

BIRTH CONTROL REVIEW

Edited by Margaret Sanger

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The BIRTH CONTROL REVIEW

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

MARGARET SANGER, Editor

VOL VII

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No 6

“Against the Laws of Nature”

THEY tell us that Birth Control is against the laws of Nature. Well, what if it is? Is that any argument against it?

Man versus Nature! The epic of civilization describes the struggle! Man, the savage, the pigmy, naked figure, without weapons, without science, with nothing to differentiate him from brute creation but a larger brain and an untried capacity for thought and reasoning, facing Nature, stern, gigantic, implacable. What chance had he against such immeasurable odds? The law of Nature to primitive man was the law of tooth and claw, relentless, blind, wasteful, reckless, destructive. Which was to be victor, Nature and Nature's law, or man, who was put on earth to subdue Nature, and to force her to do his will?

The struggle has taken long ages. Slowly and with many a casualty, man raised himself from his early position as slave to nature, subject to all her whims of heat and cold, of plenty or famine, of danger from storm and tempest, from fire and flood. He set his heel on nature and the victory was to him, in his weakness, over nature and her strength. He harnessed the powers of nature. He bound the winds and made them bear his ships over the seas, and turn his mills to prepare food for him. He bound the waters, and controlled the floods, leading sweet water into his dwellings and using the floods gently to water his crops. He made the streams turn his wheels and supply him with power for his own uses. He made the animals his servants, so that the weakness of his body might be compensated by the strength of the horse, the ass, the camel and the elephant. He defied the cold, covering his naked body with clothing of wool and fur. He made tools of stone and brass, he found iron and used it and he learned the miracle of converting it into steel. He mixed the elements and the explosive was born and he learned to shatter the rocks as though they were paper. He harnessed the lightning, and made it his slave, rendering him all services he demanded—light for his dwelling and for the great cities in which it pleased him to live. Long he watched the birds and desired to conquer the air and fly among them. At last this too was accom-

plished, and he made the winds his pathway and recked nothing of mountains and valleys as he passed above them. He annihilated time and distance with his wires and wireless and spoke to the uttermost ends of the world.

He learned to record his thoughts on stone, clay, wax and parchment, and made his wisdom immortal. He invented the printing press and filled the earth with his words. He searched into the innermost secrets of nature and recorded the results in his books. He found that by knowledge of her laws he could make nature obey his will. The animals that he had subdued to his service were forced to change their form and their habits and to become not merely his servants, but the slaves of man, producing food or clothing for him beyond their wont and far beyond the needs of their own species. Under his direction the cow became a machine for the manufacture of milk, the hen for the production of eggs, and the bee for the laying-up of honey. The horse grew larger, stronger, more swift in running or more powerful in draft. The sheep grew wool to suit his every need, soft and fine or heavy and strong, as he demanded.

Plants, too, were moulded to his requirements, until the products of his gardens and fields bore no resemblance to the wild ancestors from which they were descended. The stocks of food were multiplied a hundred-fold. The ears of wheat and corn grew heavy and massive, root crops became succulent and abundant, fruits swelled and sweetened, and men fed delicately and securely, instead of on rough and precarious fare such as had been the lot of their savage forefathers.

For long ages diseases, unchecked, took their heavy toll of mankind. A plague struck the country and all that man could do in his helplessness was to humble himself before the cruel god of his imagination who was sending this punishment upon him. Men, women and children collected in the churches and prayed with bitter lamentations that the sickness might pass away from them. They humbled themselves and confessed their sins in the hope that they might assuage the wrath of the god

who was taking vengeance upon them. But there were men who saw that here also the responsibility rested with man himself, that it was for him to use his intelligence, to find out the causes of the diseases and thus to make himself their master. They found that God, the Creator, was not the cruel, vengeful being who had been represented to them in their ignorance, but that whenever there was disease and suffering it was in the power of man himself to grapple with it and overcome it. This struggle has only just begun, and the end is not yet in sight, but no longer does civilized man assemble in the churches and humble himself to avert the wrath of a mythical god when disease strikes a community. Rather the word goes out, "You are to blame. Look to it that you mend your ways. Purify your water. Abolish your filth. Live wisely and keep the laws of health, not those of disease and death."

And now, after all these ages, man is facing the last great problem of his existence—the problem of his own reproduction. During the long years while he was conquering the world, the earth, the seas, the sky, the plants and the animals—this greatest of all his functions was left to blind chance—to that "Nature" whom in every other respect he had set himself to conquer. Having become aware that chance in regard to reproduction, as in every other field of existence, brought disaster, suffering and death into his life and heart, man set himself at last to find out the means to banish evils that were so obvious. He learned the laws of his own existence, of the existence of his race. He found that here also the laws were capable of guidance which should make them useful and serviceable instead of cruel afflictions, and those who learned this began to cry aloud to their fellows, urging them to leave the old way of haphazard and suffering, and order their lives in harmony with the new knowledge and the ripe wisdom of this late age.

But the objection is raised, by those who always follow the old paths and hate the new, that it is a sin to bring order and light and harmony into this department of human life, that it is "against Nature" and "against the laws of Nature" to endeavor to control the most important of human functions, that, while men and women should act according to the best of their knowledge and with a full sense of responsibility in all lesser matters, in this one great act of their life—the creation of another human being—they must abandon themselves to blind chance and either risk the destruction of health and happiness, the breaking up of home life, and the creation out of husbands and wives of an impossible order of celibates, or allow themselves to bring into the world children who are not wanted,

who have no fair chance of health and strength, and who will probably prove the destruction and not the strength of their parents.

It has always been thus. The conception of a cruel and barbarous god is a conception hard to eradicate from the human mind. To wipe out suffering by human action in some new and unaccustomed form is impious in the eyes of those who hold such a conception of the Deity. Every new advance in knowledge has been opposed on this score, and every time men learn to alleviate human suffering they have to bear this blame. But knowledge advances, as the need for it becomes clear, and men and women look up from the depths and see that God is greater than their vain imaginings and that he has made man in his own image, master of nature and victor over her cruelties. They see, too, that Birth Control is the last great power that knowledge has put into their hands—a god-like power, given to them for use and not for mockery.

The Case for Birth Control

THE SOCIAL WORKERS

ON SUNDAY, May 20, Mrs. Sanger addressed the Social Workers assembled in Washington for their annual conference, in the Hall of Nations of the Washington Hotel. The occasion was important and dramatic. It was a confronting of the long established methods of dealing with human misery and wreckage with the new policy of prevention which would forestall the causes of misery and guard against the possibility of wreck. As Mrs. Sanger told her audience, their work was ameliorative. It dealt with symptoms of disease, it did not reach the roots. Instead of removing the causes of so many of the evils that afflict the poor of our own country and of most other countries, it aided the poor and defective to breed more of their own kind, thus aggravating for the next generation the problems that afflict our own. Charity, by so doing, Mrs. Sanger declared, becomes a crime against the future of the nation.

Professor H. A. Miller, sociologist, of Oberlin College, acted as chairman. He urged the audience of social workers, who had shown their interest by coming to the meeting in spite of the arduous work of the week of constant conferences, not to be satisfied with merely listening, but to join the League as members, and earnestly to push this great work of prevention in which it was engaged. After the lecture, slips were passed among the audience and a large number of the workers showed their appreciation of the need for birth control by responding to the invitation to join the American Birth Control League.

In her talk, Mrs Sanger set forth in her clear and incisive manner the need for birth control, the purposes and policy of the Birth Control League, and the results that might reasonably be expected to follow the recognition of the right and duty of parents to control their own reproduction. She pointed to the infant mortality rate of the United States as a proof of the futility of social work, which allowed 250,000 babies under one year to perish this year, and yet did nothing to enable 500,000 parents to prevent the bringing into the world of the 250,000 infants who were doomed to perish in the same way next year. She also contrasted the care with which the nation guards our gates against the intrusion of immigrants from other parts of the world who would lower our social standards, with the recklessness that takes no note of the lowering of these standards through the crowding-in of undesirable and unfit babies.

The many pertinent questions which followed the lecture attested to the deep interest taken by the social workers in the question. Many of the questions were very practical. It was evident that they came from men and women accustomed to deal with concrete situations. The social workers wanted to know about the organization of the American Birth Control League, how it was carrying on its work, what were its immediate aims, and how it hoped to accomplish these, what obstacles it had to meet, and who were its chief opponents. There were also many of the questions which have always to be met by the advocates of birth control. None of the questions showed any spirit of antagonism. They were asked for the sake of information and to settle doubts in the minds of the hearers, and not to embarrass the speaker.

The historic importance of this meeting can as yet scarcely be recognized. It was again an instance of the mighty being confounded by what at the moment seemed small and weak. The newly formed American Birth Control League, with its hard-won and still scanty support, faced the great organized social agencies of the country—agencies backed by enormous contributions of money both from the revenues of states and nation and from the wealth of America, freely poured out in the vain effort to relieve human suffering without going to its source. Standing thus before the social workers, Mrs Sanger dared to tell them that in many cases they were committing a crime against the future of the nation. She offered them "a better way," a way which it was impossible for them to follow until the organizations behind them shall have a change of heart and mind. But the change will come, and when it comes this Washington meeting will mark its beginning. It will mark the

turning from methods of palliation to the more reasonable and intelligent policy of doing away with the cause that gives rise to most of the poverty, suffering and distress from which civilized nations continue to suffer—the birth of unwanted and unfit children.

THE NATIONAL WOMAN'S PARTY

A TEA in honor of Mrs Margaret Sanger and a delegation from the American Birth Control League was given on Monday, May 21, at headquarters of the National Woman's Party in Washington, and the opportunity was afforded of explaining the work and objects of the League to a representative audience of National Woman's Party members. Miss Alice Paul was present but delegated the duty of acting as chairman to Dr Cora King, to whose province, as a doctor, it seemed more properly to belong. Before introducing the speakers, Dr King, at Miss Paul's request, stated that the National Woman's Party could take up no line of work except that which it had made its own—the securing of equal rights in every respect for women with men.

The first speaker was Dr Dorothy Bocker, who is in charge of clinical research work in birth control. She emphasized the fundamental biological facts that differentiated women from men, and insisted that equal legal rights for women in industry were illusory so long as women were not given the right and the power of birth control. So long as the married woman was subject to involuntary maternity there would necessarily be discrimination against her by employers, because she was more inefficient and less economical in industry than the man worker. The fact that she might be disabled from work for several months in any year, or in every year, by pregnancy and child-bearing rendered her of less value to the employer. With the right of birth control the woman would not be subject to involuntary interruptions of work, but could make deliberate arrangements to bear a child when convenient.

Mrs Porritt then explained briefly the condition of the law as it now stands in the various states, and pointed out that it was absurd to suppose that women had equal rights with men so long as they did not possess the right to control their own bodies, both as regards sex relationship with their husbands and the use of their body for maternity. She praised the excellent work that is being done by the National Woman's Party in compiling the laws of the different states which affect a woman's right to work, her right to her own earnings, her right to own and inherit property, her right to the guardianship of her children, and other more or less import-

ant rights She urged, however, that they were neglecting the laws affecting the far more primary right of a woman to own herself The aim of the American Birth Control League, she explained, was to secure legislation making it possible for the medical profession to give birth control information and then to promote the establishment of clinics in which women could secure this information from medical experts

Mrs Sanger then made an impassioned appeal for help for the poor women who are held in a slavery worse than that of the black man in the old days of the South These women are appealing for relief Since the beginning of the year Mrs Sanger had received 25,000 letters containing such appeals and she urged that, until women who have leisure and education come to the aid of these enslaved women there can be no equal rights for women in general All womankind is bound with the chains that hold women in slavery to enforced motherhood The applause and questions that followed the speeches testified to the interest aroused among the members of the National Woman's Party who were present, the overwhelming majority of whom seemed favorable to the cause of birth control

There are many indications of the progress that is being made by the movement for birth control The nation is evidently awakening to the importance of the question, and to the seriousness of the problems of unrestricted multiplication of the least desirable elements of society Among the signs of this awakening we may certainly include the readiness of the Social Workers of the United States to hear about birth control and the desire of the National Woman's Party for more light on the subject

Birth Control Conference of Middle Western States

Good progress is being made with arrangements for the Conference of Middle Western States to be held at the Hotel Drake, Chicago, October 29-30-31 Invitations have been sent to over 2,500 women's organizations, social agencies and public health associations Many replies, accepting the invitation to appoint delegates to the conference, have already been received

The request made to economists, sociologists, doctors, social workers and public health officials to read papers at the Conference has also met with good success Professors from the following Middle Western Universities have promised their co-operation University of Minnesota, University of Michigan, University of Wisconsin, University of Iowa, Northwestern University, Illinois, University of Missouri

News Notes

April 23—Mrs Sanger addressed the Woman's City Club of Boston, Mass., on "The Need for Birth Control" The president of the club, Mrs R G Hopkins, was in the chair, and there were about 400 present A discussion followed the lecture and from the remarks and questions it was evident that many of the women were ready to take an active part in work for Birth Control in Massachusetts

April 27—Birth Control legislation in New York State was discussed at a luncheon given at the Livingston Collegiate Club by the League of Women Voters of the 11th Assembly District Mrs Robert Oliver presided at the luncheon, which had been arranged by a committee of which Mrs Herbert E Mitler was chairman The principal address was given by Mrs Sanger The work done on the Birth Control bill, introduced by Mr S I Rosenman, was reviewed, and a resolution was passed expressing commendation for Assemblyman Rosenman's courage in introducing and sponsoring the bill

May 2—A meeting, held at the home of Mrs J S Browning, Lawrence, L I, N Y, was called for the purpose of presenting the question of Birth Control before a group of women who are deeply interested in social welfare work, and who are members of social welfare organizations Mrs William Treadwell Ketcham of Lawrence took the chair, and the address was made by Mrs Sanger The remarks following Mrs Sanger's speech showed a deep conviction that Birth Control is a fundamental problem for women Thirty-three of those present became members of the American Birth Control League, and expressed their readiness to join the N Y Legislative Committee

May 15—At a meeting of the stockholders of the New York Woman's Publishing Company, called in accordance with a resolution passed at the annual meeting of the directors on April 12, the company was dissolved and its assets and liabilities turned over to the American Birth Control League Henceforward the *Birth Control Review* will be published by the American Birth Control League

May 21 Mrs Sanger was received by Count Hanihara, Japanese ambassador at Washington He welcomed her visit and asked many questions about the progress of her work in this country He spoke of the great interest in birth control that had been aroused in Japan by her visit, and said that although there was opposition to the movement there, this opposition was insignificant

NEWS FROM ENGLAND

We are informed by the Secretary of the New Generation League that the recent Birth Control cases in England have effectually stirred the British to a sense of the importance of the subject. "Dr Marie Stopes' libel suit," he writes, "has completely stopped the slight reactionary tendency that was noticeable earlier in the winter, for it has brought out the fact that a large number of the leading newspapers in England, as well as many influential doctors, are on the side of Birth Control. As you know, the verdict was given in a very ambiguous form, but the Lord Chief Justice interpreted it as a verdict for Dr Sutherland. This has caused great indignation, and many of the principal daily papers wrote articles severely criticising the judge for his interpretation. From the Birth Control standpoint, the verdict has perhaps been more valuable than a win would have been, because it has created such a widespread impression that she has not had fair play, and has consequently stirred up a lot of people who have never taken any interest in Birth Control. All the labor people throughout the country have suddenly awakened to the importance of Birth Control. A member of the Fabian Women's Group told me that, whatever the nominal subject of discussion might be, it always ended in a Birth Control discussion."

NEWS FROM AUSTRIA

The first Birth Control clinic of the League against Compulsory Motherhood of Vienna was opened on November 22, 1922. Penniless women and girls have been encouraged to attend on the free evenings—Thursday and Saturday—when they have not only been given a careful examination by a doctor, but have also had the necessary appliances supplied and fitted without charge. Encouraged by the success which has attended the Vienna Clinic, branches have been opened in the following places: Linz, Salzburg, Steyr, Atzgersdorf, and Neunkirchen.

NEWS FROM MEXICO

The State of Yucatan, Mexico, has passed a new law dealing with marriage and divorce. It specifically defines marriage as a "voluntary and dissoluble union between a man and a woman, based on the love of making a home." Divorce can be secured by either husband or wife or both. If by both, an agreement can be reached concerning children and property before applying for divorce, and this agreement, by consent of the court, may be included in the act of divorce. The greatest care is taken to guard the interests of the children of the marriage, both as regards their maintenance and

custody and their relations with their parents. The right of custody may be forfeited by both parents on grounds of misconduct and the disposition of the children is then left to the court. Parents remain, however, responsible for the expense of maintenance, and are granted the right to maintain personal relations with the children, although these children are no longer under their control. There are also sections providing for the support of the wife by the husband, in cases where she has no property or means of subsistence of her own.

NEWS FROM INDIA

Hindusthan Janam-Marayada Sabha—The Indian Birth Regulation Society—is steadily gaining public support. Vigorous efforts are being made to reach the masses. Lectures are given from time to time. Thus a very interesting and highly appreciated lecture on the Indian population problem was delivered by Professor Gopalji, M Sc., at Mohindra College, Patiala, in January. Professor K. K. Mukerji, vice principal of the college, presided. The audience, which numbered over 400, including seven professors, was very enthusiastic, and an interesting discussion followed. After the lecture there were also personal inquiries and private talks with many members of the audience. A branch of the society has since been established in Patiala.

At the annual election of the society an executive council consisting of Professor Gopalji, president, Dr P. D. Kapur, secretary, Professor D. Pant, of Lucknow, Professor R. D. Karve, of Bombay, and Mr C. R. Mudaliar, of Bombay, was chosen. The office of the society has been moved to a very prominent position, adjoining the Marwari Library in Chandni-Chowk, the most important thoroughfare in Delhi, the imperial capital of India. One of the prominent members of the society is Mr P. K. Wattal, who was one of the first Indian students to write a pamphlet on the question.

The Legislative Assembly of India, in April, passed a bill raising the age of consent of Indian girls to 18. There is strong hope that the bill will be passed by the Council and signed by the Viceroy.

NEWS FROM CHINA

A mass meeting was held in Hongkong in March in support of Governor Stubb's bill for the abolition of girl slavery. The occasion was notable for the appearance on the platform of a Chinese woman speaker, who appealed to the audience on behalf of the 8,000 young girls, held in the worst kind of slavery in a British Colony and under British rule. The bill has since been enacted into a law, and this form of slavery is abolished.

NEWS FROM JAPAN

Extract from Letter from Baroness Ishimoto

I am glad to give you the interesting news that I received an invitation from the Japanese Miners' Association to address their meeting at Ashio Copper Mines. The Ashio Mine is located near Nikko and an eight-hour trip from Tokyo. The laborers of that mine have decreased from 6,000 to about 4,000 men, but since their big strike, won four years ago, they are supposed to be the most progressive laborers in Japan.

Two large meetings were held on the evening of March 31 and the afternoon of April 1 at the theater of the Ashio town. Both meetings were attended by 1,200 to 1,300 miners and their wives. I gave the address on the subject of Birth Control, and even though I was interrupted several times by the authority of policemen, I succeeded in delivering the

thought that I wanted to propagate. This was my first experience for a real public speech and it attracted much attention of the Japanese public. The audience were radical laborers and I was called the "Japanese Sanger."

Some of the papers have reported that there was another Birth Control movement at Osaka by the Association of Factory Workers. And also an Anti-Birth Control Association was organized by the midwives of Siga City. But I have not heard any details of either of them.

Japanese women have launched a Women's Property campaign. They are asking for an amendment of the law which prevents the holding of any property by women. Before women can become human beings with rights over themselves and their children, it is felt essential that they should be able to own and hold property.

The Doctors and Birth Control

THE *New York Medical Week* for April 21 gave a very brief notice of the hearing at Albany on the Birth Control bill. The notice was written without bias either for or against the bill. It read:

At Albany on April 10, there was a public hearing on the Rosenman bill before the Senate and Assembly Codes Committee. The proposed act was intended to legalize the furnishing by physicians of information on birth control in suitable instances. Eminent physicians like Dr. L. Emmet Holt, among many others, were present to advocate enactment of such a law. Opposed to its passage was the president of the State Medical Society, Dr. James F. Rooney of Albany who claimed that, while the society had never gone on record as being opposed to the Rosenman bill, he knew that a majority of physicians were not in favor of it. He did not state how this knowledge was obtained. Every member of the Committee was said to oppose reporting of the bill so that it died in Committee.

Two weeks later, in the issue for May 5, appeared the following letter:

Editor, Public Forum

On page 7 of the *New York Medical Week* dated April 21 you have an article entitled "Birth Control Law Shelved," in which you say that Dr. Rooney did not state how he obtained the information that a majority of physicians were not in favor of the amendment.

During my absence from the city Dr. Rooney appeared at the hearing as acting chairman of the Committee on Legislation of the Medical Society of the State of New York.

When the Birth Control bill was introduced in the legislature, I sent a questionnaire to each county medical society, asking that they send in to the Legislative Bureau their approval or disapproval of the measure.

Forty county medical societies replied, thirty-six of these emphatically objected to the bill, four county societies were mildly in favor of it. Hence Dr. Rooney's statement that the majority of physicians were not in favor of it. Very truly yours,

JAMES N. VANDER VEER, M.D.,
Chairman, Committee on Legislation,
Medical Society of the State of New York

April 27, 1923

Dr. Vander Veer's statements clearly show that the medical profession—with a large number of honorable exceptions—fails as yet to realize its responsibility for the vast amount of sickness, suffering and death which afflict the women and children of our great country through the lack of adequate, scientific, contraceptive instruction. In New York State, the law gives the right to physicians to advise contraception to any woman when necessary for the cure or prevention of disease. Yet this right is not exercised in our hospitals and dispensaries, and the very women who need Birth Control information most are continually being refused it. Only by awakening a social conscience on the question in the community-at-large can we hope to arouse the medical profession generally to a sense of its duty towards the women and children of this country.

That we have already on our side a large number of doctors, men with social vision as well as medical

learning, is proved by the fact that 682 of the physicians of New York City and State signed the questionnaire sent out by the New York Birth Control Legislative Committee. The questionnaire gave the terms of the bill and ended with the words "I approve of the above amendment."

Another bit of evidence to the same effect appeared in the February 24 issue of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. It is in the form of a letter from the Chicago Gynecological Society, and is signed by three physicians who had sent a questionnaire out to all the members of the Society. Two of the conclusions approved by the majority of the members are as follows:

Information as to the prevention of conception should be given wherever indicated to wives and husbands by physicians, either privately or in existing clinics and dispensaries.

Risk to the mother, based on ill health, whether due directly to existing disease or to the drain of too frequent child-birth under unfavorable home conditions, is the essential indication for instruction in prevention of conception.

One of the other findings pronounced against the

giving of contraceptive information to the general public, and another, to which we would take serious exception, would seem to give the impression that the doctors were not willing to put into the hands of the wife the power to protect herself against pregnancy, for it condemned "all mechanical devices as well as strong chemical douches" used by the wife. The condemnation is certainly premature, for the Society can hardly assert that it has given a fair trial to all such means of preventing pregnancy.

In spite of shortcomings, however, the stand of the Chicago Gynecological Society is a long way in advance of the mass of New York State physicians, as represented by Dr. Rooney and Dr. Vander Veer. It is a stand which gives great encouragement to the advocates of responsible and deliberate parenthood. It shows that the Society recognizes its responsibility for the health and life of the mothers and infants that come under the care of its members, and it also shows a readiness to introduce Birth Control instruction into clinics and dispensaries designed for the use of the poor.

Birth Control and Organized Labor

By EDWARD G. PUNKÉ

TODAY Birth Control is *the* world problem, and it is receiving the attention of the world's best minds. It should be of great interest to Organized Labor because its advocates are striving for the same end as Organized Labor, namely, the betterment of the conditions of life of the human race, and particularly that portion consisting of the unskilled and semi-skilled workers.

Emphasis on the elevation of the standard of life has been a most important characteristic of the labor struggle in this country since the beginning of labor unions about 1825. Those familiar with the industrial and labor history of the United States are well acquainted with the important part played by labor unions in obtaining our tax-supported schools, the abolition of imprisonment for debt, the passage of the Homestead Act, and much of our modern social and factory legislation.

With this splendid record of Labor in mind, advocates of Birth Control appeal to Labor to support their movement. Organized Labor is anxious to raise the standard of life of the toilers, which necessitates an increase of real wages among the workers, especially the unskilled and semi-skilled.

Under the present economic system, however, wages are at least partly dependent upon the relative supply of, and demand for, labor. Other things equal, the larger the supply of a certain type

of labor in proportion to the demand for it, the lower will be the wage of that labor. On the other hand, the smaller the supply relative to the demand, the higher will be labor's pay. This is readily seen by a comparison of an old with a new country, as Japan or China, with Australia or Canada.

Unfortunately, owing to immigration and other forces, unskilled and semi-skilled labor in this country is over-abundant. These workers, bidding against each other, beat down wages. These laborers, moreover, who need a larger wage greatly, are the most difficult and last to organize. Hence they are denied most of the gains flowing from collective bargaining. Here numbers mean weakness. A relative diminution of the number of unskilled and semi-skilled workers is a vitally important measure for Organized Labor and for those really interested in the welfare of the toiler. To a limited extent, this is what labor unions strive for.

Now, judicious Birth Control offers one of the easiest, safest, and racially most beneficial means of decreasing the number of manual workers. Of all nations, the United States alone legally prevents the giving of such information to the people. Imitating the federal government, which classes all contraceptive information as obscene and indecent, many states have made the dissemination of such knowledge a misdemeanor or felony.

Notwithstanding this prohibitive legislation, Birth Control is now practiced almost universally among the more educated and better situated classes. Through their knowledge, better financial position and social connections, these groups can and do obtain the needed contraceptive information. Their low birth rate testifies to the use made of that knowledge.

On the other hand, the high birth rate of the poorer classes—working class wives ordinarily have about twice as many children as well-to-do wives—indicates how effective this anti-Birth Control legislation is for the less well situated. The poor are penalized for their poverty. Thus our society presents a most topsy-turvy condition,—those most able to rear and educate a larger number of children have few, whereas, those able to rear and train but a few decently, have many.

It is, further, chiefly these poorer classes—the low-wage groups—who overstock the labor market, who furnish children to break the anti-child-labor laws, and who beget cannon-fodder and machine-tenders. These classes, through their ignorance and stolid hopelessness, are the joy of the war-makers and the conscienceless employers. Likewise, because of ignorance to do otherwise, they beget children recklessly, without regard for their future education and chance of winning a decent livelihood. These classes most urgently need the knowledge and opportunity of employing modern, scientific Birth Control.

Hence the Birth Control Movement offers Organized Labor a unique opportunity. Today voluntary parenthood is recognized as a most important step toward the regeneration of mankind, toward the elimination of poverty, with its attendant misery and hopelessness, and toward the prevention of over-population with the resulting threat of more war, with its gigantic reversal of race improvement. Birth Control offers a welcome relief to the working-class mother, who often has a child with almost annual periodicity, and sees in the future only a monotonous repetition of this thankless task, ended finally by the grave.

Now, by virtue of its name, and of its constituency, Organized Labor is the champion of the working classes—women as well as men, the champion not only of the skilled and better situated, but also of the unskilled and semi-skilled, of the poorest and worst conditioned worker. Its mission, its purpose in existing, is the raising of the standard of life of the working groups—the emancipation of the toilers from their heritage of long hours, low wages, large families, and the resultant ignorance and misery. Further, it is duty bound, if it would remain true to its early record of social achieve-

ment, to support all important movements for racial and social betterment.

Voluntary parenthood, then, for the poor as well as for the better situated, has an irrefutable claim to the support of the Labor Movement. And this because Birth Control for the workers offers a most important means of elevating their standard of life.

English labor, the leader in so many fields, clearly recognizes this. It is furthering the New Generation League of Great Britain. It is helping to diminish the number of laborers competing for a particular job, helping to lessen the number of scabs and unemployables by promoting the dissemination of contraceptive knowledge and materials among the poorer workers. Briefly, it has grasped the tremendous significance of voluntary parenthood as a weapon in the struggle for bettering the conditions of the laborer.

Shortly, moreover, American Labor must assume the same attitude, if it is to forward the true interest of its members, and of the large unorganized group for which it speaks. This is inevitable. For it will avail Organized Labor little to try to unionize all the workers, to limit the number of competitors for a particular job, to have helped in restricting immigration from abroad, if "immigration from heaven" is not limited.

Birth Control is, furthermore, practical, immediately applicable, and not to be attained at some unknown future date. Dr. Marie Stopes of England, who has been running a Birth Control clinic in London's slums, says:

"This ideal differs from those widely distant Utopias which are generally presented, in being a really practicable and achievable ideal. We have already today sufficient physiologic knowledge to check (if one could only get everybody to know it) the birth of every diseased, unhealthy, unprepared-for child. Once stem the onrush of those who enter life in such quick succession that they snatch the bread and milk from each other's mouths and do nothing but defeat each other's chances of life, or if they live, live weakened, doomed, or diseased lives—once stem the onrush of those who are a total loss to the state, an anguish and drain to their mothers, and a misery to themselves, and then we shall find in each home the joyous creators of children born in love and loved before their birth."

Such, then, are the things judicious Birth Control holds in store for mankind, and particularly for the poorer classes. As the chief spokesman for those classes, Organized Labor has a unique opportunity and a solemn duty to perform,—it must forward the spread of voluntary parenthood knowledge among the poor and disinherited, it must help emancipate the working-class women from the bane of unwanted, uncared-for children.

Birth Control from a Biological Point of View

By PROFESSOR E W MACBRIDE

IN discussing the subject of Birth Control, a zoologist has several great advantages to start with. He knows that the life of man is governed by the same laws as those which control the existence of the lower animals and that, if those laws are violated, disaster will overtake us as surely as if we were a race of rats or birds, and we, therefore, believe that from the study of the lives of our animal relatives valuable light is thrown on the probable result of human tendencies.

We know that every species of animal and plant, if allowed to exercise unchecked its natural powers of reproduction, would in a few years completely overrun the earth and crush out every other form of life. The reason that this catastrophe does not occur is the terrific death rate, which falls principally on the young. The average frog begins to breed at the age of five years, and produces about four thousand eggs in the season. If we assume that a female frog lives to the age of seven years (a most modest assumption) and breeds three times, it will in the course of its life give birth to twelve thousand young, and of these, on an average, only two survive to reach maturity. That represents an infant death-rate which beggars all human comparison.

Death may be due to starvation, overcrowding and consequent poisoning by excreta, dessication and so on. But under ordinary conditions the most frequent cause of death is through the young one falling a prey to some predatory animal.

Under ordinary stable conditions, however, the proportion of one species to another does not vary much from year to year. It is true that amongst fish one year may be so favorable for the survival of fry as to produce a population of adult fish which will stock the seas for years. But on the whole, the herring population, for instance, does not vary very much, if we compare, not years, but decades with each other. It follows, therefore, that the reproductive powers of each species are just sufficient to balance the ravages made on its numbers by external foes.

What I have said is, of course, common knowledge to every well-instructed student of zoology, and the same general balance between reproductive capacity, and chances of survival has prevailed in the past with regard to man. If, however, we cast a glance backwards over human history, we must concede that the human race as a whole has been steadily increasing in numbers as the ages have rolled on, and as man's power to produce food has

increased. Anthropologists would not estimate the population of the vast territory which now constitutes Canada in pre-Columbian days at more than 500,000, the population at present is 9,000,000. The population of England, as computed from the entries in Domesday Book, was about two and a half millions in 1100 A. D., today (excluding Wales) it is 35,000,000.

If through any cause the power of producing food in any region falls off, the population inevitably declines, either by emigration or famine. In central Turkestan deserted cities are unearthed, half-buried in sand, situated in places where the surrounding country certainly would not now provide food for any considerable population. Northern Africa once was the granary of the Roman Empire, now the desert in many places reaches almost to the Mediterranean and the country supports only a scanty population of Arabs.

Now, from very early times in human history, as soon as the tribe with its common interests had been evolved, the problem of preventing the multiplication of the population beyond the capacity of the food supply had to be faced and dealt with. Hence, some form of birth control, or, more properly speaking, survival control, is found amongst all primitive peoples. In certain of the Pacific islands, all children in a family above two were drowned outside the reef. As all classical students know, in Greek and Roman times there existed the practice, sanctioned by custom, of exposing all unwanted children in jars, so that they died of exposure.

The triumph of Christianity put an end to the practice of infanticide and so ushered in a time of unrestricted propagation. Infanticide to excess and the avoidance of the marital tie, with its responsibilities, were potent causes in bringing about that decay of virility which led to the downfall of the Roman Empire. The baby crop failed, the hard-working Latin peasantry with their small farms disappeared, and were replaced by herdsmen who looked after pasture. When about 400 A. D. Italy was threatened by a Hun invasion, Stilicho, the Roman General, had the greatest difficulty in raising a sufficient army to repel it. His whole plan of campaign was hampered by the knowledge that if his army was defeated, there were no reserves available.

The opponents of Birth Control will now maintain that, since the times of the Roman Empire and the triumph of Christianity in western Europe,

things have righted themselves without birth control. It devolves on those who, like myself, regard birth control as an urgent question of today to show that there is something unprecedented and menacing in the present situation which was not so prominent in the past. I think that it is quite possible to do this—and the two new factors may be summed up in the phrases *Industrialism and Humanitarianism*—or, put more simply, factories and factory legislation.

Up till the beginning of the nineteenth century, England was, so far as food was concerned, practically a self-supporting country, nay, more, each district was largely self-supporting. The people of Devon, for instance, lived principally on the produce of Devon. The majority of the people were engaged in agriculture, and, though peasant proprietors were few, the position of the majority of the tenant-farmers was in many ways equal if not preferable to that of peasant proprietors. Farms were passed on from father to son, and when a former bursar of Trinity College, Cambridge, took office, he discovered that certain families had been tenants of college farms for a longer period than the college had existed, and it was founded in 1550.

During this long period the population of England had only slowly increased, and yet, so far as we know, early marriages and large families were the rule, and no form of birth control existed. The population and the food supply, therefore, must have been adjusted to each other by some form of natural selection. I think a little consideration will show how this selection worked. Travel facilities were few and utilized only by the rich, so that the people of each locality were largely confined to it and all their interests centred in it. When, therefore, the renewal of leases was considered or the tenancy of cottages determined, the worthless and incapable were not considered, and in a small community everyone knew who these were, and so undesirables could not marry and found families. Then the death rate from disease was appalling. An historian has said "In the good old days people died in the country as quickly as they now die in the slums of cities, as quickly as white people now die on the coast of Guinea."

Dean Inge has calculated that the Black Death wiped out between two-thirds and three-fourths of the population of England, and he further states that the condition of the agricultural laborers in the succeeding century, in consequence of this diminution in their numbers, was better than it had been for centuries before or than it was for centuries after this time.

A similar visitation traversed England in 1666 and must have thinned the population tremen-

dously. The inspection of old parish registers in Norfolk throws a lurid light on the awful death rate that attended the plague. It is worthy of note, then, when natural checks fail to prevent the growth of animal populations, their numbers, like those of human races, are every now and then reduced by an epidemic of disease. This is stated to happen every few years to the "Jack Rabbit" populations which inhabit the Mackenzie basin in Canada. The ravages of "rinderpest" amongst the wild ungulate population of South Africa may also be cited as an example. The Irish famine of 1846 and the Russian famine of today are also instances of natural correctives to unduly expanded population.

But the position in England became radically altered when we became a manufacturing population. Then our food supply began to come in necessary quantities from abroad, and our capacity to support a population was measured by our ability to exchange the products of our manufactures for food produced elsewhere. Under these circumstances the population of England increased 300 per cent between the years 1800 and 1900. Large families were the rule, and in the seventies the birth rate touched thirty-six per thousand, which was the pre-war birth rate of Russia. But the infant death rate was appalling, so that the population probably did not increase faster than the food purchasing capacity.

Since 1890, however, the public began to take the infant death rate to heart, and legislative and voluntary assistance was accorded to poor mothers, and the infant death rate has begun to go down. Free education, free school meals and free medical attendance have followed in rapid succession, and all these benefits have been provided by taxing the thrifty and saving members of the community, who have in consequence limited their families. Thirty years ago the clergy used to be reckoned as amongst the most prolific members of the community and they are rightly regarded as breeders of talent, on account of the number of their children who rose to distinction in science, literature and public service. Today clerical families consist of one or two and the same is true of doctors' families. Whilst, however, the birth rate as a whole has fallen, the birth rate of the lowest strata of the community has not appreciably diminished. Road sweepers, dock laborers and people of that class still indulge in large families. The consequence, therefore, of our baby-saving campaign is to alter the composition of the population, to increase the proportion of the poorer strains and to diminish the proportion of the better strain.

To this conclusion it may be objected that intrinsically the children of the poor are just as good

material as the children of the better classes and that so long as the baby crop is good it does not matter in the national interest what social stratum it comes from. But this position will not bear investigation. Great progress has been made with the effort to measure mental ability, and the validity of the Simon and Binet scale is now generally accepted by psychologists. This scale was evolved as the outcome of thousands of mental tests applied to the school children of Paris. These tests were selected so as to be entirely independent of the substance of what the children were taught. It transpired that a standard of mental capacity could be determined which should be reached by a normal child at each year of its existence up till the age of fifteen. Backward children take longer to reach these standards and forward children reach them earlier, but generally speaking, at the age of fifteen mental capacity is fully evolved, although mental attainment naturally depends on the quality and quantity of the education provided.

Now there exist numbers of defective children whose mental capacity never expands beyond that normal to children of certain ages. They may live to be old men and women, nevertheless they remain mentally children. They are divided into groups of different "mental ages," according to the age attained by the normal child when it reaches the standard which they never pass. People of the mental ages of one, two and three are classed as idiots, they are unable to feed or dress themselves and are consequently locked up in asylums as otherwise they would perish.

Those of the ages four, five and six can feed and dress themselves and do simple tasks under skilled direction, but, as they are unable to maintain themselves in the world, are also looked after in charitable institutions and are termed imbeciles. But those who attain the mental ages of seven, eight and nine are just able to maintain themselves in the most unskilled, lowest-paid occupations, they are termed in England "feeble minded", in America, "morons", and they constitute a fertile source of addition to our population and an ever-present source of contamination to society. The justification for this indictment we must now consider.

First, this mental defect is hereditary. This, in my opinion, is one of the most important results achieved by the study of heredity. The proof of this conclusion has been worked out in America as the result of the most painstaking research, the credit for which is due to Dr. Goddard of the Vineland Institute, New Jersey. This is an institution which receives, cares for, and strives to educate mentally defective children. Now Dr. Goddard established a service of field workers. These were

educated men and women who spent some time in Vineland in order to study the children, to see their peculiarities and to learn how the mental tests were applied. Then they were sent to visit the relatives of the children, ostensibly to carry tidings of the health and progress of particular inmates, for which the relatives who had been relieved of the care of these persons were very thankful, but in reality to discover, in friendly conversation, all they could about the family history of the inmates and to draw up a chart of the family tree of every child in the institution. Where the workers were convinced that a certain relative had been a defective, a black dot was placed on the chart. The same chart was worked over at intervals of years by quite different field workers. As the result of independent investigations, the chart was blackened as more evidence became available.

The most important results obtained were as follows. When two mentally defective people marry, *all* the children are defective. To this rule, out of four hundred cases examined, there were only one or two exceptions and these exceptions can justly be attributed to adultery on the part of the female parent. In one case mentioned by Goddard, two defective white people had a family of eleven children of whom nine were defective and two normal, but these two normal were black.

Goddard further showed that neither syphilitic disease or excessive alcoholism can be regarded as the causes of mental defect. Certainly, defective children occur amongst the offspring of syphilitics and alcoholics, but just as many defectives spring from stocks which are free from these taints. If we could explain how and why Mendelian recessives turn up in other strains, such as albino mice, we might be on the way to discover the origin of human defectives, but this we cannot do as yet.

The Americans have, where opportunity offered, applied the Simon-Binet tests to delinquents detained in prisons and asylums and have made the extraordinary discovery that a large proportion of these, a proportion varying from thirty to fifty per cent, can be shown to be defectives. This includes criminals and prostitutes and habitual drunkards. Goddard emphasizes the fact that defective self-control is at the bottom of most of these defects. Even expert criminals are brought to justice by the commission of some appalling piece of folly which seems quite out of keeping with their cleverness in other directions. Again, he says that there are two kinds of drunkards, normally minded and mentally defective. The first kind under the impulse of a great shock are capable of pulling themselves up and throwing off completely the drink habit, the second variety will repent with

tears and sign the pledge any number of times and yet within a week after each repentance will be submerged in drink again

It seems clear, therefore, that in the slums we are engaged in propagating an inferior class of people, and, in endeavoring to lower their death-rate and preserve all their children alive, we are imposing such a burden on the well-to-do classes as to cause them to limit their families to one or two members, so as to cease to be self-perpetuating

But some people point to our empty dominions as receptacles for our slum-bred population, and talk of the English race overspreading the world. Apart from the fact that were this really so, the English race would be represented by very poor material in other countries, the fundamental fact is forgotten. This is that the dominions are self-governing communities and resolutely refuse to accept these people at all.

What, therefore, is to be done? Surely the only answer is that the birth-rate amongst the prolific classes must be regulated and lowered. How is this to be enforced? The answer is (1) by spreading the knowledge of how to prevent conception, (2) by enforcing parental responsibility for the maintenance of children.

Numerous objections are raised by all sorts of people, especially ecclesiastics, to the first of these devices. In my opinion, all of these objections are founded on pure hypocrisy. All students of social affairs are agreed that methods of restricting or preventing conception are in almost universal use amongst members of the middle and upper classes, and one is at a loss to know why the critics, who belong to these classes, should wish to deny to the poorer classes this knowledge. As it is, some measure of birth control is already practiced by these, often by the most dangerous methods.

Then it is urged that if a woman is prevented from developing her natural fertility she becomes neurasthenic. If this were true we should find the vast majority of well-bred, educated women neurasthenic, which is farcical. But even if it were true that some few women would run the risk of neurasthenia if they were prevented from having children, would that not be a minor evil compared with the heart-breaking misery engendered by the endeavor to support a large family on inadequate means. Surely if we regard the welfare of the children alone there is no comparison between the two risks run.

Others urge that a knowledge of birth control would let loose a flood of immorality. No one is compelled to become immoral because he or she knows how to prevent conception, and what is the greater risk, that some people should indulge in

illicit sterile embraces or that children should be born into the world with the enormous handicap of illegitimacy?

Of course, it is true that there will always be a residuum of people so utterly careless of the welfare of the State or of their prosperity as to breed recklessly and look to the State, i.e., to their thrifty neighbors, to support their children. The only remedy for such conduct is sterilization. This can be done either by X-rays or slight superficial surgical operations. If the practice of voluntary birth control became more widespread, then an enlightened public opinion would be found which would support measures of compulsory sterilization against those who persist in having families at the public expense.

We may perhaps notice finally the argument against birth control based on the necessity for an abundant supply of cannon-fodder for future wars. To this question two answers may be given. First, it is physically impossible to support a much larger population on these islands than at present exists, and second, the late war and the fate of the Russian armies demonstrates the impotence of mere cannon-fodder. We want as many healthy, independent, well-bred men as we can support, and when we attain this limit we shall have the material for an army which will protect us against any possible foe.

THE SINNER

I sinned
Not as the Magdalene,
Hers was warm, human sin,
Fit for forgiveness,
Mine had the sanction of the church and state,
Yet unforgivable,
For that which might have been a holy thing
I turned to shame,
Meeting a strong man's passion with cold lips
And heart of dread
I loved him—
As a friend perhaps,
Not as a mate,
I gave because I tho't that such must be,
(Being man and wife)
And virtue is gone out of me

VAUGHAN READE

So long as Birth Control was practiced in secret by the wealthier and more instructed section of the community it was condoned. You could always pretend that it was a curious provision of Nature that endowed the duke's wife with three children and the dock laborer's wife with thirteen

—EVELYN SHARP

The Story of a Mother

By S A FRANK

I AM an old woman The light of my life is about to be extinguished I am worn out with the consequences of my own motherhood

Once I was young and what the world of today calls a "flapper" My girlhood days were full of beaux, and parties and good times When I married, my husband had a good job, but nothing wonderful Four boys came to us I nursed them at night and washed for them, cooked and scrubbed for them by day

Until after they came I did not know that there was a strain of insanity in my husband's family When I knew that, I determined that there should be no more children I had heard all sorts of stories of preventative measures My doctor would tell me nothing I tried everything I had heard about and I felt convinced that I was safe from further pregnancies I watched my sons with fear and trembling They seemed to be all right, but who could tell?

One terrible day I found the fifth child was expected I was in despair I felt a premonition of disaster He was born at the appointed time He did not nurse as the other children had done He seemed very slow and dense When talking-time came, I found I had brought into the world an idiot Can anyone realize what this means to a mother? Bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh, the boy is as much mine as the other children, but he never had a chance of development

One by one, my boys have grown to manhood, become successful business men, married and left me My oldest stayed by me when his father died He feared to let me bear my burden alone And so he too has missed his share of the joys and sorrows that husbandhood and fatherhood would have granted to him

People wonder why I have never sent my boy to an institution to learn a trade They say he would be much happier if he knew basketry or bottoming chairs or anything to occupy his time

I could never let him go away from me For twenty-five years I have had the same dream I dream he smiles at me and lies down peacefully to sleep in my arms I have a feeling that Death is near In my dream, Death comes from the side of the bed near the wall Fearfully, I sleep on that side, and lie awake watchful while my boy sleeps peacefully I doze off and as I doze, I feel a horrible contraction of the throat muscles and see a ghostly foot and part of a lower leg dangling in the air, about to rest upon my son I wake screaming with fear, the cold sweat pouring off my forehead That is the reason that, though he is now in physical

age a grown man, I go to his room every night and sit for many wakeful hours watching and waiting I cannot bear him away from me

A few years ago I went to Randall's Island There I saw hundreds of boys like mine Many were worse because their physical malformations were so horrible I wondered how many would have been there if their mothers had known how to prevent their birth

Was it my sin for which I have been punished? I did not want to bear a child who I knew would be born under a taint I tried my best There was nobody to help me

I love him far differently than the others To me he is still a child I have no friends People do not like to see his grinning face when they come, or to listen to his guttural meaningless grunts

My married sons try to come to me often But they have their own concerns I am lonely God, how lonely only You know! Gradually I feel all love and happiness is leaving me Only my son abides And I am afraid he will outlive me

He is physically strong and powerful I age a year in a day Merciful Heaven, who will care for him when I am gone?

NOTE The above was found by me, the physician called to attend the dying moments of the woman who wrote it Her illness was the result of a siege in which she nursed her son She survived him five hours They were buried on the same day I am publishing this in the earnest desire to advocate the right of preventive measures before conception The knowledge of such measures would have spared this woman a lifetime of misery and sorrow and would have saved this world the birth of a useless citizen

BUT, a reduced birth-rate being inevitable, the only questions which remained were How, and by whom, should it be reduced? Should it be by the traditional methods of celibacy (tempered by illicit sex-relations and prostitution), deferred marriage, infanticide, and abortion, or should it be by the new contraceptive methods? Again Should all sections of the population lower their birth-rates, or should only the more intelligent classes? Unfortunately for the race, it was the latter alternative which prevailed Instead of spreading contraceptive knowledge among the masses and thus mitigating as far as possible the evils of a racially destructive differential birth-rate, society succeeded in keeping the masses in ignorance and high fecundity, whereas it emphatically did not succeed in keeping contraceptive knowledge from the more intelligent, who increasingly practiced Birth Control—and diminished their contributions to the populations

—LOTHROP STODDARD

The Human Side of Birth Control

By EVELYN SHARP

(Reprinted from *The New Leader* of London)

IN a life already complicated by "causes" one does not readily take up a fresh one. But when a judge appears to feel so strongly on a subject that he puts himself to the trouble of arguing a jury out of one verdict into another—or so he seems, to a lay mind, to have done in a recent case—one's suspicions, cultivated to a fine point by the experience of what other humane movements have had to encounter at the hands of popular prejudice, are instantly aroused. What is there in the idea of Birth Control in the conventional mind that appears to insure a verdict against its supporters in the courts as surely as, until a few years ago, a verdict was assured against the supporters of woman suffrage?

What is clear to begin with, though it does not seem clear to some of its opponents, is that there is no longer any real question of stopping the practice of birth control or suppressing the knowledge that is necessary to its practice. It is, and has been for some time, practiced widely among members of the upper and middle classes, and among the better educated and more awakened members of the artisan class. The necessary knowledge is in the possession of so many today that its dissemination among the rest of the population is only a matter of time. But if, at this stage, the thing cannot be stamped out by opposition, or by adverse decisions in the courts, it can be hindered, and its open acknowledgment can be delayed. Herein, probably, lies the source of the immediate campaign.

So long as Birth Control was practiced in secret by the wealthier and more instructed section of the community, it was condoned. You could always pretend that it was a curious provision of Nature that endowed the duke's wife with three children and the docker's wife with thirteen. But directly the attempt is made to extend the knowledge of it to those who would otherwise have no opportunity of studying it scientifically, to give an equal chance, in fact, to the duchess and the docker's wife of choosing the number of her children, society takes fright. The crime of serious propagandists like Mrs. Sanger and Dr. Stopes is that, in trying to extend the limitation of families from fairly well-to-do circles to circles where food dwindles as families increase, they have dropped the detestable pose of whispering in corners about what may, or may not, be an inestimable benefit to humanity but is certainly practiced by numbers of people under that impression. They have openly acknowledged

the practice of Birth Control, and in the eyes of conventional people who were trying to ignore its existence in a respectable community theirs is an unpardonable offense.

But there is more than this in the conventional person's dislike of Birth Control propaganda. There is also class antagonism of a peculiarly selfish kind, for since no oppressive measures can now deprive the middle-class mother of the knowledge already gained, by which she can limit her family according to the income of the household, it seems to me the extreme of class prejudice and meanness to prevent the working-class mother, who has far more need to limit her family, from acquiring this knowledge. Where to the average woman of the comfortable classes the prospect of another addition to the family may occasion some anxiety, some readjustment of income and retrenchment of expenditure, to the average worker's wife, who can already only just "manage" on her husband's salary, it is more likely to mean despair.

There are few middle-class families in which some help is not available for the newcomer, so that the mother can continue, and rightly continues, to lead her own life after the child is born. How can she otherwise hope to be an intelligent companion both to her husband and her child when the latter grows up? But the ordinary working-class woman, bearing a child every year, acting all the while, single-handed, as nurse and cook and housekeeper and dressmaker and wife and mother and general drudge, cannot be said even to begin to have a life of her own at any time. There may be many things to urge against the conscious limitation of families, but it seems to me the height of hypocrisy to urge them first, instead of last, in the homes of these overworked mothers of the working class, old before they are forty, strangers to leisure or privacy or culture of mind or body, worn out in health and physique, while they are still young women, by constant child-bearing in circumstances that make a large family a burden and a social wrong, instead of a blessing and a social asset. Let those who condemn Birth Control preach, if they must, to the mothers in comfortable circumstances, rather than to these poor women, who, if they are to be deprived of the opportunity to acquire scientific information given openly by competent persons, will inevitably be driven to third-rate chemists in search of illicit and perhaps harmful remedies.

It strikes one as remarkable in this particular controversy that so many people seem to think that motherhood will die out in the land directly a woman learns how to avoid bearing a child. Do they think that motherhood is a disease to be avoided? Observation of the working mother is enough to convince one, not only of her uncomplaining fortitude in all circumstances, but also of the existence of a passionate and enduring love for children that no suffering and no poverty will ever extinguish.

There are, of course, some people who sincerely believe that Birth Control is wrong, on religious and social grounds, and perhaps grounds of health as well. The purpose of this article is not to combat this view where it is held, for nobody is suggesting that Birth Control should be compulsory, or practiced by those who think it is wrong. But it is important to point out that such dangers as may exist in its practice will be infinitely multiplied by driving the movement underground, which is what recent decisions in the courts may tend to do. The outstanding feature of our post-war society is the awakening of parents to the responsibility they take in bringing children into the world. By good means or bad, a growing number of mothers mean to limit their families. It is therefore of the highest social and racial importance that no impediment should be placed in the way of discovering and making known the best and most scientific methods.

For it is clear that although we cannot say now what the ultimate results of Birth Control will be, we have only to look round to see what are the manifold results of not practicing it. Those who oppose it because they think motherhood too beautiful a thing to be limited have never visited the filthy dwellings in which the greater part of our working population is born, have never studied the disgusting circumstances and repulsive surroundings in which our "surplus" childhood, day by day and year by year, is stunted and deformed and corrupted.

I do not pretend to approach the difficult subject of Birth Control except as a layman and from the human point of view. But I think that the nation which makes full and decent provision for unlimited families is the only nation which has the right to oppose the limitation of families.

I may say that I am a nurse at a State Hospital for the Insane. If one is against the practice of Birth Control, just let them visit an insane hospital, study the different cases, etc., see the effects of having too many children, and I believe they will be firm believers in Birth Control.
—Extract from a letter to Mrs. Sanger

Letter from a Catholic Woman

EDITOR, BIRTH CONTROL REVIEW

In the days of the Bible men had as many wives as they pleased. The women were under entire control of the men, both soul and body, and the good men wrote the scriptures in a way that made the women think they had to be their slaves, because it pleased the good men to have them so.

God gave the command to go forth and multiply to an empty world. He also gave us minds and intelligence, and men of science, to figure out these things for ourselves when the world became over-populated and full of misery. The mere fact that he allowed men in those days to have a number of wives proves that he did not intend to put the whole burden of populating the world on one or a few women.

The priests nowadays contradict themselves. They tell us that the abstinence is the only way out, then they tell us it is a sin to refuse our husbands, that if they go with other women after being refused by us, that is also our sin. This makes abstinence impossible. Also it makes everything a sin for the women and nothing for the man.

Men claim superiority over women in strength, morals, intelligence, etc., yet they are willing, and some of them anxious, to add to their wives' already overburdened shoulders the hardship of too many children. The priests also tell us that it is a sin to destroy the seminal secretion, that it is a gift of God. Yet all gifts can be misused, and we are supposed to use them to the best advantage. Also every married person knows that it only takes one tiny male seed to impregnate a woman and that thousands are being destroyed continually.

A family living near me has eight children, all close together. The father was out of work over a year. The children had to go ragged, the mother worked to death. Yet the priest visited that family, taking the census, and said "That's right, Mrs. Blank, have all the children you can, don't let anything interfere with your holy religion."

A Catholic woman said to me "If our Lord had not died for our sins, we should all be like animals." Well, what are we now? And what is more like animals than to breed as fast as one can? An intelligent human being would plan to have a child at the best time of the year, and when she could secure proper help. She would consider her own health and her husband's income. A woman who loved her husband would not wish to burden him with children he could not support. Also the woman who loved her children would want only as many as she could bring up properly.

I don't think Birth Control should be considered a religious question at all, or as being against religion. It is a matter of conscience and of forethought for the future generation. No one is competent to judge another in regard to something he himself has not experienced, the priests are not allowed to marry, how then can they know or understand the trials and difficulties of married people?

K B

“The Doctor Only Laughed”

Letters Showing the Demand for Birth Control

THE medical profession forms the pivot of Birth Control. The first objective of the American Birth Control League is the passage of laws which shall legalize the giving of Birth Control information, not only in the private practice of physicians, but especially at hospitals, dispensaries, maternity centers and clinics devoted to the purpose. But before a doctor can give contraceptive information, he must himself possess the knowledge, and most doctors have gone through medical school and hospital without any instruction on the subject having been imparted to them. At the present time there are experts who have gone deeply into the subject, but the ordinary medical practitioner knows little more concerning the best methods of preventing conception than the layman, and the blame that so many women heap upon the head of the doctors for their refusal to give advice misses its mark. Hitherto doctors have not devoted attention to the matter, because the law forbids them to teach the women. Change the laws, and the doctors will change their attitude, for they will realize the tremendous demand that exists for Birth Control among their patients of every class. They will then give as close and intelligent study to contraceptive theory and method, as they have done to typhoid fever or tuberculosis, or as is now being given to the study of cancer—a disease which is frequently the result of lack of Birth Control. The following letters show that the medical profession suffers in the public esteem for its inability to meet this vital need.

A DOCTOR SEEKS ADVICE

Dear Madam

Louisiana

I have just finished reading your book “Woman and the New Race.” I think your arguments and logic against the rearing, or bringing into the world of large families, are simply unanswerable, and in my opinion it will be only a few years until your views and ideas will be almost universally accepted. Like all great movements for the betterment of the human race, yours will finally sweep away the cobwebs of ignorance and bigotry now standing out against you, and when they are swept away, this will be a better, brighter, and happier world to live in. You say in your book that many physicians are ignorant of the harmless means of preventing conception, and I believe you are right. I know that I am, and one of my objects in writing you is to get you to tell me what your methods are, not that it would do me any good for I am in the position of the man who would lock the stable door after the horse is stolen, but that I may prevent my daughters, and other women who may come to me for advice, from becoming slaves and drudges from having too many children. I am hoping you will write to me, a country doctor with his nose on the grindstone on account of having a large family, six girls and one boy, to care for.

A DOCTOR'S WIFE

My Dear Mrs. Sanger

Pennsylvania

I have read your book with interest and will put it in my traveling library as I wish to interest others in this subject. Would like so much to learn of a safe contraceptive as I have five children, three of whom were born within a period of twenty-eight months. The baby is seven months old and so far I am not pregnant.

My husband is a doctor and he says there is no way except an abortion, which I would never do, for I consider it murder. I have been thinking seriously of being sterilized but find it will be hard to leave the children even for the two weeks necessary.

A DESPERATE FATHER

Dear Madam

Montana

I chanced to see your book advertised and, like a drowning man clutching at the straw, I sent for it right away in the hope that here at last might be a chance to save my family.

I am the father of four sons, the oldest was four years old in January and the youngest was born four days ago. I have been to the best doctors in my town and the best doctor in the nearest city, and if they gave me any advice at all it was something that did not work out. The leading doctor in the city told me that continence was the ideal way to prevent conception and that the only trouble with that method was that “It did not work out,” but he told me of no method that would work out.

Each of my four boys seems perfect, and we love them and will do our best for them. During this last pregnancy my wife was very irritable and would fly into a terrible rage about every week and accuse me of flirting and worse, and threaten to leave me and take the children with her, and I was just a bunch of nerves as a consequence, and could also be unreasonable and angry, but I don't think that any one who could read character would say it was my nature. I told my wife after this last little fellow was born that if no other means could be found, I would rather be castrated than to run the risk again of being the father of a crippled, deformed or feeble-minded child. We both feel that we are very lucky not to have had an imperfect child so far on account of too frequent pregnancy.

Your book has filled me with new hope and I will anxiously await your reply. I am going to show your book to a dear friend of mine who is married to a fine girl. They have had four children in seven years. The last one was born in June of this year, died at two weeks old, and now this poor girl is pregnant again, and besides that she has a goiter that is wearing on her nerves, and has bad teeth, which they cannot afford to have attended to, as

all the money he has is what he earns, and the doctors take all of that. I also have a brother in the East, who is the father of three small children, and his wife nearly died at the time of the last confinement. If she ever happens to become pregnant again, she will surely die and leave him with three or four small children that he will not be able to take care of.

I said I was like the man grasping at a straw but I hope this time I have caught hold of a good raft that will be strong enough to help me and my friends and others as ignorant as we have been.

THE DOCTOR KNEW OF NO PREVENTIVE

My dear Mrs. Sanger

New Jersey

Having just finished your book, "Woman and the New Race," I think when you understand my case you will be willing to give me the desired information. I have one child two years old. For eight months after his birth I was practically an invalid, after never having had a sick day in my life before. I had a very hard time and two operations after.

My family physician told both my husband and myself that he hoped I would have no more, but said he knew no preventive, even though we both begged him to tell us.

I am deadly afraid of my life to have another. My husband is only a wage-earner and we want to do the best we can for the child we now have in order that he may be a healthy, worth-while citizen and we have spent all our savings on doctors for me and still I am not healthy.

AMAZED TO FIND THEM SO IGNORANT

Dear Friend

Pennsylvania

Just finished reading your book, "Woman and the New Race," and it certainly does cover this important problem which confronts us today. My case is only one of the many. I have four children and all born so close that my physical condition is a nervous wreck. I have consulted doctors on this subject and it certainly is amazing to find these men so ignorant on this subject. I have consulted at least four or five doctors and none of them were able to give me reliable information.

WOULD BE ONLY TOO GLAD

Dear Madam

Nebraska

Having read your wonderful book, "Woman and the New Race," have decided to write to you, first of all in the appreciation of the wonderful work that you are trying to bring about and in my estimation should be. I am among the burdened ones, having only two children that are a year apart and have had several mishaps during the past year, one of which was of late, and I am sure that my life is shortened every time.

I begged the family doctor to give me something that would be a sure contraceptive, and he said he would be only too glad to give me something if he had it that would be reliable, but he said that he did not know of anything that one could rely upon.

COULD GET NO HELP FROM THE DOCTOR

Dear Mrs. Sanger

California

I have just finished reading your book, "Woman and the New Race." It has given me new hope, another lease on life, for I sent for the book at a time when life seemed impossible to me. I was very despondent and was ready to quit—not life, but to break up our home in order to live for the two little girls that I have.

I married very young and am not strong. I have given birth to two children and have had at least ten miscarriages in the last ten years. I am almost a wreck now, as you may know. Until I read your book, life with my husband seemed almost impossible, and though I love him more than anything on earth, I was willing to live away from him in order to live and rear the two girls that I have brought into the world.

The doctors all tell me not to have any more children, that it is dangerous for me and that I am not strong enough for it. I am nothing but an invalid all during pregnancy and for three years afterwards. Circumstances do not permit me to hire a nurse for all that time, so life is only a drag and misery to me. Now my husband is a strong and healthy man, and though he loves me and is very good to me, my condition is very trying to us both. It has almost broken my heart for I have not been able to understand and I could get no information, no help from a doctor. They all seem to think I am headed straight for the grave, but they can do nothing to help me keep out of trouble, though under the circumstances they will repeatedly perform these deadly operations. All of this has aroused a bitterness for the law and man that I cannot possibly describe and it is only for the children that I would have any desire to live.

UNRELIABLE ADVICE

My dear Mrs. Sanger

Maryland

I am writing you in desperation for help after reading your book, "Woman and the New Race" and have gone repeatedly to my physician for advice concerning contraceptives. He ordered douches—cold douches, which I discovered were not to be relied upon.

I have been married almost four years. My first baby came in June, 1919. I was in labor more than 48 hours before the doctors decided to give me ether and take the child. Our baby—a fine big boy—died during the long and tedious birth, and it was little less than a miracle that I lived. I went home from the hospital and remained almost an invalid until November when I was strong enough to go back for a repair operation.

In April of the present year, our second child—a daughter—was born. It was necessary to have a Caesarian operation or I would have had a repetition of what happened with the first child. So you see it is not possible for me to have a child by natural birth. We are very, very happy with our baby girl, and we are O! so thankful that we have her! But the fear of becoming pregnant again hangs over me almost constantly.

The Rationalists and Birth Control

JOSEPH McCABE, in "The Literary Guide and Rationalist Review" (London), for April, contrasts the attitude of Rationalism with that of the Roman Catholic Church in regard to Birth Control, and claims the honor for the Rationalists, which justly belongs to them, of having been steady supporters of Birth Control, when it was frowned upon by good churchmen in general, as well as by many people in high places who arrogate to themselves the virtue of patriotism. We give some extracts from this article

Lecturing a few weeks ago in a northern town, I heard, as usual, that the Catholics were boasting of progress, and that the local priest was singularly candid as to the manner of it. "Increase and multiply," he had said to the Catholic women under his jurisdiction. That may sound like a sincere, if mistaken, echo of Hebraic folk-lore, which he would regard as a Divine command, but he had added, cheerfully "And soon we Catholics will outnumber the Protestants."

That is the Catholic attitude on birth control. It has nothing whatever to do with refined sentiments. It is not based upon a profound respect for the procedure of nature or of the presumed author of nature. It is not even inspired by any plain principle of moral theology. Only by the grossest misrepresentation of Malthusian practices can a theologian even pretend to bring them under the sway of that weird mixture of medieval, monkish speculations which he calls the teaching of the Church. The official Catholic attitude is very definite. England generally has fallen from a birth rate of 35 per 1,000 to a rate of about 20 per 1,000. The higher the type—the Rationalist, the Unitarian, the educated Anglican—the less the birth rate. Well, say the Catholic clergy, if we cannot meet you in the intellectual field, if we cannot prevent tens of thousands of our "flock" passing over every decade to the great army of non-churchgoers, at least we will keep a 35 per 1,000 birth rate. We will thus double our population every twenty years, while our rivals, with almost stationary birth rate, must rely on the more delicate and arduous processes of intellectual and moral persuasion.

I am moved to these reflections, obviously, by a recent case in the courts. The final verdict on that case is, I believe, still to be given, and there will not be here the least effort to anticipate it, or to discuss any aspect of the case, which is still more or less *sub judice*, or may presently again fall *sub judice*. But the press of this country has commented on the test afforded by the case in its first stage, and every Rationalist must be astounded, if not outraged, at the widespread tendency to judge this grave practical issue on hypocritical pretexts or medieval sentiments.

What are the facts? I look back over a group of figures belonging to the first half of the nineteenth century, when

at length—in the year of civilization 6000 or thereabouts—it was perceived that an accurate determination of a nation's vital movements was desirable. Until then society had, in one breath, proclaimed the family its sacred and invaluable foundation, and had, in the next breath, laid upon parents a burden hardly fit for any social order above the level of savagery. In 1822 the population of England and Wales was twelve millions. To-day it is thirty-eight millions, and if it had not been for widespread birth control and very heavy emigration during the last half century, our population would in 1922 have been over fifty millions. That is to say, the natural increase of population, when there is a moderately civilized attempt to combat disease, is at least four-fold in a century. Reflect, then, on that paltry twelve-million population of 1822. England has, since the depopulation of the Ice Age, been inhabited for at least a hundred centuries. It was civilized two thousand years ago. The smallness of its population at the beginning of the nineteenth century was a grinning monument to the triumph of death, a monstrous summary of a hundred centuries of pain and loathsome disease and war and starvation and murder. That was the mechanism adopted by nature, presumably devised by the author of nature, to counteract human fertility.

In the first half of the nineteenth century we began to be "unnatural." Plague we banished from England forever. Small-pox and other redoubtable soldiers in nature's army we brought under control. We began to keep statistics. Our birth rate was 34 per 1,000 (and had been far more), our death rate was 23 per 1,000. Can any man even vaguely grasp the human anguish that is compressed into those figures? Try to imagine life in the then suburbs of London, the cellar-homes of Manchester, the slums of Liverpool. Half the boys and girls born never reached the age of twenty-one. Young children poured into the world, and sped out of it, as if the great god of England were the Saturn of ancient Carthage. This the state of things appointed or intended by an Almighty! Even the religious conscience revolted, where it was not paralyzed or terrorized by dogma. Disease must be fought. Slums must disappear. We began to talk of a social conscience, and the white-faced mother, gasping for breath on her doorstep in the slum in August, with a shrivelled, ghastly caricature of young humanity writhing on her lap, was inconsistent with any form of social conscience.

So we have cut down the death rate from 34 to 12 per 1,000, and we are only half-way through our work. American statistics, just to hand, claim a death rate of only 8.8 per 1,000 for the United States in 1922. There may be an error, but, clearly, a death rate of 10 per 1,000 is now possible, and it will eventually be much lower. Does even the Lord Chief Justice, or the Bishop of London, or the Pope, quarrel with this achievement?

(Continued at foot of next column)

Press Clippings

OUR DISGRACE

THE ever-menacing problem of infant and maternal mortality in the United States brings with it at least three immediate demands first and most important, a wide spread of scientific information on Birth Control, second, education of parents in infant and prenatal care, third, adequate hospital facilities. An appeal for funds issued by the Society of the Lying-in Hospital in New York brings out clearly some of the appalling facts of the situation. The United States is only third from the bottom of a list of sixteen civilized countries in its death-rate from causes connected with child-birth, more women of child-bearing age die from these causes than from any disease, except tuberculosis. In sketching the amazing work of the hospitals which have been under its control, the society shows one way out of this disgraceful situation the work of the maternity hospitals must reach out until it covers every village and every slum in the country. The passage of the Federal Sheppard-Towner bill gives us hope that in the educational field, too, the United States will approach the standards reached by other civilized parts of the world. Only in regard to Birth Control do we show no signs of a modern scientific attitude. A heavy infant mortality will be with us as long as we prevent parents from limiting their children to a number which can be decently fed and housed, and as long as any mothers are without adequate surgical and nursing aid when the critical hour comes—*The Nation*, New York

Then let them face the future of the race with the candid eyes of children. If they were to succeed in suppressing birth control, the population of England would rise to 100,000,000 long before the end of this century. Emigration? I like to hear people recommending emigration—to others. To themselves, exile from England forever would be the last deadly punishment, but, of course, a mere working man cannot be expected to have their fine feelings. "Tear up the roots of your little family," they say to him, "break every thread that binds your heart to your fellows and get to the other side of the planet—the climate is glorious." In any case, it is useless. The United States will be chock full in ten years. Canada and Australia will be full within half a century.

In this matter of birth control, at all events, it is very little use their pretending that they regard our social future. That is precisely what they utterly ignore. If we succeed in spreading over the earth our modern control of disease, we shall have, before the end of the twentieth century, 4,000,000,000 people gasping for breath on this globe unless there is birth control. It is the inexorable sequel of death control. But let us not stop there. We need to assert the rights of personality. We need to eliminate all that is morbid and ascetic from our conception of life. We need to make hypocrisy no longer profitable or expedient, and medievalism no longer respectable.

AN ENGLISH VIEW

THE recent prosecution for selling a practical pamphlet about birth control, so far as it has yet gone, has exposed the marvelous stupidity of certain persons of a certain importance. As there may be a further appeal, I shall not comment upon it further. But, seeing that grave misconceptions about birth control still exist in the minds of many people, I will state a few general propositions about the matter.

Birth control is regularly, almost universally, practiced by all the educated classes of this and other countries. It is a commonplace of their lives, and nobody among them objects to it. Only the lower classes do not practice it, and the reason why they do not practice it is ignorance.

Birth control is strongly supported by the leading medical authorities and the leading sociologists.

The last thing desired by the advocates of birth control is the distribution of indecent pamphlets likely to appeal to a prurient mind. Birth control can be, and is, adequately explained in perfectly decent and sober phraseology.

Advocates of birth control most assuredly do not desire the extinction of the race nor the lowering of the physical standard of the race. And they do not desire to pander to the shirking of parenthood by healthy and well-to-do parents. On the contrary, their main desire is to improve the race.

But they insist on the absurdity of a high birth-rate if a high birth-rate means a high infant mortality-rate. And they point out that in some parts of Britain, owing to the absence of birth control, one baby out of every four dies in infancy.

Thus tens of thousands of mothers undergo the tremendous ordeal of motherhood, and parents suffer the anguish of bereavement and the burdensome cost of births and funerals, and whole families are rendered miserable and penurious—with no resulting good whatever and a vast deal of resulting harm.

The advocates of birth control see a national danger, an unmistakable tendency towards national decline, in the uncontrolled, wholesale and animal-like breeding which at present goes on in the poorest and the least healthy classes.

The advocates of birth control do not want empty cradles. On the other hand they do not want cradles full of puny and useless infants whom their parents have not the means to nourish and bring up properly, and whose mere coming into the world involves deprivation, loss of health, misery and even tragedy for the households in which they appear.

The advocates of birth control have no fear that married couples will lose the habit of having children. They know that nature is unconquerable and does not change—*John Bull*, London

A DOCTOR'S OPINION

THE larger the family the poorer the quality as a rule, particularly where there is overcrowding and poverty, and one's experience is that the more fitted the parents, the less likely are they to have very large families. It is the weak, anæmic woman, unfit in mind and body, who bears a child every year, not her robust, strapping sister. Usually the death-rate in these large families is exceedingly high and the damage-rate higher still.

The worn-out mother is unable efficiently to look after the ex-baby, who in all probability is unable to walk, and as likely as not has rickets.

So it is tied to a chair to keep it out of mischief. Apart from these under-fed, ill-nourished mothers, those who are actively diseased are just as prolific. In the writer's eyes it is wrong that doctors should not instruct these women how to prevent conception. The women themselves usually bear it stoically, and will tell you calmly "they nearly died last time," not very much caring whether they do or not this. Some of them make things worse by drugging, in the hope that they will "be all right."

Opening my note-book at random, the first case that caught my eye was the family history of a delicate mother with an unfit baby. Her own mother died of cancer, after having thirteen children, of whom only two grew up. All the boys died about three months old. Surely she would have had a better chance with a smaller family.

Take the case of another woman who had been ill and suffered much for twenty-two years. She had borne ten children, of whom only two were alive, one with St. Vitus' Dance, the other with tuberculosis.

Imagine all the suffering entailed by so many deaths. Can anyone have the heart to allow this to go on, without trying to alleviate this unnecessary suffering? It is criminal to allow women in advanced phthisis or heart disease to go on bearing children. *Nay, it is murder.* How many doctors ever take the trouble to instruct these women to prevent these disasters?

—*Yorkshire Evening Post* (England)

Our Contributors

Sadie A. Frank, M.A., New York, Psychologist to Medical Dept., U.S. Army, 1918-19. Contributes to magazines and newspapers.

Harold Hersey, New York, writer, dramatist, poet, has new book, "Night," will appear shortly.

Rose C. Kroener, New York, lawyer.

E. W. MacBrude, eminent English biologist, Vice-Chairman, British Eugenics Education Society.

Edward G. Punke, Indianapolis, Ind., Professor of Sociology, Butler College.

William F. Ogburn, New York, Professor of Sociology, Barnard College, editor for the American Statistical Association.

Evelyn Sharp, London, England, writer, formerly prominent in English Suffrage movement.

Answering Herself

In our April issue we published a review, by Nalbro Bartley, of Kathleen Norris's new novel, "Certain People of Importance." In this review, Mrs. Bartley shows that the book was one long plea for Birth Control—for the liberation of enslaved wives and the salvation of women overburdened by child-bearing beyond the limits of human endurance. A couple of weeks after our April issue appeared, there emanated from one of the news services which supplies many newspapers over a wide territory, an article from the pen of Kathleen Norris, scoring any scientific form of Birth Control, and repeating the parrot cry of "self-control"—as if self-control would have been of any possible use to the wives she so graphically pictures in her novel. It would be an insult to the intelligence of Mrs. Norris to assume that she does not know the difference between contraception and abortion, yet she confuses the two when she writes of "hospitals full of white-faced women struggling back to partial health, winning a few years before the inevitable and untimely end, because nature will not be eternally flouted, because delicate flesh and blood pay the price when great privileges are abused and great purposes balked." It is absurd to suppose that these lines apply to Birth Control. Either Mrs. Norris has in mind the clumsy attempts at abortion resorted to by desperate women, or too rapid pregnancies and overmuch bearing, which she describes so sympathetically in her novel. "Wifehood meant physical weakness and helplessness, and under it, always and forever, ran the burdens and agonies of incessant childbearing." Is it possible that a woman whose observation is so keen, whose knowledge of human nature is so profound, whose insight into the hearts of women is so deep, whose joy in her own literary creation is so great, could possibly write with any sincerity of conviction "What a topsy-turvy world it is when women can find anything richer, sweeter, more utterly satisfying than the raising of whole families of sons and daughters!" Mrs. Norris has shown that she knows the consequences of the overbearing of children. How then can she write such sentimental nonsense as this "The miracle of life, as mysterious and so much more sweet than death—the fairies come alive and yours—your children." This may sound sweet and true of the babies that are wanted and welcome—the real Birth Control babies. But what about the baby whose mother dreads its coming as a sentence of death by starvation for her other children, already too many for her to clothe and feed. Would the mother agree who wrote to Mrs. Sanger "My first baby died from anemia, I have three living who are always sick, and the youngest is paralysed in both legs. I will die before I have more children and nothing to care for them on."

Science stands, a too competent servant, behind her wrangling, underbred masters, holding out resources, devices, remedies, they are too stupid to use.

H. G. WELLS

Book Reviews

A Review by William F Ogburn

THE PROBLEM OF POPULATION, by Harold Cox
G P Putnam's Sons, New York

THERE has been no population problem in the United States. For a dozen generations we have had a continent to fill with people. Our tradition and custom have been to desire great increases in our numbers. The more people, the merrier, so to speak, for increases in population meant more unearned increment to the real estate owners, more buyers for the merchants, more freight for the railroads, etc. Our position has been a very favored one. We have had to give no thought for the morrow.

But the situation has already begun to change. Our peoples have reached the Pacific Coast, and beyond is the ocean. There is no more free land. If New York City should continue to increase as it has in the past generation, within the lifetime of our children it will hold as many millions as now populate all the states west of the Mississippi. But where will we put all these people? We really have not faced the question. We do not look to the future, for our habit of thought is dictated by the past, by the old tradition of desiring greater numbers.

The overcrowding in our cities we take lightly. Most of us do not know that real wages began to fall about 1900. The unemployment crises of 1914 and 1921 do not dent our optimism. But coming events cast their shadows before.

Mr Cox has done a real service in publishing his book at this time, for we need to be jarred out of our complacency. And a splendid job he has done. His book is a model in exposition. It carries a distinctly here-and-now atmosphere.

The first chapter is a lesson in simple arithmetic — the arithmetic of rates of increase — and a very vivid presentation of a necessary lesson, for almost none of us realize this great potentiality of increase of population, which, like a rush of gas, quickly fills any open space. Seen this way, such rates of increase cannot be thought of without the idea of some kind of check or limitation. The economics of this increase is next shown by the author to be the core of the problem of welfare, that is, whether we shall raise our standard of living or whether we shall all grow poorer together. The author works all this out in concrete terms of housing, diet, sickness, etc.

We are next shown how that greatest of all terrors, war, rests fundamentally on the population problem. Throughout history and before, the pressure of population (due to this potentiality of increase) has been a great incentive to war.

Most of us think of high birth-rates in terms of the strain and suffering of the mother, in terms of the health and welfare of the child, and the economic burden on the family. All these are of tremendous human importance, but there is a broader view than that which concerns a particular individual. It is the viewpoint of progress and

of race, of the improvement of all our descendants in the great long future. Mr Cox shows very impressively how social progress and the selection of quality in our races are at bottom also problems of selective restriction of population.

These considerations place in high light the nobility of the ethics of birth control, which the author, in a most ingenious manner, contrasts with the ethics of the sordid primitive tale of Onan, a tale of a small group living in a distant land thousands of years ago, from which many persons today draw quite literally rules of guidance for great world problems of population in the complex civilization of the twentieth century.

The strategic position of birth control in this great issue of population is not only apparent but impressive. With it lie hope and progress; without it are the natural checks of famine, disease, war, and destitution.

A Review by Harold Hersey

UP AND COMING, by Nalbro Bartley G P Putnam's Sons, New York

THERE is a touch of terror in this quiet-looking book. To the sentimentalists it will be anathema. Outrageous! Terrible! It is honest. It is packed together in solid paragraphs of good writing. Facts are piled upon facts, and the whole moves forward with a kind of definite monotony, building that kind of realism which is the sure test of creative emotions.

Here is a study of three generations of American life, with neither the plastic purples of Hergesheimer nor the bourgeois profundities of the latter-day Dreiser, but rather the alert, deft work of a woman writer who has advanced much beyond her other work appearing in our toy shop magazines, the work of an unfrightened observer of life — of one whose appreciation of the wonder of living has not dulled her sensibilities to that undercurrent of sardonic tragedy that is the very essence of living.

The publisher has committed the usual *gaucherie* in his blurb, saying something or other about the hero (Jones Bynight) struggling between a peasant temperament and a patrician mind. How such a typical slogan hurts this excellent book! It is not a mere story of labels. It is bigger than this in that its artistry lies in the ease with which the third generation, as represented by the hero, uses the advantages poured out for it by well-meaning but ox-like parents and grandparents. Jones meets no colorful situations with banners flying, experiences few griefs. He merely flows along, growing more vital in a physical way because his stream of existence is fed by fresh currents of parallel energy by the sweet tenderness of women who are vastly superior to him emotionally. He does not have to reach for anything. He merely clutches to his heart what is offered — no more. He works hard, does not know how to play, and is loyal to his mother, because he must be subservient in order to exist. He is no "fighter

against Fate" after the manner of Becky Sharp or Lily Bart, nor is he the fantastic hero of a Sherwood Anderson melodrama. Had he not been the slave of his mother, and through her of the family, he would have served some other cause just as flabbily well.

The author commits a few errors, as, for example, when old Bynight dies. Pages 85 and 86 convey a pathos out of keeping with the balance of the book. I doubt whether the father of the hero could have "objectified" himself to the extent of so heroic a death-bed scene. It is too much like the lachrymose and eleventh-hour reformation of Mr. Dombey—too weak an effort towards a "situation" for so shrewd a craftsman as Nabro Bartley. But I have no time to pick out an Achilles' heel when I realize that it has been my good fortune to read an excellent book—a real book—by a sincere writer, unheralded by a lot of chatter on the part of little groups of "serious thinkers." This volume can stand alone as the simple work of art that it is, and when I say "simple" I mean that it has removed from it all the excrescences of affected writing, and that it has been put together like a fine mosaic, giving the simulacrum of life itself. More power to the pen of this fine writer!

IN DEFENSE OF WOMEN, by H. L. Mencken. Alfred A. Knopf, New York.

"There is no book on women by a man that is not a stupendous compendium of posturings and imbecilities." This quotation from the last page of Mr. Mencken's book is a not inappropriate, although perhaps rather severe, comment on its contents. Even though he claims credit for the "desire to be honest," such a desire does not necessarily counteract the general tendency to which he owns himself a victim. Nevertheless, like all Mr. Mencken's criticism, this book is thought-provoking. It continually strikes sparks in its iron work of sharpening the face of the reader. But it is unlikely that the women whom he undertakes to defend will take much notice of either the supposed defense or of the many sharp attacks. They will leave the matter to men, feeling that Mr. Mencken's ideas are so utterly remote and fantastic that any attempt to set Mr. Mencken right would be useless.

The process of making the world a fit place for women to live in has begun. It will go on, in spite of the subtle opposition set up by such writers as Mr. Mencken, and in time these men will come to see that a world fit for women to live in is also a far better world for men than the present structure. Men have never really made much effort to make the world fit. They have only vainly tried to fit themselves into the world. They have submitted to untold hardships and evils with unintelligent docility, and the result is a top-heavy social structure, based on misery and over-population and resulting in periodic outbursts of war and famine. The Birth Control movement, of which Mr. Mencken takes no cognizance, is on its way. It is a movement of liberation for women, for men, for the human race. It represents the innermost urgings of women

—not merely of the "Suffragettes" whom Mr. Mencken so cordially despises, but of the millions and millions of women who hitherto have not raised hand or voice on their own behalf. To understand women Mr. Mencken will have to understand the Birth Control movement, and to get some glimpse of the vision which is inspiring women in the fight they are making for the right to control their own motherhood. To begin with, he would do well to read a series of letters from mothers such as appear from month to month in our pages. He would learn more about the spirit and needs of women from them than from years of social intercourse with women who are never likely to show their real selves to Mr. Mencken. A. G. P.

A Review by Rose C. Kroener

INSANITY AND THE CRIMINAL LAW, by William A. White, M.D., Superintendent of St. Elizabeth's, the Federal institution for the insane at Washington, D.C., (The Macmillan Company) amply compensates the reader for the couple of hours necessary to finish it, for keen analysis and many sensible suggestions have been concentrated into this small volume.

Dr. White shows the growth of laws dealing with the insane from the early days (when psychiatry was almost unknown) to the present day, and how the old ignorance still dictates legal procedure. A relic of the old system is our use of expert witnesses not really in a position to give an unbiased opinion upon the accused's sanity, because they have been hired and are being paid by one side or the other and however hard they may try to be unbiased are for that side. He shows still further that the jury knows this and so discounts the opinion of the expert. In the last analysis, sanity is still being passed upon by the layman on the jury and by a judge who has no special training in this line.

The plea of insanity in a trial today is apt to be passed upon affirmatively or negatively, as the jury feels sympathetic with or antagonistic to the prisoner, that is, if the crime is one that they excuse on the ground of unwritten law, for instance, they consider him insane, whereas, if the crime is particularly atrocious, he is considered sane so that he may be punished to the full extent of the law, regardless of his institutional record or the unanimity of experts as to his lack of mental capacity to comprehend his crime.

Dr. White gives well-rounded, constructive criticism in the chapters devoted to proposed legislation, especially to the law permitting a judge to summon independent experts to aid the court without being hired by either side. A suggestion is made that judges in criminal courts get some training in the kind of material they are handling, that is, first-hand understanding of criminals, and that district attorneys and their assistants have scientific as well as legal training, working under a competitive civil service system rather than the present political one.

While much of the criticism and suggestion of Dr. White can scarcely fail to strike the legally trained mind

as somewhat radical, it is presented so lucidly and from such a background of thought and experience that every word merits deep consideration, and, on the whole, the reader is convinced that the whole discussion is not only fundamentally sound but very timely, since the insane and feeble-minded are still peopling the earth. Sterilization of these groups is a part of the birth control program.

THE HISTORY OF WOMAN SUFFRAGE, Vols V and VI, 1900 to 1920, by Ida Husted Harper, National American Woman Suffrage Association, New York

WITH these two volumes Mrs. Ida Husted Harper has completed the colossal history which was begun by Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton in 1877. The plan of work makes of the whole six volumes rather a reservoir of records than a real history, and the feminist movement of the last hundred years still awaits its historian. This is well, for the movement is still in progress, and no true perspective is yet possible. Woman suffrage was one, but only one, important step forward, other steps must be taken before women are really free. Most necessary and most essential for this freedom is the attainment of birth control, for until women are given the right over their own bodies and the power to regulate their own offspring, they cannot escape from the slavery in which, by law and by custom, by brute force and by the still stronger force of public opinion, they have so long been held.

THE American Civil Liberties Union has issued a pamphlet giving the record of its work from September, 1921, to January, 1923. This is its second report since its organization early in 1920. Its field has covered both Federal and state interferences with constitutional rights of individuals and organizations. Among the local cases of arbitrary police action was the stopping of the birth control meeting in New York City on November 13, 1921, when the C. L. U. came to the assistance of Margaret Sanger and the American Birth Control League. Later than the period covered by the pamphlet, the C. L. U. made a protest against the refusal of Mayor Hackett to permit any discussion of birth control legislation in Albany. The record of useful work of the C. L. U., as given in its two reports, is full justification of its existence.

BOOKS RECEIVED

From the Macmillan Co., New York, **HEALTH BUILDING AND LIFE EXTENSION**, by Eugene Lyman Fisk, M.D.

From Richard G. Badger, Boston, **THE LAWS OF LIFE**, by William M. Goldsmith.

From Boni & Liveright, New York, **THE SECRET OF WOMAN**, by Helen Jerome.

From Frederick A. Stokes Company, New York, **WHAT'S WRONG WITH OUR GIRLS**, by Beatrice Forbes-Robertson Hale.

From Cosmopolis Press, New York, **CRUCIBLES OF CRIME**, by Joseph Fishman.

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Mother and Child, Washington, D C, the organ of the American Child Health Association, in its issue for May gives a table of maternal mortality showing the United States nineteenth in a list of countries which includes not only Scandinavia, whose health records are uniformly good, Great Britain and her Australasian Dominions, but also Hungary, Spain, Uruguay and Japan, all of which in this respect have lower rates than the 68 per thousand births which disgraces the United States. In another article, Dr Philip Van Ingen discusses infant mortality according to birthplace of mother, giving the rate from various causes. "Over 40% of the babies lost," he states, "die in their first month of life. Congenital malformations, prematurity, and congenital debility—the last two of which as 'causes' of death are a confession of our dense ignorance of the physiology of the beginning of human life—are in a general way an index of the health and health habits of the mother." "When communities," he adds, "appreciate that it is cheaper and better to spend money in preventing disease than in curing it and that to develop personal health and health habits is true patriotism, we shall accomplish our end."

A table given in the May number of the *Journal of Social Hygiene* (New York) gives the number of births in the ten largest cities of France for 1921 and 1922 respectively. The total number for 1921 was 78,167, for 1922, 71,256. If a similar ratio holds throughout the country, the decrease for 1922 will be about 70,000 births, a decrease which persists in spite of all efforts of government to check it. As the decrease is generally attributed to voluntary restriction, it is an evidence that the people of France are suffering from profound discouragement over their present circumstances and the policy of their rulers. Hope and brighter prospects in life for their children would form the best incentives to the mothers of France to increase the number of their children.

An article on the "Latest Canadian Census" in the *Edinburgh Review* (London) for April comments on two remarkable disclosures. One concerns the relative increase of the French and English-speaking Canadians, the other, the differential birthrates of the various classes composing the population. As regards the first point, it is noted that the ratio of the French Canadians fell during the decade 1911-1921 from 29 to 28.5. "A ludicrously high birth-rate among the French Canadians," writes the author of the article, "is balanced by a disgraceful infant death-rate, in some communities in Quebec it is as high as 200 per 1,000." The differential birthrate of localities inhabited by rich and poor respectively is given for Toronto. In East Toronto, a district largely inhabited by foreign born immigrants, the birth rate is 43 per 1,000, West Toronto, inhabited by stockyard and railway employes, has a rate of 39, while wards inhabited by artisans and clerks, show birthrates ranging from 27 to 21, and Rosedale, the Toronto Mayfair, has the low birthrate of 12.3 per thousand.

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