

BIRTH CONTROL REVIEW

Edited by Margaret Sanger

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STORY AND IMPRESSIONS
OF
The Chicago Conference

Civilization at the Crossways

By
Professor E. M. EAST

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The BIRTH CONTROL REVIEW

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE AMERICAN BIRTH CONTROL LEAGUE

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

MARGARET SANGER, Editor

Vol VII

DECEMBER, 1923

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The World We Live In

THAT interest in Birth Control is wide-spread and rapidly increasing was proved by the Chicago Conference of October 29, 30 and 31. It was proved by the fact that delegates were present from women's clubs and social welfare organizations in all the eight Middle Western States comprised in the Conference area. The delegates were there with the determination to learn, and especially to secure information that would enable them to deal with cases that had come under their own observation. The Middle Western States have an advantage over the East. They do not have to contend against laws forbidding the giving of contraceptive information, and while the Conference unanimously went on record as approving the relegation of the duty of giving Birth Control information to the medical profession, it was realized that the doctors are not yet prepared to perform this duty. Until the medical profession wakes up to its responsibility, the trained nurses and social workers who come in contact with the tragedies of ignorance, feel that they must supply the lack, just as they would feel it necessary to do their best for a pneumonia or typhoid patient if no doctor were within reach.

IT RESTS with the medical profession whether contraception is to remain on an unsatisfactory empirical basis, or whether it is raised to the high level of scientific knowledge. The demand is here. It is keen and insistent. The women know that there is such a thing as the control of reproduction and they are determined to possess it. What is the medical profession going to do about it? If the doctors claim the field, they must set to work to prepare themselves to occupy it adequately, for the time has gone by when a casual recommendation of some ineffectual method would satisfy. The women demand safe and scientific means of Birth Control. They feel they have a right to the knowledge, and they want to know whether the doctor really understands the subject, and whether he is treating the matter with the same care and respect that

he would give to any other of their physical requirements.

ANOTHER fact emerged from the Chicago Conference, a fact which has been obvious in all recent public discussions of Birth Control. This is that the study of the population question by economists, sociologists and statisticians has far outrun the research and investigation devoted to the means of meeting the danger of over-population by men of equally high rank in biology, genetics, physiology and medicine. The world, helped by distressing object lessons furnished by China, India, Germany and Great Britain, is beginning to realize that increase of population is not necessarily beneficial to a country. But the methods of Birth Control, which is the only feasible and humane way of meeting the danger, have not received the attention that they deserve and demand, and until the biologist and the physiologist give as much attention to solving the problem of population as the economist and sociologist have given to proving its existence, mankind will still wait for the boon of the ideal contraceptive.

THE attempt of Sir William Beveridge to banish "Malthus's Devil," in his address to the British Association at its annual meeting in Liverpool last September, aroused a controversy which has extended to this side of the Atlantic. John Maynard Keynes, who was attacked by Sir William Beveridge, made a reply in *The New Republic* for October 31. It was hardly wise for a man whose special study was geography to enter the lists on a question of economics with so formidable an opponent as Mr. Keynes. As might be expected, the reply is crushing, and is likely to make short work of the optimism concerning Great Britain's population question which flickered up after Sir Wm. Beveridge's announcement. The question of over-population in England is urgent. In October the number of unemployed men and boys receiving doles was over a million and a quarter, and the ex-

pectation was that this number would be greatly increased with the coming of winter. As Mr Keynes showed, the export markets on which British industry depends are now much below the pre-war level, and are little likely to expand with an expanding population even if the demand for British goods in other countries should again assume its former proportions.

MORE than this—Mr Keynes showed that, in spite of the reduction in the birthrate, "the absolute number of daily births in Great Britain today is nearly double the number of deaths." The average age of an increasing population is necessarily lower than of a stationary population, and even if the birthrate were to drop so that it would balance the deathrate, there would be for many years to come a great increase in the number of the old, who would have to be supported by the community, and also a sharp increase in the number of adult workers, as the boys and girls now growing up entered the ranks. Emigration is recommended to meet

this situation, but under present circumstances emigration is only a palliative, and, as Mr Keynes points out, it is a ruinous expedient for the old country which must bear the cost of raising and educating a child up to working age, and then send the man to live his productive life in another country. Improvements may come, as Sir William Beveridge suggested, but "is it safe," asked Mr Keynes, "to leave the question of numbers unregulated in the mere hope that we may be rescued by one of these conceivable, but as yet unrealized, improvements?"

THE first part of a series of articles from the pen of Hugh de Selincourt, entitled "The Psychology of Sex" will appear in the January issue of the *Birth Control Review*. Mr de Selincourt stands next to Havelock Ellis in the delicacy of his approach and the keenness of his insight in regard to all aspects of the Sex Question. As our readers know, his literary style and his mastery of language make his articles a delight, whatever may be their subject.

The Chicago Birth Control Conference

THE closing days of October, 1923, were made memorable in the history of the Birth Control movement by the Conference of the Middle Western States in Chicago. On the opening day, there were assembled in the Ball Room of the Hotel Drake delegates from women's clubs, and social service organizations, doctors and Public Health officials, who had come together to consider the subject of Birth Control. In calling the Conference the American Birth Control League pointed to the high and increasing cost of Charities and Corrections, which is necessarily borne by the self-supporting and fit members of society, and asked whether it was sufficient to keep on attempting to ameliorate conditions for the defective and delinquent. Birth Control strikes at the root of the evil and offers a way by which the unfit can gradually be eliminated from society and by which also the perils of over-population, which are already so obvious in Europe, can be avoided or overcome.

The Conference opened on Monday afternoon with a reception to the delegates who had come from the cities of the eight States included in the area of the conference. Mrs Sanger, Mrs George H Day, Mrs Juliet Rublee and Mrs Anne Kennedy received the guests, many of whom were anxious at once to secure Mrs Sanger's advice on problems which they had encountered in their social and philanthropic work. From the first, it was obvious to all that there are two lines of work both of which are necessary to the movement for Birth

Control. The first line is popular education in the need for Birth Control—the sociological and economic need for restriction of the population and the social, family and individual need for checking the too great increase among the very poor and especially among the physically, mentally and morally unfit. The second is the provision of suitable means of Birth Control, which must be done by the medical profession and by the biologists.

The Public Meeting

The evening meeting on Monday was open to the public as well as to the delegates. Mr Horace J Bridges, President of the Chicago Ethical Society took the chair, and Mrs Margaret Sanger was the chief speaker. In his opening address, Mr Bridges, taking the high ground that would naturally be expected from a man in his position, emphasized the fact that Birth Control was not a movement of cranks looking for a job in the uplift line, but was work forced on the community by the effects of the blind play of uncontrolled natural forces. He spoke of the vast tide of human suffering due to the arrival of too many children in families that could not support them, in nations already too populous to welcome such additions. The leaders of the Birth Control movement, he said, had literally been reluctantly forced into the work. He compared the uncontrolled birthrate of Russia with its concomitant high deathrate, with the birthrate of New Zealand—far lower, but accompanied by

a lower deathrate. A rationally controlled birthrate, he insisted, does not necessarily mean stationary population. Control means movement in a direction that is desired. If a country is overpopulated, it may be best to decrease the number of its people. If it is at the optimum point, the population should remain stationary, but if the land is underpopulated, like New Zealand, it may be best to have a controlled increase, such as New Zealand enjoys under the free play of Birth Control.

Mr Bridges then took up the more individual aspects, and especially the attitude of the Eugenists towards Birth Control. Under present circumstances the net result of a high birthrate among the poor and unfit is often not more children but poorer quality among those who survive, and a vast amount of suffering on the part of mothers and children who are sacrificed to uncontrolled bearing. Very much of this suffering would be saved if scientific Birth Control were taught to the mothers, and if suffering is preventable, it is the duty of society to prevent it.

Mrs Sanger, whose speech sounded the keynote of the Conference, gave her story of the Birth Control movement as she had seen it, and worked in it for the last ten years. She took the audience into her confidence in regard to her own early experiences as one of a family of eleven children, and later as a trained nurse working among both rich and poor, then of her determination to work for Birth Control, the early struggles to secure the right to speak and teach, and the world wide development that had come recently, especially in connection with her visit last year to Japan and China.

Professor Ross as Chairman

Tuesday morning saw the first regular session of the Conference. The delegates and visitors assembled in the Ball Room of the Hotel Drake, and Professor E. A. Ross of the University of Wisconsin, big and impressive both in person and in the fullness of his sociological learning, took the chair, after a brief and pleasant introduction by Mrs Sanger. The first paper was the excellent one by Professor E. M. East, which we give in this issue of the Review. As Professor East had been unexpectedly prevented from being present the paper was read by Rev. Frank S. C. Wicks of Indianapolis. Mr Wicks, eager, keen and every inch a pastor of the modern type, read the paper *con amore*, reducing the loss from the absence of the writer to a minimum.

Judge Harry Olson, Chief Justice of the Municipal Court of Chicago, Ill., whose paper was second on the programme, was also unable to be present. In his case again there was an excellent represen-

tative, this time in Professor H. Harley, who had the advantage of being able to give the audience a sketch of the excellent work that had been accomplished by Judge Olson in the enforcement of law, the suppression of petty crime, and the separation of juvenile from older offenders. Judge Olson was responsible, he stated, for several new departures in Chicago—the establishment of a domestic relations court, a morals court, a speeders' court for offenders against traffic regulations, a boys' court and the Chicago Psychopathic Laboratory, where careful investigation was made into the mental condition of offenders. The paper that followed these preliminary remarks discussed Crime and Heredity, and showed vividly the waste through our present methods of encouraging the multiplication of the unfit.

An Arresting Paper

Of all the papers given at the Conference, none was more arresting than that of Dr. Eleanor R. Wembridge, Clinical Psychologist of the Women's Protective Association of Cleveland. Pretty and youthful in appearance it would have seemed impossible that she should have come in contact with so much of the almost incredibly sordid aspects of life, which she described so vividly, or have made such wise and true judgments as appeared in her paper, had one not observed the keen intelligence of her glance and the ability and poise with which she handled her subject. Speaking only from brief notes, she described the methods of classification used in dealing with the feeble-minded and borderline cases, and showed the absolute necessity of teaching these girls and women Birth Control. She acknowledged that there would be difficulty in ensuring that they would use the methods after they had been taught, but insisted that this difficulty was only one more reason for the institution of clinics, where the teaching could be impressed on them again and again, until the lesson was actually learned.

The last paper of the morning session was given by Professor Ross himself. Its title was "The Social Trend in America." It treated the subject of restriction of population from the point of view of the Sociologist, and it made an earnest plea to the American public to stop and consider the waste of unnecessary deaths which results from absence of any policy of control of the birthrate. It is useless to attempt to summarize the paper here. To be appreciated it must be read in full, and we hope to give our readers the opportunity to do this very shortly.

The discussion which followed the papers brought up many questions of interest. Among those who

took part in it were Rev F C S Wicks, Dr Rachelle Yarros, Dr L Brunk, Dr Antonette Konikow of Boston and, in reply to questions, Professor Ross, Mrs Sanger and Dr Wembridge

Society and Birth Control

The importance of Birth Control to the welfare of society was again emphasized at the afternoon session, when the Chairman was Professor Herbert Adolphus Miller of Oberlin College. Professor Miller's own contribution to the Conference was entitled "Social Control and Birth Control." Chambers of Commerce, as Professor Miller envisaged them, form one of the present obstacles to Birth Control, and he urged a campaign of education that would persuade these bodies that the main object of life is not to increase the population. Their present attitude is too frequently a boasting of bigness to the exclusion of higher values. Professor Miller's paper was a serious and valuable study of the forces making for and against Birth Control, but it was relieved by many flashes of wit which compelled close and delighted attention.

The next speaker, Professor Leon Jacob Cole, so keen in appearance that one felt it would be a difficult problem indeed that could evade solution by him, is at present Chief of the Animal Husbandry Division of the U S Department of Agriculture. But he claimed the right to speak on Birth Control not so much from his experience in animal breeding as from his biological study. Under the title "Animal Aristocracy and Human Democracy," he showed the contrast between the care expended on the breeding of animals and the utter neglect of society concerning the breeding of human beings. He did not advocate putting men and women under control such as is exercised by animal breeders, but emphasized the fact that the same laws govern heredity for men and animals, and that if we go on breeding the human race from the most inferior stocks we cannot expect improvement. He pleaded for more education in genetics, and urged that we must make society see that conscious evolution is possible and is preferable to the haphazard methods of nature.

Tuberculosis and Birth Control

Dr S Adolphus Knopf, of New York, the next speaker, whose excellent work in regard to tuberculosis is well known, attacked the question of Birth Control, not from the sociological nor economic point of view, but from the standpoint of the physician who would banish the dread white plague and other social diseases. He pointed out how largely health depends upon heredity—influenced, of course, by environment, but primarily due to

the stock from which the man or woman sprang. This is true not only of mental deficiency, where heredity is generally acknowledged to be of first importance, but also of tuberculosis and other physical ailments. "It is my conviction," he said, "that had our government and private agencies attacked the tuberculosis problem from the eugenic side as thoroughly as they have from the environmental, the result in the reduction of our tuberculosis rate would have been so startling as to justify the hope of the absolute eradication of the disease within a generation."

Dr Knopf's paper covered practically all the arguments for Birth Control and took up and answered the objections usually brought against it. He urged Birth Control Clinics as the best means of bringing Birth Control information to the parents who need it, and also emphasized that these clinics would have a constructive side, in dealing with sterility which can often be removed by proper medical means and which is often the cause of great unhappiness. Dr Knopf's earnestness and the impression he made upon his hearers of intense conviction gave an especial value to his paper. Here was a man who had given his life to the fight against tuberculosis. He had done his utmost and yet he felt that without Birth Control the fight was in vain and the victory so distant as to be practically out of sight. When we talk of the immigration problem, it behooves us to remember what we owe to men like Dr Knopf, whose foreign accent does not allow us to forget his European origin.

There were two more papers at the afternoon session. One was from the Rev John H Ryan, Chaplain at the Illinois State Reformatory at Pontiac, and the other from H Pauline Little, R N, whose varied experiences during the war entitled her to be heard on the need for Birth Control. Mr Ryan gave an account of a debate among the men and boys of his Institution, and stated that they had come to the conclusion that voluntary limitation of the family was essential to successful family life—a conclusion arrived at without any outside influence or interference.

The Medical Session

Undoubtedly the most interesting session of the Conference was that of Tuesday evening which was reserved to the medical profession. It is very encouraging to the advocates of Birth Control that the doctors should show such keen interest in the practical aspects of the question, because it is to the doctors that we look for the carrying out of the Birth Control programme. At present, owing to the fact that Birth Control is not taught in the medical schools and that there are very few clinical

data to form a basis of knowledge, there is great ignorance on the subject even among gynecologists. The most interesting papers were therefore those of Dr James F Cooper, Clinical Instructor in Obstetrics, Boston University Medical School, formerly of Union Medical College, Foochow, China, Dr Antonette Konikow, Boston, and Dr Dorothy Bocker, Director of Clinical Research in Birth Control in conjunction with the work of Margaret Sanger in New York. The Chair at this meeting was taken by Dr Joseph L. Baer, one of the best known gynecologists and obstetricians in this country, who has long ago given his hearty adherence to the policy of Birth Control.

For the benefit of the delegates, especially those from social workers' organizations and the nurses who attended the conference, the findings of the medical session were reported by Mrs Sanger and Dr Bocker at a special session held on Wednesday afternoon. Again the interest in this practical side of the subject was shown by crowded attendance. Many of the delegates had come in contact with cases which they had been unable to relieve, and in the absence of the clinics, which all desire to see established, they sought the knowledge that would enable them to teach Birth Control to women to whom another pregnancy meant misfortune, disaster or even death.

A Crowded Day

The last day of the Conference was crowded with work and interest. There was a full session in the morning, with Dr John Favill as Chairman, a luncheon in the great ball-room of the hotel at half-past-one, with a session immediately following that lasted until after four, and finally Mrs Sanger's special session with the delegates on Birth Control methods.

The papers at the morning session included one from Dr C C Little, President of Maine University, which was read by Dr Favill, as Dr Little was unavoidably absent, an account by Mr Owen Lovejoy, General Secretary of the National Child Labor Committee, of the deterioration of child life through child labor, and reports on Birth Control work by Dr Rachelle Yarros and Mrs James F Porter of Chicago, Mrs Anne Kennedy, Executive Secretary of the American Birth Control League, and Dr Dorothy Bocker, who, before she entered upon her present work in clinical research, was attached to the Public Health Service of Georgia. Dr Little's paper was a plea for more knowledge concerning methods of contraception, for more research and investigation, using small mammals as material, and a more general recognition of the importance of the problems of Birth Control. Mr Lovejoy made very clear the cheap-

ness of child life which tends to the employment of children in field and factory. But, while he acknowledges his belief in Birth Control, he is so much engrossed in the immediate work of protecting the children already in the world, that he has scarcely had time to lift his eyes to the ranks upon ranks of children waiting to be born, children who, if the nation still refuses Birth Control to the mothers, will inevitably be child laborers a short generation hence.

Mrs Kennedy's report covered the whole of the activities of the American Birth Control League since its organization in November, 1921, while that of Mrs Porter was concerned with the history of Federal Legislation affecting the conveyance of Birth Control information and material through the mails or by public service carriers, and the attempts that have been made to secure the amendment of these laws. Dr Yarros and Dr Bocker both spoke from personal experience. Dr Yarros took as her subject "Birth Control and Sex Hygiene," and Dr Bocker, looking towards the future when Birth Control would be one of the most important public health activities, made an appraisal of the work these authorities are now undertaking and the cost of this work to the public, when no effort is made to check the increase of the unfit. Both papers aroused the keenest interest. In fact during the whole conference, interest was always most lively when the practical aspects of the subject were touched. After this session—as after all the sessions—there were many questions and considerable discussion, and it is worthy of note that none of the questions was obstructive or hostile, and that the discussion was kept mainly on useful and constructive lines.

The Luncheon

The luncheon was held in the Drake ball-room, the floor of which was so crowded that tables had to be set in the gallery to accommodate guests whose applications came at the last moment. All the delegates were present, and many of Chicago's most distinguished citizens including Miss Jane Addams and some of her Hull House colleagues, were there. Rabbi Louis L. Mann, formerly of New Haven, Conn., and now of Chicago, presided. He sounded the note of the Morality of Birth Control when he said that every child should be well born and welcome, and that it had been well said that the 11th Commandment was "Honor thy son and thy daughter." His reading of old Talmudic literature had shown him that even in the days before the Christian era, the wise men of Israel had realized the necessity of checking the multiplication of the unfit.

At this session a report on the efforts of the Illinois Birth Control League—or rather of a committee of members of this League—to establish a Birth Control Clinic in Chicago was made by Mrs Willoughby G Walling. She told of the organization of the Committee, its work in preparing for the opening of the clinic and the obstacles it had encountered through the opposition of the Commissioner of Health, Dr Bundesen. They were then, she stated, awaiting a decision of the court on their application for a mandamus which would compel the granting of the license for the Clinic.

Margaret Sanger's address, which was the culmination and summing up of the Conference, followed that of Mrs Walling. Rev James Austin Richards, of Winetka, whose name was on the programme, sent a message stating that to his manifold regret, at the very moment when he was to have been at the Conference, he had had to conduct a funeral of a beloved and respected friend. The message continued—

I would not have the church serve any less at the portals of the next life, but more at the portals of this. I rejoice in its strong voice of faith regarding those who have finished here, but it must also find its voice in behalf of those not yet born. That it will find that voice I have this reason for believing. When I agreed to speak for you, someone not in my church called it courageous. I did not agree then and I am further from agreeing now, for since then not one person in my church has spoken any criticism and many have come to tell me their gladness that the church was to have a place on your programme. The more important a matter, the more needful is it that it be studied in the light and guided by intelligence. There is no more important power given to humans than the power to summon other souls to walk with them here. That in large sections of our population the exercise of this power is now left to chance and to ignorance is a crime of which we shall sometime all learn to be ashamed.

The final address of the Conference, an address which formed its culmination and which summed up its work, was then given by Margaret Sanger. She surveyed the subject of Birth Control, giving special attention to the need for controlling reproduction in relation to the health and circumstances of the mother and father. She also took up briefly the objections against Birth Control, especially that of its supposed immorality—an objection which takes no heed of the fact that, if parents understood how to control their offspring, early marriage and happy wedded life would be substituted for attempted celibacy and the degradation and disease of prostitution.

The Demand for Clinics

The Conference went on record as favoring the giving of Birth Control information by the medical profession, and the establishment of clinics for this purpose when it passed unanimously and with acclamation the following resolution—

Whereas, if civilization is not to be swamped by an increasing proportion of the unfit, it must be made possible for all women, especially those who are now the victims of excessive child bearing, to obtain information about Birth Control such as is already utilized by women more fortunately circumstanced, and

Whereas, experience has demonstrated that methods of Birth Control must meet the needs of the individual case which can only be effected by personal interviews between physician and patient,

Therefore, be it resolved, that this Conference go on record as advocating the giving of Birth Control information by the medical profession in private practice, in hospital and dispensaries and in special Birth Control Clinics, and

Be it further resolved, that this Conference endorse the efforts to establish a Birth Control Clinic in Chicago.

Greetings from Abroad

An interesting feature, and one that must not go unnoticed in any attempt at a story of the Conference, was the reading, on the opening day of a number of messages of encouragement and approval. The first of these was from Professor E W MacBride of London,* who wrote—

Will you tell your friends that the Eugenics Education Society of England is quite converted to the cause of birth control? We are going to agitate for an enquiry by the Ministry of Health into the best methods of control—those devoid of any danger to health and then, when the best method has been authoritatively determined, to urge that it should be taught to all desiring to use it in hospitals, maternity centres and poorhouses. Any hesitation that we may have as to the wisdom of such propaganda is entirely due to some remaining uncertainty as to the best method.

We find that practically all the middle and upper classes practice birth control—as do the best section of the working class. Only the poor and ignorant are devoid of the knowledge of the methods—and the suffering of the women in these classes is appalling. In any democratic state it is utterly unjust that one section of the community should be denied knowledge which is available to other sections.

*[Fellow of the Royal Society—Professor of Zoology in the Imperial College of Science and Technology (the holder of Huxley's chair) Vice-President of the Zoological Society of London 1913-1923. Member of Advisory Board to British Government on Fishery Science. Vice Chairman of Eugenics Education Society of London.]

Further, from the Eugenic point of view, the offspring of these poor people are the least competent and least desirable members of the community, yet it is they who are constituting by their greater reproduction the larger part of the coming generation. Formerly, in less humanitarian days, the offspring of these incompetents died out and the evil of their quick reproduction was thus neutralised, but now the effort of the social reformer is to keep all babies alive.

Lastly it may be added that in the absence of the knowledge of proper methods of control, wicked and dangerous methods will be resorted to. Amongst the British working class artificial abortion is very common and often leads to the death of the mother.

Mr H G Wells wrote — "I'm rather run down and dull today and I can't think of a fresh original message for your conference. But why not read them a passage you will find in 'Men Like Gods,' describing how the world was destroyed by reason of over-population."

The passage to which Mr Wells refers is as follows —

The first response of the general population of Utopia to the prospect of power, leisure and freedom thus opened out to it was profleration. It behaved just as senselessly and mechanically as any other animal or vegetable species would have done. It bred until it had completely swamped the ampler opportunity that had opened before it. It spent gifts of science as rapidly as it got them in a mere insensate multiplication of the common life. At one time in the Last Age of Confusion the population of Utopia had mounted to over two thousand million.

The overcrowding of the planet in the Last Age of Confusion was, these Utopians insisted, the fundamental evil out of which all the others that afflicted the race arose. An overwhelming flood of newcomers poured into the world and swamped every effort the intelligent minority could make to educate a sufficient proportion of them to meet the demands of the new and still rapidly changing conditions of life. And the intelligent minority was not itself in any position to control the racial destiny. These great masses of population that had been blundered into existence, swayed by damaged and decaying traditions and amenable to the crudest suggestions, were the natural prey and support of every adventurer with a mind blatant enough and a conception of success coarse enough to appeal to them. The economic system, clumsily and convulsively reconstructed to meet the new conditions of mechanical production and distribution, became more and more a cruel and impudent exploitation of the multitudinous congestion of the common man by the predatory and acquis-

itive few. That all too common, common man was hustled through misery and subjection from his cradle to his grave, he was cajoled and lied to, he was bought, sold and dominated by an impudent minority, bolder and no doubt more energetic, but in all other respects no more intelligent than himself. It was difficult, Urthred said, for a Utopian nowadays to convey the monstrous stupidity, wastefulness and vulgarity to which these rich and powerful men of the Last Age of Confusion attained.

Dr Havelock Ellis sent his good wishes in the following words —

Needless to say I send my best wishes for the complete success of the Conference. There doesn't seem any message I could send, for you have so often helped me to make clear how heartily I am on the side of Birth Control and I have now no more left to say. At least so it seems to me at the moment.

Dean Inge, of St Paul's, London, added a word of encouragement.

You are liberty to say that I can see no justification for withholding from the poor knowledge which is at the disposal of the rich, and that I am strongly convinced of the social and racial evils which are being caused by the present differential birth rate.

Bertrand Russell sent his good wishes.

At the moment I am too busy to write a proper message, but I send you my best wishes for a very successful conference and my warmest sympathy in your good work.

Professor J Maynard Keynes who is one of the world's authorities on Economics, felt the importance of the occasion and wrote —

The attention which is now being paid by the people of the United States to the immigration problem shows that the question of numbers is beginning to perplex them seriously. It is a very short step from this to troubling about the whole issue in its major aspects. The control of immigration cannot preserve for very long the advantages of ample natural resources if the internal population problem is left uncared for. The average standard of life in the United States of America is at present very greatly higher than in most other places, for example in Great Britain. I think that this superiority is to be attributed mainly to the superiority of natural resources in proportion to population which still exists there. The coming generation of Americans will be forced by circumstances to consider the problem of what is the ideal population for their country, as well as the not less important problem of the quality of those who are bred up. It will be a great moment in the progress of civilization when man takes conscious control of the factor of numbers, which so greatly influences his destinies,

but which he has generously left hitherto, and nearly always to his undoing, to the blind forces of nature

Harold Cox, who was one of the speakers at the First American Birth Control Conference which was held in New York in November, 1921, sent a more detailed message —

I shall be grateful if you will convey to the Conference assembled at Chicago the congratulations and good wishes of an Englishman. The Conference is engaged on a work not only of domestic and national, but of world-wide, importance

The primary benefit of a conscious control of the birth rate accrues to the individual woman and to her family. If births come too rapidly the woman's health suffers, the children are less well cared for, and their chances of a healthy and happy life are diminished

The second great advantage accrues to the nation concerned. Most modern nations have accepted what may fairly be described as semi-parental responsibilities for all the children born within their frontiers. When babies are begotten without set purpose merely to satisfy sexual desire these public responsibilities are increased, for large numbers of children thus brought into the world are mentally and physically unfit to maintain themselves and to take their share of their country's work. Finally there is the world aspect of the problem. If any nation expands its numbers recklessly, sooner or later it will be brought into conflict with other nations claiming equal rights to the earth's surface,

and war will ensue. The inhabitants of the Middle Western States doubtless still have much room for expansion, but that fact does not justify them in ignoring the world problem. The Middle Western States, by publicly recognising the moral obligation of consciously controlling the birth rate, will set an example of priceless value to countries already overpopulated, and will thus help to establish what, in the final resort, is the only foundation of world peace

And finally from Dr G. Hardy, who in spite of danger and discouragement continues his great work for Birth Control in France, came these forward-looking words

President Millerand in an old speech congratulated the French Government on having a birthrate policy. I wish vividly that all governments in all countries had a birthrate policy. Even when it has for its object the increase of the birth rate, such a policy calls general attention to the question of population in its relation to individual, family and social ills, to slums, poverty and war

Perhaps your Conference can utter a wish asking the League of Nations to suggest to the governments of over-populated old Europe an international policy on the birthrate. Do you not believe, as I do, that if this wish were taken under consideration it would result in the spread of Birth Control and even in the official installation of Contraceptive Clinics? My ardent good wishes are with your efforts which look in the long run solely to general welfare and universal harmony

Impressions of the Conference

By P. W. WHITING

Iowa Child Welfare Research Station

SOME say that Mrs. Sanger has a fixed idea, that she is daft on the subject and needs psychoanalysis, but others put the same thing in a different way and say that she has a great ideal which she has kept constantly before her. She is stubborn or determined, as you may prefer, but in any case, despite a quiet demeanor lacking even a trace of masculine aggressiveness, both her personality and her program are splendidly dynamic. Another quality displayed by Mrs. Sanger is tact and a ready ability to size up situations created by those educated cranks and unbalanced personalities who always frequent popular gatherings attempting to impose their obsessions upon a helpless audience. Such types were not entirely absent from the conference, but were dealt with both kindly and firmly.

The Conference was an undoubted success, for it gave an opportunity for members of diverse professions to get together in a discussion of problems

bearing upon birth control. Moreover, it went a long way toward making the subject "respectable," so that it may be talked about in circles in which it has been tabooed. This breaking down of prudishness and puritanism is of vital importance for a sane and scientific attitude for the future.

It is not to be expected that such a conference could be in all phases above criticism. Considerable overlapping in subject matter was to be observed in the various papers with consequent repetition. It may be suggested that a better grouping of the papers would facilitate discussion, bringing out the various points of view in regard to any one phase of the matter at the same time, and making it possible to have discussion of this phase at the termination of the papers in this group. An undue length of some of the papers was also to be noted. Perhaps more and shorter papers would be an improvement. This end might be obtained by setting a time

limit as is done in the conventions of many societies. It is suggested that papers dealing with the ethical phases be set in one group. The historical and legal aspects might form another. Sociological, eugenic and hygienic questions might constitute a third group. Technique of Birth Control from the medical point of view constituted a well-unified session. With the exception of Prof C C Little's group of papers presented at the Tuesday evening paper, there was nothing suggestive of radically new methods. A session should be devoted to the important subject of research in serological methods of temporary sterilization, temporary sterilization by temperature and other physical methods, the effect of vasectomy and salpingectomy on the physiology and psychology of the subject. It is clear that constructive work for the future is to be found along such lines. This may ultimately bring knowledge which will displace to greater or less extent our present only partially satisfactory methods.

A most important phase of the crying need for Birth Control, not considered at the conference, is the findings of psychiatry. The evil effects of suppressions in causing family discord, prostitution and divorce were mentioned, but no adequate treatment was given to the mental mechanism involved. The point of view of the psychiatrist or psychoanalyst should be considered in relation to problems of ethics, eugenics and individual well-being. The implications of such findings for birth control are very numerous.

There were many errors and superstitions entertained by the speakers and others at the conference. This is to be expected since the various branches of science are advancing more rapidly than their results can be transmitted by education. Since the implications of these errors are of significance from the point of view of birth control, an aggressive attack should be made upon them. Misconceptions in the field of genetics were, for example, held by many. Conclusions drawn with reference to birth control and eugenics are of course unreliable when premises are false. It would, of course, be undesirable to consider at length disputed questions of little moment, but a brief statement of well-established scientific principles bearing upon effects of selection, modification of germ-plasm, maternal impressions, and telegony, would do much to clear up methods of thought.

Doubtless the next conference will consider many of these things, thus being both a stimulus to research in lines bearing upon Birth Control as well as an impetus to the spread of useful knowledge already gained.

News Notes

October 16—The Schenectady Committee met at luncheon, with Dr Caldecott presiding. They adopted a constitution and appointed committees to prepare for the winter program. Two candidates for the Assembly attended and expressed their interest in the principle of Birth Control.

October 17—Mrs Kennedy met with the Syracuse Committee to discuss the preliminary arrangements for a State Conference in that city in 1924.

October 18—The presidents of the Men's and Women's City Clubs of Rochester are discussing arrangements for a combined meeting for the presentation of an address on Birth Control from the standpoint of Population.

October 19—The Buffalo Committee met with Mrs Kennedy to arrange for a luncheon to discuss the sociological aspects of Birth Control and also amendment introduced at Albany last year.

October 22—Detroit has an active committee of which Mrs Wm McGraw is the chairman. They have monthly meetings with large attendance. Local speakers are doing excellent educational work in Michigan.

October 24—At the Universalist General Convention, at Providence, R I, Rev L Griswold Williams, of Reading, Penna, introduced a resolution providing for the endorsement of Birth Control as a means of conserving the health of the nation and preventing over-population with its consequences of war.

October 28—The Denver newspapers published a statement from Judge Ben Lindsey to the effect that he was seriously considering the establishment of a Birth Control Clinic in connection with the Court of Domestic Relations. Several days previously Judge Lindsey had been subpoenaed by the Denver Grand Jury to tell what he knew about illegal operations. He refused to appear, on the ground that to do so would be to violate "the sort of confidences" which it is "absolutely necessary to maintain if the real constructive work to reduce abortions being done here is to be allowed to go on." As for the extent of the evil, he stated that he believed that there were a thousand such operations in Denver in September alone, and at least a million in the United States. Any attempt to meet the evil by prosecutions Judge Lindsey felt sure would be a failure, and the only alternative to the continuance of the present abhorrent state of affairs is to offer the substitute of Birth Control.

November 2—Mrs Sanger was at Des Moines, Iowa. Her first address was given at a luncheon.

held at the Hotel Des Moines. There were present about fifty of the most distinguished citizens of the State, including the Lieutenant Governor, Congressmen, ministers and rabbis, doctors, judges and editors. Mrs Sanger was introduced by Mr Harvey Ingham.

In the afternoon an open meeting was held in the auditorium of the Library. The room was unfortunately too small to hold all the people who desired to hear Mrs Sanger. About six hundred crowded into it, many of them being obliged to stand. The audience was characterized by the number of social workers who were present. Rev S H Ingham presided.

The same evening an informal dinner was given in order that Mrs Sanger might meet a number of physicians who were interested in Birth Control. Many of these physicians were in Des Moines to attend the Tri-State Medical Conference. The growing interest of the medical profession in Birth Control is highly encouraging to Mrs Sanger and her fellow workers.

November 5—The Cleveland Committee met with Mrs Kennedy and reported a program for an active winter in Ohio. It is proposed to raise a fund to enable a large Cleveland hospital to operate a mother's clinic where contraceptive information may be given.

November 6. Mrs Sanger addressed a meeting at the Open Forum, Milwaukee, Wis. The audience, which showed deep interest, numbered about six hundred.

November 7. Mrs Sanger spent the day in Milwaukee, appearing first before the Executive Committee of the Labor Trades Council, and later before the Labor Trades Council itself. This Council is composed of about 300 delegates from the organized trades of Milwaukee. Birth Control is essentially a subject which concerns working people, and this appearance of Mrs Sanger before the Milwaukee Labor Trades Council is one step towards the enlistment of organized labor in the movement.

November 9—Mrs Kennedy found much active work in Pennsylvania. The Allegheny County Birth Control League is preparing to put a paid secretary in the field to do preliminary educational work looking to amendment of the Pennsylvania law. The Philadelphia Committee is sending delegates to the Luncheon in New York City on December 5th, and the Reading Committee, which is gaining in membership, is planning a medical meeting for January.

November 10—The Professional and Business Women's Club of Denver, Colo. at a noon meeting,

listened to an address on Birth Control from Mrs Sanger, who was accorded an enthusiastic hearing.

November 11—Mrs Sanger addressed the Open Forum of the Grace Methodist Church of Denver. She was introduced by Rev George Lackland, the Pastor, who described her as "one of the saintliest cultured and useful women of the world." The Church which has a capacity of 1,200 was greatly overcrowded, and several hundreds were turned away. Mrs Sanger's message was received with enthusiastic approval.

November 12—Mrs Sanger addressed the Visiting Nurses' Association of Denver, and also met with the Denver Birth Control Committee, which is making plans for an active State Campaign. The Committee has extended an invitation to the American Birth Control League to hold a National Conference in Denver in 1924.

November 14—Mrs Sanger was invited by the Liberal Club of the University of Chicago to speak before the students. The meeting was sanctioned by President Burton on condition that it should be for women only. Unfortunately Mrs Sanger's train from Denver was late and her place was taken by Miss Helen Todd. Cobb Hall, where the meeting was to have taken place, was too small for the crowd who wished to attend, and at the last moment permission was received to use Kent Hall, which seats 1,200 and was crowded to the doors. In fact Miss Todd had great difficulty in entering the hall.

November 15—Mrs Sanger addressed another crowded meeting of the women students, under the auspices of the Social Service Club of Chicago University.

November 16. A meeting of the Conn Branch of the American Birth Control League was held at the home of Mrs George H Day, Sr, Hartford. After a talk by Mrs A G Porritt, on "Why Women Voters should help Birth Control," plans were discussed for promoting the campaign for the passage of a Birth Control bill by the Conn Legislature at its next session in 1925.

December 5—There will be a luncheon at the Hotel Pennsylvania, New York City, at 12:30. Mrs Sanger will preside. Important facts of great interest concerning Birth Control will be given for the first time to the public.

December 7—Mrs Margaret Nohowel of Islip is arranging a meeting for Mrs Sanger at one of the local theatres.

December 10—Seventh Assembly District League of Women Voters of New York City, Mrs Marcus Harris, leader, have arranged a meeting at 71 Central Park West.

December 11—Twenty-third Assembly District League of Women Voters of New York City, Mrs Alfred Herrfeldt, leader, will hold a luncheon for their members and friends to discuss the legislative amendment on Birth Control

December 12 —Mrs Fenley Hunter of Flushing is interesting her community in a Birth Control meeting on this date

December 13 —League of Women Voters of 22nd Assembly District have asked for a speaker on Birth Control

December 21 —Amalgamated Metal Workers of America have asked for a speaker in New York on Birth Control

NEWS FROM ENGLAND

Sept 28 —At an evening meeting for men, held in connection with the Church Congress at Plymouth, Rev G A Studdert Kennedy gave a long and careful address on Birth Control. He urged that the Church (Episcopal) should not only recognize its necessity, but that it should give its sanction when medical men advise it. The Bishop of Exeter, who presided at the meeting was taken by surprise by Mr Kennedy's views, and made no secret of his disapproval. The audience, however, seemed largely in sympathy with Mr Kennedy

NEWS FROM FRANCE

The Fifth National Birthrate Congress was held at Marseilles, September 27-October 3. The great majority of those who attended were Catholics, the Roman Catholic section being headed by Mgr Chaptal. This being the case, it is not surprising that much of the time of the Congress was devoted to the subject of divorce, and that one of the resolutions passed was in favor of stricter divorce laws—divorce to be made impossible after two years of marriage, remarriage to be prohibited, and penalties of three months in prison for the guilty partner to be enacted. How such a law would help the birthrate was not made clear. There was no resolution in regard to Birth Control, but there was a recommendation of stricter repression of abortion. The only hope for the future in the eyes of the Roman Catholic clerics was a return of the French to the piety of their fathers

On October 21 at Liège prizes were given to twenty-three families which had an average of thirteen children each. All the families were poor, a fact which induced *Le Rapell* of Paris to suggest that the best means of increasing the birthrate would be to encourage the four conditions usually associated with large families—"*La religion, l'alcoolisme, l'ignorance et la misère*"

A Farm Woman on Birth Control

By JUNE MARGARET SMITH

TO ME, as an ex-school teacher and farm mother, it is very apparent that large families, with poverty, are the principal factors in the social evils found in the rural schools. For the most part, the children from large families come to the school more or less ragged and filthy, not only in a physical but also in a moral sense. The poor overworked mother, usually in bad health caused by too frequent pregnancy and child-birth, has not the time nor the inclination to teach them cleanliness of body, much less of morals. Often the two go hand-in-hand. The large families live in crowded homes, a fact which further enhances the rapid spread of childish immorality that one might well be shocked to find in children so young.

These ill-cared-for children of large families are a malignant factor for the mother who has a smaller family and who tries to teach her children moral purity and to guard them against contamination. In many schools this simply cannot be done. Nine hours a day, five days a week, and from seven to

nine months a year the child from the wholesome home is in constant contact with children who often know no better than to pollute the innocent minds of the other children. The rural teacher finds it impossible to be with the children all the time, especially when they are going to and from school. If the number of children in these large families were more nearly gauged to their resources, the mothers would have more time to attend to their personal sanitation and to teach them good morals. Nearly all rural mothers, even when they are overworked and half ill, are concerned over the welfare of their children, and would, if they could, teach them the straight and narrow path. If they had time from child-bearing, and better health and strength, they could inform themselves on the questions facing farmers' wives, and be better prepared to give the right instruction to their children. It is not so much quantity as quality of farm children that is needed, if they are to take their rightful place among their city cousins, who are said now to have better chances

MOTHER'S RIGHT TO SPACE HER BABIES

Letters Showing the Evil Results of Too Rapid Child-Bearing

So long as the law denies to women the knowledge which would enable them to space properly the births of their children, society is guilty of the death of thousands of babies and mothers sacrificed unnecessarily. There may be differences of opinion as to the number of children in an ideal family, but on one point the medical profession and the common experience of mankind agree. This is that it is not good for pregnancies to follow one another too rapidly. The woman who bears children, or suffers abortions at intervals of ten months, sixteen months or anything under two years, becomes exhausted and probably dies of much bearing, before her children are old enough to do without her care. The children suffer even while she lives. The babe at the breast is not properly nourished when there is another already in the womb, and the unborn infant is also deprived of its due share when the double task is laid upon the mother. The mortality of children born at close intervals is shown in the Children's Bureau Study of Infant Mortality in Baltimore (Bureau Publication 119) to be much higher than the rate for children born further apart. For women in the poorest class who have had ten or twelve pregnancies during a married life of less than sixteen years, the infant mortality rate was found to be 326.6 per 1,000, while for women of the same class who had had not more than three pregnancies, the rate was only 70.5 per 1,000. This means that 326 infants out of every thousand coming into life at short intervals of each other perish. And this does not take into account the suffering and death of many mothers and the privations and hardships of the other children in these families. Surely it is a duty owed to these mothers that they should be given by doctors, and in all welfare clinics, instructions as to how to space out their babies. The mothers want this knowledge with an intensity that only they themselves can realize. Has Society any right to deny it to them, and then to profess that everything possible is being done for infant and maternity welfare?

Spacing by Death

Kansas

I have been ill for a long time and cannot think or write intelligibly. I have grown much weaker in the past two years and am almost a complete wreck both mentally and physically. Had I been possessed of the knowledge of contraceptive methods, life would have been vastly different for me.

I have three living children and four are dead. Two were dead at birth, one died at four months, another died a few hours after birth. I also miscarried at three months—twins. If my children had all lived I would have had nine in 8 years (twins three times).

Life is indeed dark for me. We are in very poor circumstances and although suffering tortures from inflammation and misplaced organs, I have to drag my miserable and worn-out body about and do house-work and sewing. I try to be patient with my poor little ones, but I am only a wretched broken failure—and oh! such pain. I am afraid my mind will go unless I get help.

I have been keeping to myself since the last birth. But we haven't any home—it's just a place for dissension, quarreling and endless misery, and I don't know how

long I shall be able to continue to myself. I'd gladly give up the struggle, but for my children. They are all girls. I do so want to live and help them escape the hell that has existed for me—because of ignorance.

A Mother's Devotion

Rhode Island

I have been married four years. I was married one year when I gave birth to a pair of twins, a boy and a girl. They were only seven months twins—little pre-matures. The girl weighed three pounds and 11 ounces and the boy weighed four pounds. I worked so hard to bring them up. I never got rest night or day. I had nobody to help me as I have nobody in this country but myself. But I did not mind the work, I wanted the babies so bad.

When the twins were a year old I got pregnant again. I was heart-broken with worry—how was I going to take care of them, as my husband is only a working man, and I cannot afford help. I have to do all my work myself. So my husband went to a doctor he knows and asked him if he could give me something to help me. So he gave him a prescription, and told me when the bottle was empty.

to fill it up again I took two bottles, and when I was four months, I had a miscarriage which near cost my life

Just a few months after that I conceived again Well I got the same prescription, but this time it did not help me at all Just one month ago I had a girl, weighed nine pounds, born dead I had a hemorrhage and they thought I would bleed to death They took me to the hospital I was worried to death about my little twins If I died, I kept thinking, who would take care of them I have nobody My husband had to stay out from work for three weeks and take care of the twins and pay a big expense for me in the hospital I came home, not strong, and I had to start right in to work

My health is broken and I am all run down My twins are only little babies yet and a great care and all that I can care for properly I would do anything not to get that way again I have never had one bit of rest since I was married Just imagine four in four years, so please help me and tell me

"Irritable and Cross"

Wisconsin

I am a Christian woman and until I read your book, I believed it to be my duty to accept my fate as God's will Now I know better I am mother of four children, the oldest being six and the youngest ten months There is only eighteen months between my youngest two I did not mind so much until my health began to fail Now I am irritable and cross, thus making home unpleasant I have to do my own work within a few days after my children are born, as we are too poor to hire My eyesight is failing fast, and I cannot afford medical treatment

In the last ten months we have stopped all sexual intercourse, and my husband has become indifferent as to whether he spends his time at home or somewhere else For God's sake and the sake of my children, help me if you can I am only thirty-two years old, but do not care for myself, as I am so unhappy, but pity my children to think they have to be raised in such an atmosphere as prevails in our home, and in poverty

Six Children Under Eight

Massachusetts

I have been married for nine years and have six children, the oldest being seven and one-half years and the youngest a few weeks I have had lots of trouble bringing them up The oldest had infantile paralysis when he was eighteen months Of course he is lame, but he can walk Besides this they all had eczema I do not know what this came from, but it really is very discouraging to put children in misery of that kind I married when sixteen and one-half years, very ignorant of what married life was, and am now twenty-six years old, and as you see I have six children Really I am discouraged I try to keep away from my husband as much as possible

but this always leads to quarrel, and he says he will go find what he needs elsewhere Now there ought to be something that could be done My husband is earning small wages and we have six children to care for and myself very broken down Please give me instructions so that I may in the future be able to bring up decently the children which I already have, without adding more misery for others to come

"I Cannot Give Her Proper Care"

Montana

I was married at the age of 16 Eleven months later a baby girl arrived She is now seven months old and I am expecting another in a few months I love my baby and she is healthy and good, but if I continue to bear a child each year I cannot give her the proper care she should have, nor can I care for the little unborn babies My doctor advised me to undergo an operation, but this seemed so dreadful to me that I could not do it The greater number of women I know either bear children annually or are continually going to the operating table The best way is to prevent having babies, but the women are ignorant on this subject I know one woman who is mother of four, the oldest barely four years, and she is expecting to become a mother again What can women like that do? The family is poor, the father is a cripple (one leg off at the knee) yet he can still make children There are thousands of women in just such positions Sometimes I think I am lucky that I am not more unfortunate, but in a few years I would be as bad as they

Four Children; Oldest Four Years

Michigan

I am 22 years old, was 16 when married, and I have four children If you could only see us I know you would pity them as well as me They are not healthy My last one is three months old, and my oldest is only four years old I try to keep away from my husband as much as I can He told me if I continue doing that he will run around with other women I cannot stand to have another child so soon Won't you please take pity on me and help me I want to keep my husband for my children's sake, please, please tell me what to do, and I am sure God will reward you

Ten Children; One Every Year

New York

I am the mother of ten children, the oldest is ten, the youngest four weeks old I have one every year When carrying my babies I am much of an invalid I have to be put to bed like a baby and have to be dressed and helped out and in my chair I have asked my doctor but got no help from him We are poor and cannot afford help I have to take care of my babies when I am in bed ill Will you not help me?

Civilization at the Crossways

By E. M. EAST, Harvard University

A Paper Read at the Chicago Birth Control Conference

ONE who proposes to discuss any phase of the population question should possess a chrome-steel insulation for his emotions and a policy at Lloyds on his reputation. It is no proper undertaking for a sensitive man. Whatever he says is certain to run counter to some of those haphazard conclusions drawn from the miscellaneous observations of everyday life, or to those deep laid ego-centric impulses which give rise to national conceit, to racial prejudice, and to religious intolerance.

I do not say this merely as a preliminary warning of the various and sundry charges I am about to make into the china shop where pet beliefs are stored. I say it because I believe with Huxley that the problem of population is the most important concrete subject of inquiry confronting the human race, because I believe a satisfactory solution of it is possible only if the mind can be divested of pre-conceived ideas and the facts considered in a wholly objective manner, and because I have found this latter task to be more difficult than with any other subject susceptible of logical presentation.

Though a century or so ago the Reverend Thomas Malthus made the first succinct statement of the population problem by submitting the thesis that "population tends to outrun means of subsistence," nevertheless the beginning of the nineteenth century was not the time nor England the place in which the subject first came to the front. Long before the dawn of history, many an old chieftain must have gathered his tribe around him and stirred their passions with some such harangue as this: "Look you, my children. Our people increase as the sands of the Great Water. My young men come empty-handed from the hunt. Let us arise and fall upon the People of the Rolling Plain. Let us bring their heads as a burnt offering to the great Sun God, that he may deliver them into our hands. Besides, who are these bumpkins to have so much good land, anyway?" And, the year 1914 found the same gentle method still in vogue.

But invading hordes did not always find forceful annexation a profitable pursuit. Occasionally they discovered themselves back on the home grounds wondering how they would pay the indemnity and still have enough left to line the void between their ribs and their backbone. Whereupon up speaks some old hater of the chase who wanted to make his head save his hands, and suggests taming a few cattle and sheep and bringing them up in the back yard.

Thus was born the pastoral stage of civilization, and all went well till the population caught up with the system. With the pressure again at the bursting point, Mother Necessity once more put a bright idea in the proper place. Some medicine man, or priest, or forerunner of the college professor looks around him and muses thus: "Look at all these lazy women. Nothing to do from morning till night, but to take care of the tents, and tend the animals, and bring up the children, and nurse the sick, and cook the meals, and tan the skins, and make the clothes. It's bad business, all this idleness, and moreover the grazing lands are not what they used to be. It would be an all round good thing for everybody to have them plant a little wheat and a few beans on the side." The genesis of agriculture, if you please.

The Coming of the Industrial Era

With these two changes in mode of life, the world worried along until the beginning of the nineteenth century. War and famine, sickness and death, took their toll, but still more and more new lives came to keep the planet humming. Then arrived a new and greater age, the industrial age, the age of steel. Invention followed invention, discovery succeeded discovery. Food was so plentiful that the natural increase of population, though advancing ever more rapidly, seemed distanced in the race. European economists shouted gleefully that the Malthusian specter had been laid low. Human ingenuity in providing sustenance would always keep a lap ahead of the advance in population.

Just there they made their great mistake. There are two good and sufficient reasons why our last stage of social progress is fundamentally different from those of previous eras. The population problem is a legacy born of half a million years of evolution. It is only because nutrition and reproduction, our two basic instincts, tend to pull us in opposite directions, that there is a problem. To keep pace with uncontrolled population increase, agricultural progress must have no limit, and must steadily accelerate its rate. This statement of the theorem in itself reduces a mechanical solution to an absurdity. But what of the two concrete reasons for maintaining that our pro-population enthusiasts in the political economy uniform were over-zealous?

In the first place, the change from the hunting era to the pastoral era, and from the pastoral era

to the agricultural era, actually did augment the food supply tremendously for a people chained to a fixed area of land. With each change in social culture came the possibility of supporting more people. And more people came to take their seats at Nature's banquet table. The roving barbarians were able to supply one "siege perilous" for each square mile of land, let us say, the careful shepherd was enabled to add some twenty more, the toiling farmer multiplied this second figure by ten. In the second place, there was always new land to be brought under the plow. Unexploited reserves of virgin soil lay ready for the coming squatter.

Clearing Out the Larder

But the present epoch, now only a century old, is different. It has aided agriculture in only the slightest degree, and this indirectly. Its watchword has been Speed, more Speed and more Speed. It has provided no more regular seats at the feast, but has encouraged us to engage in rapidly clearing out the larder by inviting guests for a second table. To change the metaphor, we are in the same frame of mind as the lady who excused her forty-mile driving to the judge by saying she had only a gallon of gasoline left and wanted to get to the next garage before it gave out. I hope there will be no mistake as to the meaning of these statements. The truth is that we have been able to double the world population during the past century merely because we have had a plentiful reserve of new land that we could exploit rapidly, and not because we have been able to increase the harvest on each unit of this land. We have opened up the whole world to colonization, and have come dangerously near to a saturation point in terms of people without having made any real contribution to the problem of feeding those people more easily. That is to say, industrialization has brought about more extensive farming, and has done little for intensive farming.

Some will say that this viewpoint is that of a pessimist. As I have said in another paper. There are serious thinkers, who have a vague but firm belief that, when all other signs fail, new foods will be discovered and old ones raised to the nth power of productiveness by the skill of the plant breeder. This bright idea may be put in the same category as the synthetic food air castles built by other day dreamers. Not a single plant of dietary importance has been brought into cultivation within historical times. Prehistoric man discovered them all. And now that there are no unexplored regions, the probability of new boons like corn and potatoes is small. Limits of production will be extended, the ravages of insects and fungi reduced, and gross prolificacy augmented, but neither genetics nor chemistry can

be expected to furnish a final solution to the old Malthusian proposition.

If, then, there seems to be no hope of scientific advance providing a sufficient continuous increase in the products of the soil to fill the mouths of the advancing millions, where does the solution lie? There is but one answer. It lies in repressing the results of the reproductive instinct. If the world can support only a limited number of people in comfort and happiness, then the population of the world must be kept within that number.

The white race taken as a whole is increasing at a rate of about 12 per thousand annually. Our statisticians are generally agreed that this rate is probably greater than that in operation at any previous time. Presumably the rate is somewhere near the peak, but cannot be expected to decline markedly for several generations. What we should like to know is the factors influencing this rate, and the probable trend which it may be expected to take.

Positive Checks to Population

Let us consider the spasmodic positive checks to growth, war, famine and pestilence, the three dread horsemen of the Apocalypse who prepare the harvest for the fourth.

None would like to admit that continuous war is a satisfactory cure of over-population, but it may surprise many to be told that war is only a temporary relief in any case. In the last three centuries there have been several great wars which on a percentage basis were even more bloody than our great war of the twentieth century, yet between the eighteenth and the nineteenth centennials the population of the world doubled. Vital statistics are meager even during the memory of the present generation, but it can be stated categorically that war causes only a perceptible flicker in the flood tide of population. Many are called in the power and vigor of young manhood to offer up their lives on the altar of patriotism. The birth rate is temporarily depressed, the normal distribution of parenthood is changed, the age distribution of the population is shifted for nearly a generation, but as soon as peace is signed, up goes the marriage rate, and with the marriage rate, the birth rate. The late Great War is no exception, in spite of the misgivings of the press over the effect of a more widespread knowledge of the newer methods of birth control. The figures at hand for Austria, for Germany, for England, and even for France, show that the gaps left by the four years of strife are rapidly being closed. A careful study of the data leads one to doubt whether fifty years from now, the natural increase of these devastated countries will show a significant shift in the curves from this

cause. It seems more likely that there will be only a passing fluctuation first below and then above the general curve of population tendencies.

Population and War

Because war is no panacea for population troubles, it does not follow that the converse of the proposition holds. Most assuredly overpopulation may become a very grave cause of war. Napoleon is alleged to have said that with the high birth rate of France, she must make war. But when the star of Napoleon waned France chose to reduce her birth rate. Within a century there resulted a nation whose population was almost stationary, and whose people, well situated economically, had no desire for war. Her eastern neighbor, on the other hand, made no such effort to live peacefully within her own boundaries. The Kaiser was thus able to justify the attack on France with the old plea of necessity couched in these words:

"You are now sixty million people. Within twenty-five years you will have doubled your numbers. You will then be one hundred and twenty millions. Can one hundred and twenty million people obtain the necessities and comforts of life within German borders? You know it is not possible. You must, therefore, overflow your own borders and take possession of the lands beyond."

I mention this because it seems to me to have a bearing on our problems of health and happiness. There is a demand for public sympathy by every rapidly growing nation which sees her expansion coming to an end in the near future because of the limitation of the food supply. Japan is the latest country to camouflage an inordinate ambition by the plea of an irrepressible growth of population. One can hardly imagine a bid for public sympathy more unsound, yet it has been successful in many quarters. Suppose little Belgium politely requested all other peoples to move into the Pacific Ocean that she might have their room instead of their company. A stupid hypothetical question, is it not? But in just 200 years Belgium could again people the earth with its present numbers at the rate of increase now going on in Canada. And this is not the worst side of the situation. One of the few seemingly rational arguments against the solution of the population problem in any one nation by reducing the birth rate is the fear of aggression by neighbors who are expansionists. One may agree that France could not have held out alone against Germany, but this is hardly a legitimate argument. Small nations are in evidence in many parts of the earth. Look at Belgium, at Holland, at Portugal, at Switzerland. Standardized nations of 100 million people, let us say, do not seem practicable. Protectionist politics,

alliances and agreements, if one cannot hope for Golden Rule ethics among nations, must help out the side with the weaker battalions. The real argument in this plea, if there be any, lies in the fact that through "peaceful penetration" the people with a continuous expansion policy will ultimately prevail over the people with a continuous restriction policy. Nevertheless it appears probable that the competition for place in a saturated world, which will soon be in evidence, will take care of all this. And, at any rate, if it should turn out that individual happiness is generally greater with a restrictionist policy even with some aggressive wars thrown in, who can plead expansion on the score of racial ambition?

Famine and Epidemics

What has been said about the fleeting effects of war on population growth applies equally to famines and to the pandemics of the various scourges afflicting the human race. It is not easy to secure quantitative proof of this statement, though it can be approached by a consideration of the crude vital statistics of some of the Indian states. Is direct proof really necessary, though? To many of us the general fact that the rate of increase of the population of the world has increased in modern times in spite of pestilence and famine, is sufficient. Nevertheless it is possible to demonstrate two rather interesting things in this connection. The birth rate decreases and the death rate increases in the year succeeding a lean harvest, even when there has been no actual famine, while the reverse is true when the storage houses are full. Again, in the case of world-wide epidemics, such as that of influenza in 1918, many collateral factors affect the situation, which tend to minimize the catastrophe. The death rate spread over a term of years is cut down because of the decreased mortality due to respiratory affections. The net loss of children is reduced because individual losses are replaced in families which otherwise would have had no additional births.

A hasty reconnaissance of the spasmodic population checks thus leads to the conclusion that they are of no avail. A given unit of habitable land will become peopled up to the limit of sustenance of that unit, sooner or later. With an unsaturated world, this limit is not the intelligence and industry of the people in wresting food from Mother Earth, but is measured partly by their ability to establish and maintain an oversea commerce with underpopulated nations, with the rapidly approaching saturation of the world, the limit of population of any unit is the agricultural limit. Then there can no longer be countries such as Belgium able to support two-fifths of its population, or England able to support

less than half its population, or France able to support three-fourths of its population. It behooves us, therefore, to look into the present population tendencies, and to see if data cannot be collected which will make all reasonable men of one mind in regard to the proper procedure for the future.

Trend of the Birth Rate

One of the studies most interesting to me has been an investigation of the trend of the birth rate, the death rate and the natural increase of population during the two decades before the war in those countries having some approach to a national system of vital statistics. Unfortunately the United States is not one of these countries. Naturally, since these records do not include the population shifts due to emigration and immigration, the conclusions one can draw are limited, and are less accurate than one might desire, nevertheless several interesting results emerge. I shall not burden you with a lot of dry statistics, but shall present the results categorically, asking you to bear in mind the fact that countries which furnish large numbers of emigrants have the birth rates depressed and the death rates raised in consequence. But if one makes shift to gather passable statistics for the United States and then considers the white world as a whole, he does not go far wrong, for the above errors inherent in the data of old countries are balanced by errors in the reverse direction in new countries.

There is a general tendency in all these countries to have a downward birth rate trend, but it does not reach the extreme assumed by the alarmists of the public press. Over the whole period it is greatest in pre-war Austria and Belgium—two catholic countries—but even there the total change is only about 8 per thousand. Presumably part of this depression is due to emigration, as I said before. And so also the apparent stationary birth rate of Australia and New Zealand is necessarily influenced by their importations of persons. Taking the figures as a whole, they show that the birth rate of the white race during the period between 1895 and 1915 dropped only 3 or 4 per thousand. Furthermore the result of this drop in the birth rate is not what we have been led to believe. The generalized death rate has dropped faster than the birth rate, and the national increase of population shows a slight upward. If, as seems likely, the shifts of these two curves go hand in hand for several more decades, the land area of the white world will be pretty well peopled before its curve of increase goes permanently over toward the horizontal.

Another thing well worth mentioning is the high inter-nation correlation between birth rate and death rate. Countries like Russia with crude birth

rates up around 47 per thousand have just about the same natural increase—about 16 per thousand—as countries like Australia and New Zealand with crude birth rates averaging something like 27 per thousand.

One should be careful about pressing these conclusions too far. It is rather an intricate problem to calculate the minimum birth rate capable of keeping a country just barely increasing in population with a reasonable estimate for what may be expected in reducing the death rate by progress in the art of medicine. New Zealand, for example, with a current death rate of about 10 per thousand, has been taken by over-enthusiastic Neo-Malthusians as a country for emulation by those of us who are forced to dwell in presumably less civilized states. They feel that an annual birth rate of 11 or 12 per thousand is ample to keep such a country merely rolling up a greater and greater population. Their hopes rest on such an obvious statistical fallacy, one wonders how it was possible for writers to fall into the trap. What New Zealand is doing, one might say, is increasing on the inertia of her own increase. In other words, the death rate of an increasing population, owing to the constant change in age distribution, does not measure the average duration of life. If it did the average in this case would be an even 100 years. France is the only country where we can obtain concrete data on this subject, for France has been practically stationary in population during the last generation. Assuming France to have a constant age distribution year after year, and assuming moreover her advance in social hygiene to be equal to that of any other civilized country, her records show that between 18 and 20 births annually per thousand of the population are necessary for a zero natural increase under our present state of knowledge.

Reaching the Saturation Point

Here then is a point of marked importance. Within the lifetime of our children one may expect those portions of the earth suitable for Caucasian colonization to become saturated with population, unless there should occur some radical unforeseen change in agricultural efficiency. In a peaceful world, reasonably free from famine and plague, between 18 and 20 births per thousand annually will keep up this saturation point. But, on the other hand, with an average marriage rate equal to that now customary among Europeans and among ourselves, and with an average age at marriage around 22 years, the annual unrestricted birth rate would never fall below 50 per thousand. Let me emphasize these figures again. Under average nuptial conditions there is an annual birth rate of 50, when un-

restricted, where soon but 20 can be accommodated in this vale of tears. What then shall become of the excess? I ask this question because the answer is so pertinent in a consideration of where our present civilization is leading, and for a very good reason. The prevention and cure of disease is undertaken in order to lower the death rate, and thus the problem of population is made more acute, yet the world is of one mind in desiring above all things to see this relief work pushed to the utmost extreme.

Please pardon me if I tread on the tender toes of the physician, for the average physician knows less about this subject of population than the average economist or sociologist or general biologist, if the large number with whom I have talked are representative. I say this with all due deference to the profession, since it seems to me that with so many special problems of a ramified applied science with which to deal this ignorance is quite to be expected, but I say it because so many physicians insist that they only shall decide questions relating to birth control, seemingly for no other reason than because they were trained to officiate at births. Isn't it more reasonable to bespeak calm investigation of all phases of this subject by specialists of every type, with a careful analysis of the data and widespread publicity to the results, rather than snap judgments, emotional and unconstructive? Perhaps these statements are wholly unnecessary here, but in justification let me repeat the substance of what one of the most prominent Protestant physicians of Boston said recently within my hearing: "There will be no population problem for centuries. The world can take care of twenty times the present number of people. And when the problem arises, its only solution is continence in the marriage state." What is one to do when a statement like this comes with the confidence of a papal edict from a man whose mind appears to be an absolute blank regarding the possibilities of agriculture, and not very densely bespotted with knowledge of modern psychiatry?

Controlling the Death and Birth Rates

Let us look into the matter. There is little evidence of a possibility of shifting length of life beyond the five score years that appear to have remained the maximum potential of a human life span for ages past. But there has been and will continue to be a change in the expectation of life, particularly in the early ages. In the short time elapsing since the labors of Pasteur and Koch, medical research has made possible the complete control of tetanus, diphtheria, yellow fever, typhoid fever, typhus, malaria, sleeping sickness and syphilis. Actual abolition of these diseases is not yet an accomplished fact, but the road has been pointed

out and they have been sent on their way. More remains to be done—more is being done—particularly in regard to the reduction of infant mortality. And it seems wholly within the bounds of reason that progressive nations may soon be able to cut the death rate for a population of standardized age distribution to about 17 per thousand annually.

The general trend of preventive medicine, therefore, is to increase the population by preventing untimely death. The goal is a death-rate, calculated to a stationary population, of less than one-third of the birth-rate of a normal monogamous society where there is no restriction on fecundity. Naturally, if two and one-half times as many births occur as are necessary to keep up a saturated population, the death-rate must go up to balance the difference, and medical progress will have been in vain. Since civilization pins its faith on medical progress, no other course remains than to restrict births, since in spite of the hopeful statements of many non-biological writers there is absolutely no evidence of human fecundity taking a compensatory downward trend as the curve of population goes up.

But there are two ways of restricting births. There is the temporary celibacy of delayed marriage advocated by Malthus, combined with the permanent celibacy taught in various religions, and there is the conscious limitation of the family as advocated by the Neo-Malthusians.

No scientist familiar with the recent facts of neuropathology as to the ill effects of too stern a repression of the sex impulse could for a moment advocate the former. There remains the conscious limitation of the family by the forethought of the individual. It is the only recourse which civilization has left.

This cure for population evils will be discussed in succeeding papers by abler writers than myself. My task is merely to show that the remedy is needed, sadly needed, if we are to build for happiness and contentment in the future.

In some time to come, when we shall have ascended from the plane where we now are, covered with fog and miasmatic vapors, up to the clean sunshine region of intelligence, our legislators shall direct their attention constructively toward the most vital of all questions that concern the government of the human race, which is the question of the regulation of the population.—DR. FRANK CRANE

All that society can reasonably expect of its members is that they should not have families without being able to support them. This may be fairly enjoined as a positive duty. Every restraint beyond this must be considered as a matter of choice and taste.—THOMAS R. MALTHUS

Is England Over-Populated?

EMIGRATION, especially to Australia, was the remedy suggested at the meeting of the British Association by Sir William Beveridge. The same remedy was recommended by Sir Sidney Low, in an article in the *Weekly Dispatch* of London, written about the same date. Both of these eminent authorities agree that there is a serious population question in Great Britain, but neither can point out any way of compelling the Dominions to accept the surplus population. To send Australia the kind of men and women she would accept would mean the ruin of England, for it would mean a continuous drain of the best of her blood and brains, while leaving all the C3 and lower strains in full possession of the Mother-land. Birth Control throughout the nation would remove the danger of over-population and leave a better balance and a healthier population. Without going into Sir Sidney's emigration argument, we reproduce his estimate of conditions in Great Britain.

At the British Association the other day Sir William Beveridge, economist and sociologist, brought up the population question again. Sir William is not on the side of the birth controllers and restrictionists. He defies the Malthus spectre, which he considers a bogey. He does not think there are too many people in the world or are likely to be. 'The earth is large enough for all of us, and for our children's children. People say it is overcrowded. But look at its illimitable empty or nearly empty spaces! There is room and to spare for all the millions of Europe in Brazil, the American and Canadian West, South Africa, and Australia.'

Moreover, we are reminded that it is the populous countries which are usually rich and progressive. More mouths mean more hands. More food and other things will be wanted and more will be produced. The prodigal bounty of Nature is futile without enough labour to garner the harvest and brains to direct its profitable use.

That, in general terms, is true. The globe is not over-populated. There is room for anybody somewhere. It does not follow that there is room for everybody anywhere. Nor does it help a person who is being squeezed out of comfortable existence in Western Europe to be told that there is any amount of vacant soil in Northern Africa.

The question for us is whether the British islands can properly provide for a population approaching fifty millions and still growing fairly fast. In England there are over 618 people to the square mile. That is not quite the highest level of congestion. In parts of Lower Bengal and China the ground is more closely covered. So it is in Belgium, which

supports seven and a half millions in an area not much greater than that of Wales.

Perhaps the human content of most countries could be almost indefinitely increased. There might be a community so organised that it could carry on with only bare standing-room for all its members. That could be done, the bees have done it. There are, I believe, 70,000 of them crowded together in an average hive. It is an industrial city supporting a prodigiously congested population by an incessant flow of imports. I suppose a small, and naturally rather poor, island could maintain itself in the same way provided it adopted the same methods. Its whole adult population from the cradle to an early grave would be slaves of the State. They would be Robots, toiling without intermission during the term of their brief lives.

I daresay one hundred or one hundred and fifty millions of people could find food and clothing and shelter in Great Britain, if they would submit to live as the bees live, each worker producing more than he or she consumed, and all contriving to exist, as the bees do, without rest, or hope or leisure, or love.

Britons, however, do not propose to pass their days like the hive-bees, though that seems to be the aim of some of our Communists. Nor do I think they will care to reproduce the conditions of some of the congested Asiatic countries where the peasants wring a bare livelihood out of the earth by intense, unremitting toil. We may, it is true, become a larger Belgium, but if so, we should have to emulate the thrift, the obstinate perseverance, and the purposeful, relentless energy of the Belgians, which we show no sign of doing. We want to live comfortably, with short working hours and abundant scope and time for holidays, amusement, and other amenities of a prosperous civilisation.

Out of the soil and sub-soil of Britain we cannot extract the means to supply for all this for 50 or 60 millions of people. Our only resource is to obtain raw material from outside and convert it into something which we can exchange abroad *at a profit*. Whether we shall continue to succeed in the face of increasing competition, from many quarters, is a question—the question of questions for us. With a million and a quarter of our possible workers permanently unemployed and living on State charity, one cannot be too confident of a favourable answer.

For my own part I do not expect one. I believe Great Britain is already full, and I do not see how her production—which must be, I repeat, *production of goods for profitable sale*—can keep pace with her growing population—SIR SIDNEY LOW, in *The Weekly Dispatch*, London.

Press Clippings

UNEMPLOYMENT AND A RISING BIRTH RATE

THE town of Jarrow lies just beyond Newcastle, on the River Tyne. Above it swing gigantic cranes, huge skeleton frameworks pencilled in black lead against the thick grey sky. And they, like the black chimneys that tower beside them, are silent and cold.

So much one sees from the train. I descended into the town to see what might be at the foot of those silent cranes and chimneys, for I knew that of a population of 37,000 in Jarrow, 27,000 were living on charity, because there is no work for their men. Worse, many of those men, have been out of work for three years. How are they living? What of their wives and families?

The first thing I found was that Jarrow, most of whose inhabitants have been existing in semi-starvation—some of them for as long as three years—is producing children at an extraordinary rate, a rate much increased from normal times. Many of the women, who, by dint of incredible economy, hold the bodies and souls of their families together on a few shillings a week, are having a new baby every year. They are given one shilling per week for the support of each child.

I stood in one of the streets of the town with Nurse Morris, the head of a group of devoted nurses who spend their time trying to alleviate the sufferings of the women of Jarrow. The streets, though full of people, were oddly quiet. The men stood in dark groups at the street corners, talking in low tones.

Children

At every doorway, at every window, was a woman, each with a bundle in her arms that contained a small child. There was no shrill gossiping, no loud quarrelling. But the silence was not apathy. These people have no energy to waste. Theirs is a grim, silent struggle for existence. "Where do they come from?" I asked.

Nurse Morris sighed.

"The birth rate has gone up enormously in the past three years of unemployment," she said. "These people can't afford children, but nature takes no account of that. The thing is natural enough, with the husband home, idle, worried, irritable, then sorry for his irritability, for most of the husbands here really love their wives. Many of the children die, of course, but that more live is a miracle of mother-love. One shilling a week allowed for each child up to five, and then no more. You can see for yourself what it means."

I followed the nurse into one of the four-roomed houses. One family in the two rooms downstairs: a father and mother and nine children. The eldest a son of twenty. The youngest six months. The floor cluttered, the air thick and foul. The windows closed to keep in the heat. The only furniture a big bed and a mattress on the floor in the corner.

For this they paid ten shillings a week, making no complaint because, since their bread depended on the charity of the Guardians, they feared to fall out with their landlord, connected with that body in some way. We chatted with the mother, who put down her sleeping baby. We learned that this family of eleven got the maximum help—thirty-five shillings—with ten out for rent—twenty-five for food and clothes for nine growing boys and girls. The husband had been a skilled workman, but three years of unemployment had made his savings disappear. He had had exactly six weeks of work in that time.

Home

In the two rooms upstairs lived two families. One room—for which the rent was 8s 6d—contained a family of six. Their story was monotonously like that of the family below. Indeed, the story I have told is practically that of every family in Jarrow, except where illness makes the tragedy more desperate.

In the other room the family was smaller—only a young couple, with two children and a new-born baby. We went in softly, for the woman was very weak. The husband sat despondently at one side, keeping the older children, aged two and four, quiet. After a word or two with the wasted woman on the bed the nurse beckoned him out of the room.

"I told you she must be given eggs and milk—nourishing food," she said.

The young husband looked at her dully.

"I went yesterday and asked for special relief for her," he replied, "but they told me that it was a rule that if they gave it they would have to withdraw my four shillings a week groceries order. That means the older children would have nothing to eat."

On my way back to the station I passed a new and expensive war memorial dedicated by the town of Jarrow to those who fell fighting for England—*Sunday Express*, London. (And yet the British Ministry of Health refuses to allow Birth Control information to be given in the Clinics maintained out of public funds—Ed.)

The Coming Birth Control Nurse

Besides the tuberculosis nurse we already have the baby-welfare nurse, the hospital social-service nurse, and the contagious-diseases nurse, to whom will be added, perhaps one day, that extremely important person the birth-control nurse, and a specialist in eating and drinking. May the American of the future find it in his heart to make friends with all these people!—J. Rosslyn Earp, in *The Nation*, November 7, 1923.

*Only women that want babies create really good babies
And only really good babies are wanted*

ARTHUR BRISBANE

Book Reviews

*A Review by Raymond Pearl,
School of Hygiene and Public Health, The Johns Hopkins
University*

CONTRACEPTION (Birth Control) Its Theory, History and Practice A Manual for Medical and Legal Professions By Marie C Stopes, D Sc Ph D, etc London, (John Bale, Sons & Danielson, Ltd) 1923 xxiii + 418 pp 4 plates

IN this volume we have at last something approaching a comprehensive scientific treatment in English of the practical biological problem of preventing conception. The appearance of this book has been eagerly awaited by those who knew that Dr Stopes was preparing it. Though not a medical graduate, her early training and experience in rigorous scientific research should eminently fit her to deal critically with obscure evidence, and to set out logically and clearly the essential biology of the problem. But there is another reason why this book attracts particular interest. In recent years Dr Marie Stopes seems somehow to have become the world's chief protagonist of more and better sex life in the home. In his *Introduction* to this volume, Sir William Bayliss, the distinguished physiologist, says it is this "which, so far as I know, Dr Marie Stopes has the honour of bringing out into a clear light, I mean the possibility of a normal and beautiful married love." Everyone who knows anything about the matter, and who is not a hypocrite, will grant at once that some sort of contraception is an essential part of any programme to make sexual intercourse among human beings, living in present day society, a normal physiological process "entirely noble and good." So we have in this book a happy tempering of the somewhat bleak wind of physiology of reproduction to the aesthetic, emotional and spiritual problem which the poor human lamb meets in his love affairs.

Coming now to details, the structure of the book is as follows. After a flock of laudatory introductions, three short opening chapters deal respectively with the problem of birth control in its broad aspects, theoretical desiderata in a satisfactory method of contraception, and indications for contraception, social, medical and other. The following four chapters deal at length with all the methods of contraception known to the author. Chapter III discusses objections to contraception. The next three chapters constitute a detailed and rather fully documented history of contraception. The three final chapters deal respectively with the legal position of contraception in different countries, with instruction (or its lack) on the subject in medical schools, and finally with birth control clinics.

This mere outline of the ground covered shows at once that the book is quite different from anything existent in English. Such uniqueness of position invites critical examination.

The first chapter is weak. The author is obviously

impatient to be at the thing which is her chief interest, practical contraception, and the only reason her discussion of the population problem misses making the judicious weep violently is because it is very short. The desiderata for the ideal contraceptive are extensively talked about, but all that can really be profitably said is (p 23)

"The main and most legitimate objects of a true contraceptive are to permit of the full benefits of coitus, the complete absorption of all that can naturally be absorbed and used from the seminal fluid, and the prevention of the union of the spermatozoa and the ovum."

"This seems a very simple requirement, but partly owing to the prudery which has surrounded and kept the subject from being studied properly, and partly from the complexity of the psychological reactions involved in the act of coitus, even yet after many centuries of use, we are far from a complete knowledge of contraceptives."

And, she might have added, we are equally far from knowledge of any completely satisfactory contraceptive.

Owing to the restrictive features of the Comstock law, it is as impossible to review realistically in this place the important middle third of the book dealing with the technique of contraception, as it is for the book itself to circulate freely in this country. What can be said, however, is that the value of this part of the work, great as it is, would have been enhanced if the author had restrained the expression of her prejudice in favor of her "own method," and been rather less dogmatic in her tone in general. Not only does this prejudice throw the whole discussion out of balance, but it also leads to the actual omission of references which may be regarded as quite as valuable as some she does give. Dr Stopes appears to overlook the fact that tastes in contraceptives may differ as they do in other things, and that doubtless there are not a few other people in the world who know quite as much as she does (or even more) about the physiology of reproduction, and are quite as delicately attuned and widely experienced connoisseurs in the art of love as she is. The plain truth is that "my own method" which she lauds *ad nauseam* is a poor, crude, troublesome, and somewhat uncertain device as compared with what an ideal contraceptive would be. Some people regard it as the best of available means, others equally competent do not.

The chapter on objections to contraception contains nothing new, or that has not been said as well or better by Mrs Sanger, or Dean Inge, or Harold Cox, or Havelock Ellis.

Undoubtedly the best part of the book, critically considered, is found in the historical chapters. Again realistic reviewing or quotation is impossible. Chapter IX deals with the pre-Malthusian period. It is shown that the idea and intention of preventing conception at will go back to remote antiquity. The records of technique are fragmentary, and the methods recorded not such as to inspire confidence in their reliability. A long and interesting chapter on the 19th century is chiefly devoted

to Francis Place. He must have been an entertaining character indeed. His commonplace books and manuscripts fill over a hundred huge volumes in the British Museum, we are told. He undoubtedly was one of the foremost contributors to the discussion of the population problem which was precipitated by Malthus.

In his book on the population question published in 1822, Place said "The remedy can alone be found in preventives, as will be further shown in the following section." After demonstrating from his own experience as a working man, under how great a misapprehension of their needs and natures Malthus laboured, he goes on to say

"If, above all, it were once clearly understood, that it was not disreputable for married persons to avail themselves of such precautionary means as would, without being injurious to health, or destructive to female delicacy, prevent conception, a sufficient check might at once be given to the increase of population beyond the means of subsistence, vice and misery, to a prodigious extent, might be removed from society, and the object of Mr Malthus, and Mr Goodwin, and of every philanthropic person, be promoted, by the increase of comfort, of intelligence, and of moral conduct, in the mass of the population."

"The course recommended will, I am fully persuaded, at some period be pursued by the people, even if left to themselves. The intellectual progress they have for several years past been making, the desire for information of all kinds, which is abroad in the world, and particularly in this country, cannot fail to lead them to the discovery of the true cause of their poverty and degradation, not the least of which they will find to be in overstocking the market with labour, by too rapidly producing children, and for which they will not fail to find and to apply remedies."

What could be more modern than all this?

Dr Stope prints in full a most entertaining hitherto unknown letter from Place to Richard Carlile in 1822 in which he answers effectively a series of arguments which the latter had brought forward against contraception, and, as it appears, finally won Carlile to his views. The interesting thing which emerges from this whole discussion is that certainly before the middle of the 19th century, contraception, by methods still in use, was widely practised in continental Europe, and probably to a considerable extent in England as early as 1825. In this connection we may recall that the marked decline in the English birth-rate did not begin until the 70's.

In the chapter on Birth Control in the 20th century Marie Carmichael Stopes looms large, as might be expected. This is doubtless appropriate, though a little modest reticence about one's own claims to fame is thought by some to be in better taste. The treatment in this chapter of Mrs Sanger and her significance in the Birth Control movement seems to the reviewer to be extremely casual (perhaps from genuine ignorance of her real standing in this country).

The final chapter gives an account of the establishment and successful operation of the Birth Control clinic founded by Dr Stopes and her husband, Mr H V Roe, in North London.

Altogether, this may fairly be regarded as a comprehensive pioneer text-book of Birth Control, excellent in many respects but marred by the brash self assurance

and esteem of its gifted author. Some of its defects will doubtless disappear in later editions, and some day some one will write an altogether better book along the same lines. In the mean time, everyone interested in Birth Control will want this latest of Marie Stope's books in his library.

A Review by A G Porritt

WOMAN A VINDICATION, by Anthony M Ludovici
Alfred A Knopf, New York, 1923, pp 321

IF this is a vindication of woman, one would like to know what could be said in condemnation of the sex. Mr Ludovici's ideal woman—the positive woman—is characterized by the following vices, all of which he considers inseparable from her functions as a promoter and preserver of life. Duplicity and indifference to truth, Lack of taste, Vulgarly, Love of petty power, Vanity, and Sensuality. All these characteristics are part of the very essence of the positive woman and therefore cannot be eradicated or modified without destroying her "positiveness." The five cardinal virtues which the author finds in woman are in some respects not far removed from what ordinary people would be apt to class as vices. They are Unreflecting constancy to the demands of life, Untiring interest in the processes of life and its multiplication, Desperate bravery in defending and succoring human life, a capacity for single-minded devotion to her own offspring, and a capacity for bodily purity or chastity. These may sound promising, but when we are informed that the devotion of a woman to her own offspring necessarily makes her unfair and unjust to the offspring of others, and especially to her step-children, the virtues take a lower rank.¹ As regards bodily purity, this does not exclude a tendency to adultery whenever the husband happens to be absent.²

Feminism and Birth Control are naturally anathema to the author of "A Vindication." Present tendencies are deplorable and the only practical remedy is to place woman once more under the charge of man. She must be kept merely as the breeder of the human race—primitive, unmoral, without social sense and without influence on national policies. In fact the world, including the women and the children, must again be given completely to the male sex, and the fact that in the past and in Oriental countries where men are completely dominant this male civilization has not been entirely admirable is not to the point. Fortunately for the vast majority of women and a smaller majority of men, the "Positive woman" is not the ideal woman. Mr Ludovici tries to damn the modern woman by calling her negative. He shouts "Make woman honest, upright, straightforward make her scrupulous, make her the reverse of vulgar, destroy her love of petty

¹"In fact a good stepmother may always be taken to mean a bad or indifference mother. The whole tendency of the modern world is to depreciate the bad stepmother and to honor the good stepmother. In this way are woman's best virtues being undermined."

²"The most desirable woman must be unfaithful to their husbands when, through any cause whatsoever, the latter are forcing them to be unfaithful to Life itself."

power, her vanity and her sensuality, and what in sooth have you achieved? You will have undermined the very instincts that Nature has implanted in her to secure the survival of the species at all costs" But it would be an impossible task to turn back the course of moral civilization and to compel men and women to accept as their ideal the positive woman as represented in this curiously archaic treatise, and to deny to woman the right to virtues which Mr Ludovici would make the monopoly of man

PERIODICALS

The November issue of *The World Tomorrow* (New York) is devoted to China, its problems and its industrial development. The one problem that is not tackled is that of population. With the introduction of foreign medicine and humanitarianism, the older checks on the increase of population will gradually cease to work, and already the cheapness of human life in China is one of the outstanding features. Fortunately the Chinese themselves are beginning to realize this and there is an active Birth Control movement both in Pekin and Shanghai—a movement which owes its inception to Mrs Sanger's visit to China early in 1922. The account of child labor, given by Agatha Harrison in a chapter on Shanghai, is startling and disquieting. "One thing that characterizes all industry, whether in the home or the factory," she writes, "is the appalling use of children. Apprenticed to one or other of the small trades (often a form of slavery), helping to build houses, to mend roads, carrying heavy loads, everywhere children. And where you get child labor you get all the other evils—a 12-hour day (sometimes 14 or 16 hours), night work, insecurity of employment, little care for health and safety of the workers, low wages. Human life is cheap in China." And cheap it will remain until there is some limitation of the supply of babies.

The excellent series of articles on "The Morality of Birth Control" in *Know Thyself* (Girard, Kans.) is concluded in the November issue. In these articles, William J. Fielding urges in clear and incisive language the arguments, long familiar to the advocates of Birth Control, but still of enormous importance to the movement, which go to prove that Birth Control "is one of the great moral and ethical forces of the present age."

Paul Popenoe, the Eugenist, contributes to *The Scientific Monthly* (New York) for November an article on "The Marriage of Kin," in which he shows from historic instances, that even long continued intermarriage of the closest possible kind does not necessarily lead to degeneration.

The *Modern Review*, Calcutta, the organ of the Indian Liberals, shows an interest in social hygiene and the laws of heredity by devoting considerable space to these subjects in the September number. Dr Chuni Lal Bose writes of the shortcomings of a bill before the Indian Legislature

for checking commercialized vice and especially the girl slave traffic. At present with the full knowledge of the police and the authorities, about 1,200 minor girls, many of them under 10 years of age, are annually imported into the City of Calcutta alone for immoral purposes. All religions in India condemn prostitution, but hitherto little has been done to put a stop to it, or even to limit the traffic in girls.

In the same magazine, Professor Bhatia discusses the laws of heredity as applied to man. He considers the persistence of the Hindus while empires have risen and fallen, a proof of their good inheritance, but makes a plea for more reasonable marriage customs and laws which would give better scope for the working of natural law.

Two of the writers in *The Scientific Monthly* for October take a pessimistic view of the future of mankind. The first of these is Professor O. D. von Engel, whose subject is "American Tendencies in Geography." In considering one of the practical uses of geography—"Land Utilization," the placing of population on land not occupied to its fullest capacity—he writes "Evidently even vaster numbers of people than at present are in the future to be doomed to poverty and misery." It is perhaps not in his province to suggest that the doom might be averted by universal Birth Control. The second of these pessimists, Professor B. W. Kunkel, lets slip just a phrase of foreboding in an article on "Calories and Vitamines." He writes "Indeed, there is every indication that as populations increase and arable land decreases and the fertility of the soil is gradually washed off into the sea, the problem of supply the human engine with energy will become more pressing." And yet people bewail a decreasing birth-rate!

A warning note against the disproportionate increase of the unfit is sounded by Dr B. Austin Freeman in the July issue of the *Eugenics Review* (London), in an article entitled "The Subman." Dr Freeman sees in much of our vaunted "progress" changes which are adapted to secure a relative increase of the unfit and decrease of the fit. He condemns modern "institutions which have for their function the elimination of economic inequalities by lifting the burdens from the weak and putting them on the strong." In this way the weak are favored and allowed to increase, while the strong are handicapped by being made to bear the burdens of others as well as their own. The writer suggests no way out of the difficulty, but remarks that "whoever can suggest a sufficient remedy will be a benefactor not only to mankind at large but to the subman himself."

"The Weather Chart of Population," by C. Reinold Noyes, in *The Yale Review* for July, sounds a warning concerning the danger to the United States and to civilization generally of the present overcrowded state of

Europe Mr Noyes points out the comparative underpopulation of the United States and the certainty of an unexampled pressure of immigration should the bars we have erected be let down He holds that Malthus was correct in setting out only two alternatives for mankind, in view of the inevitable tendency to reproduce more rapidly than the increase of the food supply These alternatives are Positive checks to population—war, famine and disease, and Preventive checks—the deliberate control of reproduction—in other words, Birth Control

BOOKS RECEIVED

From the Government Printing Office, Washington, D C, Chinese Migrations, With Special Reference to Labor Conditions, by Ta Chen, A M, Bureau of Labor Statistics
From the Austin Publishing Co, Los Angeles, Cal, The Cause and Control of Sex by Cary S Cox

From Harcourt, Brace & Co, New York, Studies in Evolution and Eugenics

From McClelland and Stewart, Toronto, The Rosary of Pan by A M Stephen

OUR TOPSY-TURVY SOCIAL WORK

The social policy of securing the survival of the unfit could hardly be better illustrated than in the competition on October 31 for admission to the Josephine Home for Anaemic and Underweight Children at Peekskill, N Y The contest was described in the New York Leader, under the heading "Most Emaciated Tot Wins Contest, With Health as Prize" Thus do we spend our money on the unfit, while the law forbids any attempt to teach voluntary restriction of their multiplication

A mother, whose name was not revealed, was in tears yesterday because her ten-year-old girl was not sufficiently starved and pale and underweight to win a chance for recuperation of her health at a home for anaemic children maintained at Peekskill, N Y

The little girl was only 14 pounds underweight Had she weighed just one pound less she could have a fighting chance for health

Another ten-year-old girl met the requirement in a contest of the Josephine Home for anaemic children That requirement was to be the child most dangerously near tuberculosis in the neighborhood She will receive free treatment in the institution

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But if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own household, he has denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel —I TIMOTHY, V, 8

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The New York League of Women Voters are asking for speakers on Birth Control in Assembly District meetings and in County Conventions They recognize that it is a question of vital importance to the women, children and men of this country

Members of the American Birth Control League are frequently also members of other organizations of women Can you secure the introduction of the subject in your clubs? Birth Control ought to be presented to every group of women interested in the welfare of their fellow women and of their country

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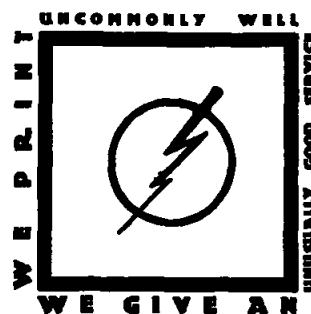
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BIRTH CONTROL REVIEW

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