactionaries?

One pressing matter before this convention is the prayer book, now used for the past three hundred and seventy years. The conference will vote on eliminating that part of the marriage service which compels the woman to promise that she will "obey" her husband. No self-respecting woman can or will honestly promise that, and how any equally self-respecting minister of the church can ask such a question continues to puzzle us. Another equally mediaeval matter, with which the convention will wrestle, concerns the Jews. At present the prayer book asks for God's mercy on them, together with Turks, infidels and heathens. Broad-minded men in the conference realize that such a prayer is hardly in keeping with brother love as taught in the twentieth century and will move to substitute less objectionable wording. For the sake of the fine men and women within this church, we hope that progressive thought will prevail and quickly excise these evidences of outworn theology.

Another resolution seeks to revise and shorten the wording of the Ten Commandments. If Americans can be made to obey these fundamental laws, by abbreviating their length, no one should object. We agree that the third commandment is redundant, and the fourth could lose its qualifying phrases, while the reward offered in the fifth might possibly be omitted, but we emphatically object to any change in the second commandment. Whether the Protestant Episcopal Conference likes it or not, God *does* visit "the sins of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me, and show mercy unto the thousandth generation of them that love Me and keep My commandments" (Exodus XX, 5-6). Instead of wiping out, this great body should emphasize these words and tell the whole world that they refer to the deadly ravages of venereal disease. Here is the very sanction for the church to teach social hygiene and sex education, and no better text is needed to explain the dangers of ignoring the laws of Nature. These words deny that a young man may with impunity sow his "wild oats." Whether this powerful assembly of citizens at Portland will retain or omit the concluding words of the second commandment, its delegates may rest assured that God's law will continue to function without favor, with death for those who refuse to heed. There must be but a single standard of morality and a militant church of all religious bodies should lead in teaching this lesson.

\*As foreshadowed here the Convention condemned Birth Control, though evidently without any real understanding of the subject.

ALL OF THESE changes, however, are of minor consideration when compared with the subject of Birth Control. Whether or not a Protestant Episcopal woman promises to "obey" her husband, the position of woman today will rapidly continue to approach that of total equality to man. The twentieth amendment to the Constitution, with woman being made equal before the law to man, is not far off. Jews will continue to serve humanity and our blessed America to the best of their ability, whether the prayer book continues to list them with other undesirables or not, and whatever action is taken on abridging the ten Commandments, their truths will be as fundamental tomorrow as yesterday.

But with Birth Control it is quite different. Here is a fundamental and vital principle of life seeking public recognition. True the Bible command says "Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth and subdue it" (Genesis I, 28), but these words were spoken to Adam and Eve when the world lacked population. Today, the universe seeks not quantity but quality. Population is increasing very rapidly, and building sufficient houses as well as providing enough food for our increasing millions are pressing problems. Theodore Roosevelt made a grievous mistake when he wrote against "race suicide," and his later silence on this subject would indicate that he recognized his error. President Harding rendered a disservice last year when he congratulated the poor father of a family of seventeen children, thereby encouraging large rather than select families. We, who stand for Birth Control, prefer that children should come into the world by choice and not by chance. We plead for intelligence in the rearing of wanted children. And realizing the power over its church members of the conference, we hope it will not deliberately oppose itself to sane and sensible child-rearing propaganda.

We should like every delegate who votes against Birth Control to stand up and state the number of children in his family. Ministers of well-to-do congregations are not blessed with large families, and we are confident that most of the delegates voting against Birth Control have for years practiced it in their own lives. Why not help the poor people, who most need it, to this valuable information? If the members lack the daring to openly square their votes with their lives, let them ignore the subject altogether. The Protestant Episcopal church did precious little to end the iniquitous twelve-hour day in the Pennsylvania coal mines, and it continues to this day, despite many prominent church leaders whose influence could have strengthened the miners' appeal. How much has it aided the fight to end child labor? When there are so many economic problems, on which we all agree, calling for church assistance, why should the delegates invite trouble by condemning a principle, old but now seeking public recognition? If the assembled delegates cannot openly favor Birth Control, at least let them preserve a dignified—and discreet—silence.

# The Problem of The Unfit

By Horatio M Pollock, Ph D

*A Paper Presented at the International Birth Control Conference*

THE DIVERSE ELEMENTS comprising human society have been roughly placed into two groups, namely, "life givers" and "life takers." To the former group belong the intelligent, industrious, thrifty and generous people who do the work of the world and carry its burdens, to the latter group belong those who fail to a greater or lesser degree in meeting their responsibilities and become dependent in part at least on the former group. Life givers are the promoters and upbuilders of civilization, life takers block the wheels of progress and undermine the foundations laid by the life givers.

Life givers may be rich or poor, or of high or of low rank. It is not their possessions or their position or station that counts, but, rather, their personal contribution to human welfare. An autocrat who lives in luxury and rules unwisely and unjustly is a life taker of the grossest sort, while a humble artisan who does useful work in a skillful way is a life giver and is entitled to the respect and gratitude of his fellow men. Life givers of genius like Jesus and Buddha who are able to work out universal principles governing human relations, or like Pasteur and Edison who search out the secrets of nature, represent mankind at its highest and best. Through their efforts the whole human race of the present and future is made richer and happier.

The life takers are not a homogeneous group but are composed of many types. Some are intelligent and well educated, but lack tact and adaptability, some are temperate, but also lazy and shiftless, some are rich through inheritance, but useless and vicious, some are religious, but lack capacity and initiative, many others are alcoholic, feeble-minded, psychopathic or delinquent. All are parasitic to some degree and therefore are to be counted as unfit for independent existence. A considerable part of the life takers might become useful by proper treatment, the others constitute a hopeless assortment of wrecks. The latter group of defectives and incurables are the big problem with which we must deal. Destroy them we must not, reform them we cannot, care for them we must, whether we like it or not.

With the influx of the population into cities the care of the mentally defective and the insane in homes has become less practicable and consequently institution care is fast displacing home care. The burden of support of these classes is also being rapidly shifted from the family to the state. In states and countries where a high standard of institution care has been provided, the rate of increase of insane in institutions has far exceeded the rate of increase of population. Most state hospitals in America are now crowded far beyond their capacity. State care of mental defectives is usually limited to the lowest grades and there are always more applicants for admission than can be accommodated. Apparently the burden

of both the chronic insane and the mentally defective is continually becoming heavier.

Is the problem then hopeless? Must we go on building institutions to house a continually increasing number of the unfit? Must the products of the thrifty and industrious be forever depleted to supply the non-productive? Must the general level of society always be kept down by the mixture of disintegrating elements?

Many measures for temporary relief are being advocated. Among the more promising of these may be mentioned the careful study and supervision of school children, the organization of special classes for abnormal pupils, systematic vocational guidance for children who leave school early, mental clinics, and psychopathic hospitals for the early treatment of incipient mental disorders, special institutions for defective delinquents, colonies for high grade mental defectives where they may become self-supporting, and occupational therapy along productive lines for the mentally and physically sick.

THESE, WITH BETTER laws regulating the production and distribution of wealth, should do much to improve conditions, but I see no hope for permanent relief unless society awakens to a full realization of the situation and becomes willing to cast aside some of the prevailing rules and regulations relative to the procreation of the race. It is commonly observed that at the present time much more intelligence and wisdom are exercised in breeding domestic animals and plants than in propagating the human species. The latter is very largely a haphazard matter. Under our present marriage laws there is no opportunity to conserve in large measure for the benefit of the race the capacity, vigor and moral and physical beauty of specially gifted men and women. On the other hand, practically nothing can now be done to check the rapid multiplication of inferior stocks.

In spite of the rapid advancement of science and practical arts of the past half century, in spite of the general extension of institutions of learning, in spite of the higher standards of living and the improved conservation of life, there is practically no evidence that the human race is improving physically, mentally or morally. How could it improve under present methods of propagation? The few eugenic marriages of recent years are more than offset by the many matings of defectives. We have no racial ideals, no standards of selection. We know enough of the laws of heredity to give us a basis for definite measures for race improvement but apathy and social and religious customs have thus far prevented any concerted action in this direction.

"AS YE SOW, so shall ye reap", was a common observation many thousand years ago. This great biological principle has been used with marked success in the raising of grains

and vegetables, cows and horses, but practically not at all in the raising of men

What does it profit us to advance in the arts of civilization if the human race is to deteriorate? What avail physics and chemistry if their discoveries are to be used for destructive purposes? Advanced civilization demands highly developed men and women with strong moral purposes. Without these it cannot endure.

What we need is both positive and negative Birth Control, positive Birth Control to insure the reproduction of men and women with superior gifts, and negative Birth Control to prevent the reproduction of the unfit.

It is time to cast aside precedents, prejudices and laws that stand in the way of racial progress and to take a decided stand for race improvement. Mental defectives and psychopaths should not be permitted to procreate, and negative Birth Control should be encouraged among inferior stocks. Society is fully justified in using close supervision, segregation or sterilization whenever necessary to prevent reproduction among the markedly unfit. Aggressive measures will be necessary to accomplish desired results.

We can never expect to be entirely free from the burden of the unfit, but by taking thought we can lighten the burden for ourselves and future generations. The emphasis must be continually placed on the prevention of disease and defect. The laws of physical and mental hygiene must become common knowledge and must be observed in the rearing of children. Venereal diseases must be stamped out. Sentiments that stand in the way of health and social safety must be disregarded. The knowledge of how to live that has been gained through many years of study must be diligently applied for the benefit of the race.

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## THE CONTROL OF PARENTHOOD

(Continued from page 197)

It is difficult to study the history of India and China and not come to the conclusion that much of the misery of these unhappy countries is the result of centuries of uncontrolled breeding of children. Excessive increase of population means periodic visitation of famine and plague and the horrible custom of infanticide. It is difficult to study world history and escape the conviction that over population is often the cause and more frequently an excuse for war. In 1914 Germany demanded more territory to accommodate her people. Today Japan is seeking a section of China and Siberia in order to care for the Japanese who overflow the island empire. The hollowness of her position is found, of course, in her desire to pour a part of her surplus population into China, which is already over populated. If we can restrict the population of each country of the world to a reasonable limit, we may not end war, but we shall at least remove one of the excuses and causes of international conflict. It is for this reason that I have come to have more faith in Mrs Sanger's visit to Japan and China and India than in the visit of our statesmen to Washington or Genoa or the Hague.

THE FINAL ARGUMENT is that Birth Control vouchsafes us some measure of control over the future. We have not hesitated to extend our control over nature, we do our utmost to bend nature to our use, we have not hesitated to extend our control over vegetation, for decades we have been experimenting with seeds and plants and flowers. We have not hesitated to extend our control over the animal kingdom, for centuries we have watched the breeding of sheep and cattle and horses, and within recent years we have turned breeding into a science. In truth, we seem to be more concerned about the racial development of bugs and beasts than about the racial destiny of man. It is possible through Birth Control to relieve ourselves and society of many imperfections, it is possible through Birth Control to free ourselves for the realization of those splendid visions that summon us from time to time to vaster enterprises and loftier levels of spiritual culture. Those who feel a passion for finer realms of thought and conduct and comradeship find in Birth Control an instrument of exceeding promise and power.

No movement that can do these things, no movement that can guard the child, preserve the mother, relieve the extent and pressure of social distress, remove one of the excuses and causes of war, no movement that can invest us with the power to determine to some degree the character of posterity, that can teach us to so control our creative instincts that we shall create not suffering and sorrow, but joy and beauty, a world in which each baby will be wanted and welcomed and cherished, can be anything but moral.

YOU may say children are from God. I reply, so is the cholera. I suppose you are here, among other things, to determine when and how God's laws shall operate.

—REV R HAWES



## Book Reviews

### A Review by Dr Aaron J Rosanoff

BISEXUAL LOVE THE HOMOSEXUAL NEUROSIS By Dr William Stekel English translation by James S Van Treslaar, M.D Boston, Richard G Badger 1922

There is a bit of current gossip among psychoanalysts which alleges that Freud, in exasperation, once explained to a small circle of his disciples, 'Will some one please sublimate Stekel for me!' The truth of this I am not in a position to vouch for, but a reading of the book under review would soon convince one of its plausibility. When one considers that neither psychoanalysts as a group nor Freud as their leader are squeamish—as prevailing standards go—about discussing matters of sex, then it can readily be understood why this book of Stekel's is for sale only to members of the medical profession.

One copy was sent me for review by the Editor of THE BIRTH CONTROL REVIEW but it never reached me. May be the post office authorities are keeping tabs on the manner of its distribution. A second copy sent direct to me by the publisher reached me promptly.

The book is devoted to a study of human homosexuality. Detailed histories of the authors and other investigators' cases are cited and an attempt is made to formulate a theory of the nature of homosexuality on the basis of this material.

The question principally considered is: How much of homosexual behavior is traceable to inherited or inborn constitution and how much to environmental influences? It can hardly be said to have been answered either by Stekel or by his predecessors, whose works are referred to. The available facts are most difficult to analyse into measurable elements and an unequivocal conclusion could hardly be drawn from them.

Stekel may be right in disagreeing with Krafft-Ebing, Havelock Ellis, Albert Moll, Magnus Hirschfeld, Iwan Bloch, and others, who rather arbitrarily assert homosexuality to be inborn and he is perhaps also right in saying that, "All persons originally are bisexual in their predisposition" and that, "There are no monosexual persons" (i.e., exclusively either heterosexual or homosexual). But it would seem that he is equally arbitrary in his conclusion that homosexuality, as well as heterosexuality, arises out of bisexuality and is wholly determined by environmental conditions, for the most part in childhood but occasionally also in later life.

The criticism I should offer of Stekel's manner of dealing with data is that he, like many others, seems to be fundamentally lacking the quantitative view point, which, of course, is the essence of scientific method.

For instance why should he assume, as apparently he does, that bisexuality implies no variation, as between different individual, in relative strengths of its hetero- and homo-sexual components? Instead of taking for granted that the distribution is always 50-50, should not one rather consider the possibility that, for either component the relative strength may be anywhere from a fraction of one per cent to nearly one hundred per cent? Similarly, granting *a priori* the influence of environment, why assume that in all cases it must be either all determining or wholly negligible, and develop the discussion on that basis as Stekel does? Is there not a third alternative? Is it not possible that all cases are not the same and that the relative part played by either of the two etiological elements—inborn and environmental—may also be from a fraction of one per cent to nearly one hundred per cent?

Such variations would seem, indeed, almost certain, from analogy with all the more readily observed and measured biological properties of structure and function.

Moreover, although we are dealing, in this particular connection, with data which cannot easily be subject to exact measurement, yet a more scientific attitude might have enabled Stekel to size them up roughly in a quantitative way and thus be guarded against extreme dogmatism.

### A Review by Dr C C Little

GENETICS By Herbert Eugene Walter The Macmillan Company, N Y \$2.25

Doctor Walter's new book on Genetics represents not only an enlargement but almost a complete revision and reorganization as compared with his former book on the same subject.

Being as he is, an excellent teacher and free from a close entanglement with experimental genetics, he is in a position to act as an open minded critic and to make use of his special abilities in order to present the subject in a way which is interesting to laymen. Thus he succeeds in a notable measure in doing. The first part of the book dealing with the broader questions of variation, heritable differences, and acquired characters, takes up three matters well known to any intelligent reader of the broader biological literature. In presenting them, Doctor Walter uses with great success diagrammatic methods of visualization which add greatly to the clarity of his text.

The experimental evidence, which during the past fifteen years has been accumulated in enormous amounts concerning the methods of inheritance in domestic plants and animals forms a considerable proportion of the foundation of modern biology and is given the extensive and dignified consideration which it deserves. A chapter on Mendelism which forms the first of this group takes up Mendel's own work and extends it to various of the earlier and well known examples such as coat color in rodents, and hair color and shape in humans. Following this is a discussion of the pure line hypothesis and the effects of selection. The "Law" of Galton is reviewed and it is shown how the later work of Johannsen and others have furnished us with an interpretation of troublesome cases which is consistent with simple Mendelian results.

A chapter has been given to the Factor Hypothesis which, with students of biology, holds quite as important a position as would the table of chemical elements to the chemist. By using a consistent method of visualization Doctor Walter is able to lead the reader from the observed to the theoretical aspect of this subject without any break or difficulty. In doing this, the examples are drawn largely from mammals, thus adding to the interest of the reader.

Blending inheritance another stumbling block to Mendelists, is also taken up. The examples of this relatively complicated group of cases are clearly and interestingly supplemented with a series of diagrams. In the final chapter of this 'experimental' group, a discussion of Reversion and Atavism is given and the distinction between the two is brought up.

The next matters of major importance to be considered are the carriers of the heritage and the architecture of the germ cells. In the two chapters dealing with these subjects are contained many of the main points which have served to give the chromosome hypothesis of inheritance the prominent position that it now holds. The fascination of this topic has evidently seized the author and has by him been transferred to the reader most successfully. He has, with simplicity and sustained enthusiasm, recorded the chief results obtained by the modern representatives of this school. Inasmuch as the work done represents probably the greatest contribution by Americans to Biological Science for half a century or longer it is of great interest to all.

Development and emergence of bodily structures from hereditary sources is then taken up. The longer of the two chapters on these topics deals with a matter of the greatest popular interest, namely, the determination of sex. The viewpoint taken is the one most widely prevalent at present, namely, that sex is intimately connected with the number and type of chromosomes, thus resembling all other bodily characters. The cases of sex-linked inheritance are gone into with considerable detail and the matter of secondary sexual characters is brought up in connection with the nature and function of hormone action.

The final chapters deal with the application of genetic theory and principles in the case of man. In dealing with this matter

the author shows an understanding, unhappily altogether too rare, of the relative importance of the experimental and applied viewpoints of his science

There is no comparison between a well judged presentation of the experimental and human aspects of genetics such as that given by Doctor Walter and the more frequent type of long winded books on Eugenics containing a multiplicity of theory and speculation with a trace of fact or experimental basis for conclusions. Approximately seven eighths of Doctor Walter's book is devoted to the experimental aspects of the fields of genetics but since the treatment is both clear and interesting and since the viewpoint is broad and the illustrations many and aptly chosen, the layman need have no hesitation in approaching Doctor Walter's book with the feeling that time and effort put into its reading and study will prove to be well spent

### A Review by M J Exner, M D

SAFE COUNSEL by B G Jeffries and J L Nichols, J L Nichols Company Nashville III

The book 'Safe Counsel' by Dr B G Jeffries and J L Nichols is clearly an effort to put a new patch on an old garment, in which the results are not very happy. The book was first published in 1893. The present revision is apparently an attempt to bring an old and very poor book somewhat in line with modern knowledge and opinion on the complex subject of sex in order to make the book still salable.

The book is a curious hash of sex matter, a little being said on a lot of subjects to make filling. It consists in large measure of platitudinous stuff which to the untutored layman may have sound if not substance.

A bad feature of the book is the fact that it addresses itself to young and old of both sexes. It is pedagogically vicious. It is one of the many popular crude sex books which do much to hinder progress in sex social education.

A fairly sound section of the book under the title 'The Story of Life' prepared by Dr Ozora S Davis, President of the Chicago Theological Seminary and Dr Emma F A Drake, does not redeem the book as a whole. It is amazing that a man of the position of Dr Davis should permit himself to collaborate in the publication of so poor conglomerate a volume on a vital subject.

## PERIODICALS

*Scribner's* (New York) for August contains a remarkable article by John Corbin. It is one of a series on "The Return of the Middle Class," and is devoted to Democracy and Womanhood. Mr Corbin sees in the new liberation of woman the one hope of escape from what he views as the present rapid deterioration of society, through the excessive multiplication of its inferior elements.

*The Century* (New York) for September in an article on "Our Medicine Men" scores preventive medicine on the ground that it is saving the lives of too many people and thus bringing about an acute population question and that in especial it is saving cretins, morons and defectives who will multiply their kind and so threaten civilization. To advocates of Birth Control such attacks on preventive medicine seem foolish when the evils complained of can be avoided in ways so much better than by permitting the premature death of helpless babies.

Della Thompson Lutes in *Beautiful Womanhood* (New York) for October attacks the opponents of Birth Control for "Blaming it on God." She asks why God should be handed the responsibility for large families and infantile mortality rates any more than for the pneumonia bug which carries off a respected citizen. Sickness, she writes, is natural law, accident is natural law, poverty, death and the bearing of children are natural law. These or the acceptance of them may be controlled by spiritual law.

*Health and Life* (New York) for September contains an informing chapter from Ettie A Rout's new book 'Safe Marriage.' In it she discusses venereal disease as a danger to the family. Through some oversight, when Anthony Comstock framed the obscenity laws which

he managed to get through Congress and through so many of the State Legislatures he omitted to include as obscene any discussion of or warning against the venereal diseases. This omission—which we are certainly justified in regarding as accidental—made possible the nationwide campaign against these diseases which now bids fair to curb their ravages and finally to eliminate the terrible race poisons of syphilis and gonorrhea. Unfortunately much of Ettie Rout's book is concerned with the question of responsibility of parents for the birth of their children. In the United States this is an obscene subject and our laws are framed to prevent all knowledge of the possibility of responsible parenthood from reaching the people who most need it. Consequently, while the part of the book that refers to venereal disease can be published here the remainder of the book is held out of reach by our careful government.

*The Woman's Outlook* (Manchester, England) for September printed an interview with Margaret Sanger, in which she described her tour of the East. The article is illustrated with a portrait of Mrs Sanger and a reproduction of the cover picture of the July BIRTH CONTROL REVIEW.

*The Labor Leader* (Manchester, England) has been conducting a vigorous correspondence on Birth Control. *The Leader* is the organ of the Socialist Independent Labor Party, and many of the letters have voiced the stock Socialistic objections to Birth Control. But it is evident that opinion on this question is changing in the ranks of the Socialists especially when the women make themselves felt as an intellectual force. Writing editorially in the issue for August 10 Katharine Bruce Glazier writes:

So far men only have taken part in this correspondence. Yet it is pre-eminently a woman's question. Some of the writers have professed themselves scandalized that well known Socialists should take part in a Conference where it was sought to give practical expression to the thought that if Man has been given dominion over the animal kingdom that dominion should assuredly include control over his own bodily powers of pro-creation. They have, moreover, discussed the question only from the standpoint of the earth's potential food supply.

"I L P men and women who are wrestling alike with the war mind and the capitalist mind in the world today, from the rock foundation of the sacredness of all human life, will recognize that the child's right to be nobly born and reared—fathered as well as mothered to the full, and the woman's right to the conditions that will enable her to do her mother's work well are rights that will need quite as much emphasis in the Holy Human Empire of our dreams as even the right of access to the land. We need to save our children born and unborn as well as our dockers, from what Bevin termed the Fodder Basis."

*The Sunday Chronicle* (London, England) for August 6th published a front page article by Robert Blatchford under the title 'Give the Child Its Rights.' In this article he rebuked sternly those people who complacently rest contented in the assumption that "this is the age of the Child." He showed how far the present generation is falling short, not only in England but all over the world, in its duty towards the children. He quotes figures of child labor facts concerning inadequate education and especially statistics concerning delinquency and dependency among children. Terribly he proves that the parents' betrayal of the unborn child that comes unwelcomed into the home, may make the 'condemned to die' sentence of the judge on the bench, passed on an adult man a sentence of merciful relief compared with the "condemned to live sentence" passed on the child of irresponsible parents.

## BOOKS RECEIVED

From the A C McClurg Co, Chicago THE COST OF LIVING by Walter E Clark

From the T Y Crowell Co, New York CRIME, ITS CAUSE AND TREATMENT by Clarence Darrow

From the Haldeman-Julius Co, Girard, Kan THE PUZZLE OF PERSONALITY, by William J Fielding

ERRATUM—In the Review of "Society and Its Problems," by Grove S Dow in our September issue, the name of the publisher was accidentally omitted. The book is published by the T Y Crowell Co, New York.

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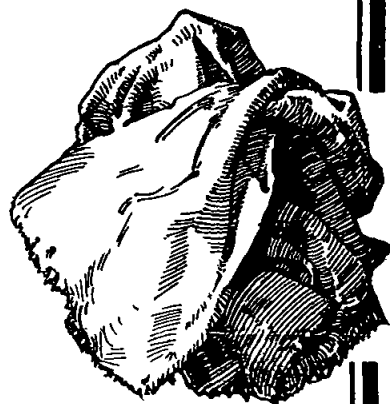
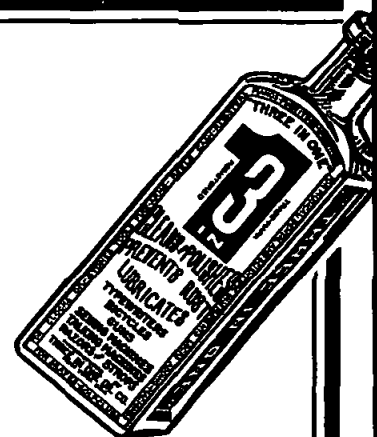
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