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Twenty Cents

BIRTH CONTROL REVIEW

The Conscious Control of the Birthrate

Testimony for Birth Control

How it Works

Letters from Some
Who Have Tried it

BIRTH CONTROL REVIEW

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

VOL XII

SEPTEMBER, 1928

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EDITORIAL

IN MEMORIAM

THE world is the poorer for the loss of Dr Henry G Brainerd of Los Angeles, who died on July 22—too late for mention in our August issue. Dr Brainerd who was a well-known physician and distinguished alienist, was a good friend and outstanding supporter of the Birth Control movement. It was very largely due to his efforts and inspiration that the Los Angeles Mothers' Clinic, one of the first Birth Control clinics in the Far West, was established. His interest in the clinic was unremitting and he was one of the directors and in constant touch with its work to the last. Not only did he give it of his best during his lifetime, but in his will he left a fund of \$30,000 to provide an income and to ensure its continuation. Not only did he leave behind him this bequest, but his example and his devotion has supplied a stimulus to the whole movement for Birth Control. Even had there been no Brainerd fund, his fellow citizens of Los Angeles would surely never have permitted the work that lay so near the heart of their beloved physician to languish for lack of the support that they, as well as he, could give to it.



The death of Dr Brainerd is a reminder of the great debt that the Birth Control movement owes to individual physicians. It is true that the medical profession as a whole has not yet given its adherence to the movement. It is not yet convinced that Birth Control is as worthy of professional and scientific attention and research as are given to methods of cure of well recognized diseases. Only here and there in the ranks of the profession, do we find the outstanding supporters of Birth Control. But the few who have made the cause their own have given us a very striking object lesson in regard to the value of medical support, and also in

regard to the loss it has been to the movement for Birth Control that it has had so little help from the majority of doctors and physicians in all countries. There has been a certain degree of irritation and impatience shown by medical gatherings when the question of contraception has been discussed. They have resented that the agitation in favor of Birth Control has been conducted by "outsiders." At such moments the profession likes to claim the whole subject as one in its domain. But if the "outsiders"—who after all are chiefly the women who are most intimately concerned and the men who realize the need for the limitation of families—had stood aside and had not shown the medical profession that there existed a great and insistent demand for Birth Control, the few doctors who have stood with them would have found little support from their brethren in the profession.



THE time is soon coming when contraception will be as much a part of medical practice as any other form of preventive medicine. When that time comes the credit for the change will have to be given to the women and men who conducted the agitation for Birth Control and to the clear sighted physicians who took up the case when it was highly unpopular with their profession. Among these men, Dr Henry G Brainerd will take his place alongside of Dr J Rutgers, who pioneered the establishment of Birth Control clinics in Holland, of Havelock Ellis, more scientist and writer than physician, who broke through the tabu on sex in both England and America, of Lord Dawson, who has dared to preach Birth Control to both peers and prelates, as well as to his fellow physicians of the British Medical Association, of Dr W J Robinson, of Dr William Allen Pusey, of Dr S Adolphus Knopf, of Dr Alice Vickery, of Dr Aletta Jacobs and of many others whom space forbids us to name.

THE prospect of a future for mankind, when the food supply will be inadequate to the needs of a crowded world, is by no means a fantasy of a few pessimistic scientists and philosophers. It is already within sight for those countries, such as Japan and India, which are always only a little removed from scarcity or actual famine. In this country, with constantly recurring crops which are greater than the producers can profitably market, and even in England where food can always be bought in abundance, it is impossible to make people feel that the question of failing food supplies is other than academic. But there are other aspects of over-population and of shortage of the necessities of existence, which already come home to large sections of the population even in the United States, and much more pressingly in England. One of these questions is the increasing difficulty of securing ample water supplies for towns and cities. Great cities are going further and further afield for their water, and are monopolizing immense tracts of land which might otherwise be used as sites for populous communities. In England the sources of water supplies are already largely monopolized and growing towns and cities are looking in vain for more water. A dry season extending over merely a period of six or seven weeks brings suffering and water privation to thousands, and it is freely predicted that it will be the lack of sufficient water rather than shortage of food that will force Great Britain to call a halt to the expansion of its population.



ANOTHER difficult question which arises in a fully settled country whose population continues to increase, is the lack of housing. France, with its almost stationary population does not experience this difficulty. Houses in the old days were built to last. They do not wear out quickly, and each generation can easily replace those that become outworn or unfit for habitation. In England, on the other hand, where the population is increasing by over 200,000 a year, and where there was an almost complete stoppage of house-building for the four years of the great war, it seems impossible to catch up with the need. Roughly speaking, there are 100,000 newly married couples each year wanting homes, in addition to those who have been waiting their turn for years as a result of the arrears into which the nation fell between 1914 and 1919. In spite of help from the government and

much activity in house building on the part of many municipalities, the task has been greater than the nation could accomplish. People are living in overcrowded and unhygienic conditions in every town and city of great Britain, and marriages have to be postponed because there is no place for the young people to live. Under these circumstances there is no possibility of avoiding a check to the birth-rate. It may be due to the indirect Birth Control resulting from postponing marriage, or there may be the more direct and more moral form of Birth Control which permits marriage between young people, while conditions make child-bearing and child-rearing in anything like fit surroundings impossible. That the congestion of population and the shortage of housing facilities results in such childless marriage has been proved by inquiry and statistics. The fall in the birth-rate is not paralleled by a similar fall in the marriage rate. Apart from any other consequence of over-population, the lack of adequate housing alone seems likely to bring about a gradual approximation to a stable population, which would allow the nation to catch up with its housing needs.



A Correction

IT has been difficult to ascertain the exact position of the American Medical Association in regard to contraception. In our last issue the account given was not quite accurate, and we are glad to supplement it by giving the following correction, received from the Executive Secretary of the Committee on Maternal Health. She writes:

The American Medical Association has never "put itself on record as favoring the alteration of existing laws" about contraception. However, one of its Sections, that on Obstetrics, Gynecology and Abdominal Surgery, in 1925, passed such a resolution which was referred to the House of Delegates, but not considered by them till 1927 at the Washington meeting. The house did not act on the resolution but in turn referred it to the Board of Trustees, which in 1928 referred it back to the House of Delegates for action. It was not discussed but, as we understand, was turned over to a Reference Committee. What happened to it there is not yet known" (We have written to ask.)

The convention of 1928 was at Minneapolis not Memphis.

"The Maternal Health Committee did not apply for space to exhibit contraception, but on Surgery of Sterilization, which was granted."

Lord Dawson on Birth Control

THERE are various reasons—economic, social, moral and religious—which lead the parents of to-day to control the number and spacing of their children. To ask that this generation should go back to the helter-skelter method of having families is like crying for the moon.

Means for checking conception, such as prolonged lactation, were used during the Victorian era, nevertheless families were large. Reduction of the number of children has now become a necessity, and if the same type of people are to have smaller families they must either abstain from sexual intercourse when conception is not desired, or they must use means to prevent intercourse from resulting in conception. That is to say, the alternatives at the present time are abstinence and some method of conception control.

If parents are to limit births by abstention from sexual intercourse it will be necessary to alter the conditions of our social life, for efficient abstention means celibacy for prolonged periods. Let us take the case of a man of twenty-four who wishes to marry a girl of twenty. He can afford to have one child, but marriage is impossible if it is to mean a series of subsequent children at intervals of one or two years. Such a man cannot marry, unless he knows that he can stop at one child for some years, and, although I would sooner see the gap between the second and third child, the fact remains that circumstances often require a considerable interval after the first is born. How is this interval to be secured? Are we to invite the young man and woman to abstain from cohabitation for two or three years? A single intercourse is enough to bring about pregnancy in large numbers of people. The couple live in a villa, bungalow or tenement, and occupy the same room. If we want them to abstain we must ask them to live in separate houses. Yet if marriage is to be a success it is necessary that relationships should be intimate. The fabric of the "home" envisages periodic sexual satisfaction, without which love and even health are endangered. The critics of Birth Control content themselves too much with high-sounding phrases and ignore the realities which determine the solution of this problem.

ABSTENTION, to be effective, constitutes a demand impossible for the mass of married people to meet. Efforts at such abstention produce a strain harmful to health and temper. If they do not succeed, the minds of husband and wife are troubled by anxieties and conflicts which do

them damage, and if they do succeed in preventing conception there eventuates the prevalence of sex excitement, followed by abortive and half-realized satisfaction. Moreover, there is an increased susceptibility of the man and woman to outside sex temptations. Birth Control by abstinence is either ineffective or—if effective—pernicious.

To consider the alternative—the control of conception whilst intercourse is continued. In one form or another such control has long been practised, and the Roman Catholic Church, by sanctioning cohabitation during the "safe period," has conceded the principle that it is right to have an intercourse which has not the immediate object of conception and which reduces to a minimum the chances that such will occur.

A method of contraception should be judged according to its fulfilment of three conditions: (1) it should be effective, (2) it should produce no physical or mental damage, and (3) it should be consistent in its application with sentiment and refinement. Restriction of intercourse to that part of the inter-menstrual period when conception is least likely is unsatisfactory, because this period is in general the time when a woman's desire is at its lowest. The proper time for intercourse is when the desire is mutual. Those who recommend that it should regularly take place during the "safe period" and condemn other contraceptive methods as "unnatural" are inconsistent. What could be more unnatural than to restrict intercourse to the very time when Nature has least intended it?

Similar violation is done, in another way, by the practice of congressus interruptus, because it necessitates control at a time when there should be no control, because it is apt to leave the woman unsatisfied, and because it involves emotional strain.

BY EXCLUSION this brings us to contraceptive methods which depend on some device for preventing fertilization. There is no doubt that a perfect method of this kind has not yet been discovered. The determination of further and very necessary knowledge as to the best methods of contraception can only be obtained by animal investigation and carefully collated records in special clinics and private practice. This inquiry will give a desirable stimulus to such investigation.

In my judgment there is no evidence that the use of contraception as such does either physical or moral harm to those who practise it, nor do I think that its use leads to excessive intercourse.

When I read gloomy forebodings as to the break-up of home life, I console myself with the thought that these prophets "of little faith" are interpreting change as decadence, and that, if they would go and look, they would find the homes in all classes of Society different somewhat, it is true, from the home of their own childhood, but not one whit less ordered and happy, controlled more by understanding influence and less by duress than their homes were, and peopled by children equally lovely, loving and lovable

Meanwhile, it is well to state the opinion that families which are too restricted have their dangers and that here and there restriction is too great. It is important for the health of the mother that the

complete cycle of maternity should recur sufficiently. Children need each other and keep their parents young. The single child is at a disadvantage as regards discipline and happiness and is apt to lack initiative and adventure.

If our "pastors and masters" would but accept control of conception as a necessary feature of our present-day civilization, and still more, cease from feebly excusing it on so-called medical grounds, and, on the other hand, unite in bringing before the public the importance of adequate parenthood, constructive guidance would take the place of futile controversy.*

*Reprinted from "Medical Aspects of Contraception" Martin Hopkinson and Co, London



A Doctor's Testimony

By DR H C WESTERFELT*

I THOUGHT when I came home from the army, that if I ever again heard the tap, tap of a crutch or a wooden leg, everything within my soul that had to do with humanity, or with intelligence, or with justice would just boil over and that never again could I tolerate the three words "Made in Germany". But I want to tell you, as I stand in the out-patient clinic at the hospital, as I watch that endless procession of women, broken down in what, God save the mark, is laid upon them as their duty, that of bearing children as rapidly as they can be delivered of one and become pregnant with another, losing their interest in life, losing all that is worth while for their usefulness in the community, their minds becoming more and more chaotic until finally they lose them and later fall down in sheer discouragement, tired out, then I feel that there is a more terrible thing that I found in any American boy with a leg shot off, or with both legs shot off, that there is a crime against intelligence which is worse than the crime of war. It is the crime that compels a woman, for the sake of a vaunted standard of morality, for the sake of the maintenance of a law, archaic in its intent to lay down her life to immolate herself upon an altar of sacrifice, which the good God never intended. When the Lord of

Life was held on trial, and the question of the sin of it all was brought up, he fixed the matter of intelligence, I think, for all time, when he said "he that hath delivered me unto you is the greater sinner". The sin was against knowledge,—Judas, knowing who the Lord was, delivered him for a handful of silver, betrayed him with a kiss.

IN our administration of our great clinics and our great hospitals, I see this endless parade of women laying down their lives because of a crime against the intelligence which should protect them. We have safety first for practically everything except the human kind. Absolutely we have safety first for practically everything except the babe unborn, or the babe unconceived. If a dog is mad, or there is a suspicion of its being mad, it is either put out of the way or confined, if a cow has tuberculosis, the laws of the state say, "Kill it". If a hog has cholera we get rid of it. But the baby, the baby, who may be a legislator some day, the baby, who may be a judge some day, the baby who would like to be president of the United States some day, is absolutely, except in a very few outstanding instances, not protected.

The passage of this bill would be a mark of extreme intelligence, because it would be protecting the children of God. It would be a safety first measure for a generation that we all know is going very fast somewhere, in a very unsafe way.

*Dr. Westerfelt was one of the speakers in favor of the Birth Control bill, presented to the Pennsylvania Legislature this year. The purpose of the bill was to permit doctors to give contraceptive advice to married women. It failed of passage. Here is an extract from Dr. Westerfelt's speech to the Legislative Committee.

Birth Control and the Home

By EDITH HOUGHTON HOOKER, M D

THERE is in the State one institution of supreme importance and that institution is the home. The most important defense for the home in this age, in my opinion, is Birth Control. If this institution—and this means monogamous marriage, the marriage of one man and one woman—is to be continued, it must be made feasible, and I contend that it is not feasible if we do not have Birth Control.

In the first place the fertility of the average woman is too great. The average income of the working man is less than \$1,500. The average family in this country, in the absence of some form of Birth Control, would number six, eight, ten, or more children. It is obvious that the average income is altogether insufficient for families of such size.

I think that the reason there is so much opposition to the movement for Birth Control is that people feel there is something immoral about it. They regard sex as moral in only one of its aspects. They look upon sex as only justifiable as a means of procreation. This thought of sex for procreation should have second place in the human comprehension of sex, for it is our comprehension of sex that differentiates us from the lower organisms. Love has changed sex from merely something needed for procreation to something pure and ennobling. It is the expression of personality and affection and covers a wide range of what is peculiarly human in life. Ordinarily when the word sex is used, there comes up in the mind of the individual a picture more or less shameful. People think of sex in a wrong fashion, as a thing debasing and unclean, and because of that attitude we find people opposed to something as reasonable as Birth Control.

IN its higher aspects, sex means the home, the love of mother and child. It means happiness and peace, and the best things there are in the world. Now if we do not have Birth Control—the permission to spread the knowledge of Birth Control to those who need it—marriage, in many cases, is changed from a good and legitimate thing to something debasing and degrading. The very existence of marriage in these days is based upon conditions in the home. A great many of the patrons of the women in the streets are married men, and the reason why these men come to them in many instances is because, practically speaking, they are driven out of their homes. If a woman fears preg-

nancy, and she be broken in health, it simply means that the husband is turned away. His sexual hunger increases and after awhile he deserts his wife and family and goes out of the home to the women of the street. Yet the home is the most important and sacred institution that we have, an institution that cannot succeed if we continue in the way in which we have been going. It is said that the number of divorces and legal separations is coming almost to equal the number of marriages. I think that with Birth Control, divorce would be checked, the home unit would become better marked, love between husband and wife would be permitted expression, instead of being ever denied, and monogamous marriage would be conserved.

JUST consider some individual cases that arise as a result of the denial of Birth Control information. There are the diseases inherent in sexual vice, the vice to which a man goes out when he is denied in his own home. As a result of that vice there are the syphilitic children, the wives who contract disease from their husbands, perhaps infected before they are able to afford marriage. Such women should not have children. If you once saw a syphilitic child, a poor, wasted infant that should never have been born, you would realize that the rights of the child demand respect, and that the child should be protected. Any law which prohibits the dissemination of information to these women and to the women suffering from other diseases, women who will die if they become pregnant, is an inhuman law, a barbaric law. It condemns a woman to death, and to keep such a law on the statute book is a crime against women and against motherhood.

To continue such laws upon our statute books is to continue infamy. It is to degrade marriage. It is to wreck the lives and the morals of human beings. To legalize Birth Control is to uphold womanhood, to add a sure defense to monogamous marriage. To deny Birth Control is to inflict unnecessary suffering, to condemn the innocent to die. Upon the heads of those who deny Birth Control to the people rests the responsibility for the death of the women who every year are going down to their graves unnecessarily, and for the destruction of the homes broken up through lack of power to control the size of the family.

The Anti-Birth Control Neuroses

By FLOYD DELL

ANY intelligent person, in reading the usual denunciations of the use of Birth Control methods, is struck not only by the hysterical note in them, but by a wonder how these opponents meet the situation in their own lives. Some of them, indeed, may wear their wives out with continual childbearing, and may be given the credit of a brutal and fanatical consistency between their practices and their opinions. A few others may be sexually weak or incompletely hetero-sexual persons with a homosexual disgust ("idealism") which alienates them from sexual relations, which they thus practice dutifully a few times in their lives for reproductive purposes only. Still others may use, with exceptional success, the so-called "natural" methods of family limitation, restricting their sexual relations to the alleged "safe time", and perhaps finding (as is sometimes the case) that conception does not occur during the nursing period, which may be accordingly prolonged to its utmost limits, or, what is considerably more likely, they may believe that they are limiting their families by these "natural" methods, the limitation being actually due to physical defects. But skepticism may well balk at accepting these explanations as in all or most cases reconciling the practice of such persons with their precepts. The limited size of their families, taken in conjunction with the duration of their married life, presents a situation which can only be explained on the whole by abortions or—and this also occurs—by the use of the very Birth Control methods which they are so violently attacking!

Now in certain instances this last may be plain hypocrisy. But, after all, nobody asks these people to declare themselves on the subject. They may be subject to a certain social pressure to refrain from publicly admitting that they use contraceptives, but they are under no obligation to tell absurd lies about their practices. The fact that they rush voluntarily into print with their impassioned denunciations of Birth Control, and the illogical character of these denunciations, should suggest that we are here confronted with a special form of hypocrisy, an unconscious and neurotic hypocrisy. And since hypocrisy implies a conscious and deliberate pretense, that term might better be dropped in this discussion. For it appears—unlikely as this may seem at first thought—that the actual knowledge of what they are doing (or acquiescing in hav-

ing done) to prevent conception, is repressed into their unconscious minds. Their conscious minds are sincere enough in their utterances, and it is the knowledge and the sense of guilt in their unconscious minds, which gives their utterances their peculiar and unmistakable neurotic tone of unmeasured and silly emotionalism.

Unconscious Awareness

It is of course, peculiarly possible in the sexual relationship not to let the right hand know what the left hand doeth—for the left hand is in this case the sexual partner, the wife. It is (in these neurotic instances) she who actually carries out the actions by which conception is prevented, by the use of means sufficiently unobtrusive for her neurotic mate to ignore their existence. Actual deception may of course be involved, but it is altogether unlikely that in years of marital intimacy the use of such methods by the wife should completely escape the husband's observation or suspicion, if he is not a fool.

They escape his conscious awareness because he does not wish to be aware of them. He has made a working compromise between his sense of reality, which will not permit him to burden himself with too many children, and certain neurotic considerations, of various sorts, which are unconsciously necessary to his self-respect. These neurotic considerations, to be discussed presently, would, if not checked by realistic considerations, give him a possible total of twenty children to support in the course of his marital life. Obviously these neurotic considerations cannot be indulged in the world of reality, they must be indulged in the world of fantasy—the world of lies. As long as he can pretend to himself that the actualities of his sexual life correspond to these fantasies, the compromise can be maintained. He need only ignore those aspects of his (or his wife's) sexual life which conflict with his dream sexual-life. He permits himself to be easily fooled. But public mention of Birth Control disturbs that secret psychic adjustment, by threatening to bring his repressed unconscious knowledge of what he is actually doing up into his consciousness. That is why he must denounce Birth Control as obscene, ugly, vicious, filthy, etc. He is battenning down the hatches of his unconscious, lest he become aware of his own secret.

But meanwhile, his wife understands the situation perfectly. A woman does not live with a neurotic husband without learning her role. Her role is to say "yes, darling"—and then go and do whatever actually has to be done. Men are neurotic about all sorts of things. It would break a certain husband's heart (or, more accurately, destroy his neurotic self-esteem) if he thought his wife had to do any housework. But there is temporarily no money for hired help, so she toils at washtub and dishpan, but before her husband comes home she changes her clothes and is sitting in a chair in the parlor, the perfect picture of an idle wife, when he returns. She conceals the facts that she is tired. Does he know the truth? Yes and no. He doesn't let himself know it. So with money, concerning which husbands often have curious neuroses. And so with Birth Control. "Yes, darling"! she agrees with him in his strong opinions of the hussies who want to teach women "the common practices of the brothel", as one recent opponent of Birth Control characteristically puts it. She rather admires his high-minded idealism, in spite of its inconveniences. But she knows that, as a practical matter, she must not become recklessly pregnant, and she sees to it that she doesn't. She knows that his high-minded idealism is not intended to be taken too seriously—only seriously enough that he need never be forced to "know" what is going on in their sexual life.

Objecting to Precautions

What, then, are the reasons for this quaint masculine wish, that their women should not take any precautions against undesired pregnancy? Involved in it there is, of course, some anal-erotic repressions, due to an infantile identification of the sexual with the anal region and its products. A scientific education is necessary to banish these widespread anal-erotic disgusts from the mind. But that is scarcely the root of the matter.

An anecdote will serve to guide us in the right direction. This anecdote, incidentally, has been told me twice, and refers to two different men and two different incidents, the details being exactly the same in both cases. A man "picked up" a girl and commenced living with her. She was young, beautiful and a charming companion. The man—from whom both stories come—was really very much in love with her. The thing that particularly impressed him was that in her passion for him, she showed no concern whatever over possible dangerous consequences. They lived together for months. Then one day, in her absence, looking for something in her bureau, he found an appliance which she had been secretly using to prevent conception. He felt

indignant and hurt. He walked out, and did not return. He made no explanations, and never saw her again! And he didn't know why—but that was just the way he felt about it.

There was, it should be understood, no real wish on the part of the man that the girl should actually bear him a child, that would have been out of the question. The incident is capable of a variety of superficial interpretations. It might be said that he had found himself dealing with an experienced young woman instead of an "innocent" girl, and that his mistake was not flattering to his vanity. But that would not have wounded his feelings so deeply as all that. The true explanation seems to be that her apparently trustful, or reckless, or ignorant indifference to "consequences" enabled him to indulge, as a *necessary* part of the psychic excitement with which the sexual act was accompanied, in a fantasy of impregnation. He was profoundly grateful to her for providing, in what seemed her heedlessness of her own interests, the opportunity to indulge a fantasy which was necessary to his complete psychic and sexual satisfaction. And his disillusionment was correspondingly painful.

But why was the belief that he was impregnating the girl necessary to his satisfaction? Not that he wanted a child, or would have let her have one. No, it was a satisfaction not in the world of reality, but in the realm of neurotic fantasy. What he wanted was a fantasy of sexual power with which to counteract a neurotic fear of—impotency. A fear of being insufficiently masculine would perhaps be a more accurate descriptive phrase, since this fear involves homosexual and sterility fears as well. I leave the psycho-analysis to deal with the infantile and complex-determined origins of that widespread masculine neurotic fear.

Preferring Abortion

We need not pause to discuss the doubtless unintentional encouragement which such religious teachings as those of the Catholic church give to these neurotics, by forbidding contraception, and leaving, in common practice, their wives to the resort of secret abortion. For, quite aside from those under such religious influences, there are many others who practice this arrangement, by which the man habitually takes his neurotic satisfaction in accomplishing an impregnation, at the expense of regular abortions for the woman. I happen to know a highly "intellectual" and even "radical" young man who persuaded his talented young wife that there was no "beauty" in the sexual act unless it were done without precautions against conception, and

when finally, broken in health from a long series of abortions, she told that there was no "beauty" in it for her, and that she proposed to use preventives thenceforth, he found the situation so intolerable that he left her

He is a kindly person, outside the field of such neurotic compulsions—not at all a brutal monster, as might indignantly be expected. And these instances might be multiplied, not among the sodden poor, but among the intelligentsia

And this—though our inquiry undertook to deal only with masculine neuroses in connection with Birth Control—brings us to the question *Why do women put up with this kind of neurotic exploitation of their sexual lives?* And again, I refer not to the poor, the ignorant, the ones under churchly influence, but to apparently and in all other respects actually intelligent girls of character and courage. It is no pleasant thing to go through an abortion. And to make a practice of it to please some neurotic male is really too mid-Victorian for the year 1927¹. Why do they do it?

I am not prepared to answer—and I think some woman should come forward and answer in these pages. But I will suggest that this martyrdom of theirs fulfills some equally neurotic feminine need. And, aside from these extreme cases, it would ap-

pear that poor girls are not the only ones who are reckless, nor ignorant girls the only ones who get themselves into trouble. A young woman whose liberal career is more or less characteristic of these free and easy times said to me "I know 'What Every Young Girl Ought to Know', all right—but it spoils things to be *always* so careful. It's more exciting to take a chance once in a while!" Perhaps this isn't as neurotic as it seems. I fully understand—and have offended all my old-fashioned feminist friends by saying—that all women want to have babies. But taking a chance on getting impregnated in that recklessly adventurous fashion doesn't seem to me to be a realistic way of going about getting a baby. It frequently enough means getting an abortion instead.

Can taking these meaningless chances be a symbolic act by which they would allay their secret fears of sterility or homosexuality? A surrender in fantasy to the feminine role of motherhood, but not a real surrender under circumstances in which the action would result in a real baby, in a real home (and with an actual husband to get breakfasts for indefinitely)—a mere neurotic compromise, to be fulfilled on an abortionist's table! These are harsh things to think about such nice girls. I don't know whether they are true or not. I wish some woman who knows would tell me.



The Indispensability of Birth Control

From the Point of View of the Social Reformer

THE absolute indispensability of Birth Control for the success of any modern program of social adjustment has perhaps never been better put than by Robert Cloutman Dexter, in his book *Social Adjustment**. Only a small portion of his comprehensive work is occupied by the question, but this is because it is disposed of early as a necessary foundation for other social efforts. In the short space given to it, there could hardly be a better presentation of the need for Birth Control, and the arguments in its favor.

The twentieth century, Mr Dexter believes, will be the period when the child will come into his own. But the time is not yet here and many are still the offences committed, "sometimes inadvertently through ignorance, and sometimes wantonly through cupidity" against the little ones. Of these of-

fences, not the least is that committed against the right of every child to be wanted. "Of all the tragedies of life", Mr Dexter writes, "that of the child coming undesired into a home already crowded with earlier arrivals, or unfitted economically, morally, or socially to care for him, is the worst."

Checks on Over-Population

Mr Dexter discusses briefly the question of over-population. He describes earlier methods of keeping a check on the too rapid increase of numbers, especially the methods of infanticide and abortion. The automatic rise of the death rate, whenever the birth-rate becomes excessive is also described, with some account of the tragedies which accompany this one of Nature's methods of preventing over-population. "The tragedy", he writes,

*New York, Alfred A. Knopf

"is not only for those who die. For others, less fortunate, the result is an infancy of suffering, a childhood devoid of maternal care (for the mothers are too busy with the other children, or in earning a livelihood), an education administered in the mass by a state whose main interest are military and economic, and an unsatisfied and perverted adolescence, before they again repeat the cycle of their parents and themselves become the parents of unwanted children."

Besides infanticide and abortion, there are three other methods by which individuals can keep down the number of their children. These are celibacy, continence and contraception. Celibacy, he dismisses as of "no practical value in preventing overpopulation." Here he probably fails to realize the immense effect on the birth-rate of partial celibacy, of the postponement of marriage which is very common in over-crowded countries. It is this postponement of marriage until the most fertile years are past that accounts for much of the recent fall of the birth-rate in such countries as England and the eastern States of this country. Whenever contraception is inaccessible, young people find themselves unable to marry early, and the readiest method of Birth Control is the postponement of marriage. The results are generally recognized as unfavorable to morality and to family happiness, and the encouragement of earlier marriage is one of the strong arguments for contraception.

Infanticide and Abortion

Infanticide, once common, is now universally recognized as a crime, and is much less common than abortion. Yet "abortion is in some respects even more objectionable than infanticide." It destroys the unborn babe and at the same time threatens the life and health of the mother. Continence is dismissed as in general impracticable, for "a single act of sexual intercourse in a year might conceivably mean from eighteen to twenty-four births per family."

Hence the practicable and available methods are narrowed down to one—contraception, the objections to which are briefly considered. "Of all the social adjustments discussed in this book," Mr. Dexter concludes, "that of Birth Control through contraception is in every way the most fundamental, without it most of the others will be useless or at most merely palliatives. With it society can increasingly turn its attention to other problems without the feeling that at any moment all its steps forward will be negated by its swarming progeny. An over-populated nation, or an over-populated family can at best simply struggle

for survival. A nation or a family whose numbers are intelligently limited, can devote itself to adjustments of its outstanding wrongs, and to the advances which alone set off man from the beasts that perish."

One point, Mr. Dexter does well to emphasize. "The advocates of Birth Control", he states, "do not maintain that the state should compel anyone to practice their principles, they believe that the advantages of small families are so obvious that self-interest and prudence will suffice to guarantee the limitation." "The falling birth-rate among our immigrants of the second generation", he adds, "particularly among the Irish who in spite of their Catholic faith are little behind the native-born in limiting their families, especially, is significant."

The Feeble-Minded

There remains the problem of the feeble-minded, and for these Mr. Dexter believes that there should be sterilization. This should be authorized by the State, under a system providing for "careful medical, psychological and social inquiry." To illustrate the necessity for such a drastic step he quotes one of his early experiences in social work, an experience which can be duplicated by practically every one who has worked among the lowest strata of society. In the case quoted, almshouse care was necessary for a feeble-minded woman of thirty who was about to bring into the world her seventh child. Compulsion would be needed only where mentality was so low as to render it impossible to teach Birth Control. "For many of the physically defective and some of the mentally diseased as well, particularly with those with taints of insanity and epilepsy," Mr. Cloutman believes, "contraceptive knowledge will be sufficient. This will enable them to marry, if otherwise desirable, without the danger of passing on their unfortunate heredity."

"It is impossible for the state directly to do much more than provide against the multiplication of defectives, indirectly, through education and encouragement, it can do much to encourage the production of the fit. With free access to knowledge regarding Birth Control on the one hand and strict prohibition of the multiplication of defectives, either through segregation, or better still, through sterilization, on the other, society will have done its duty to the unborn and to its future citizens. It will still have many problems to face, but at any rate it will have made a splendid beginning towards remedying that most unfair of all maladjustments—a hopeless or a handicapped start in life."

The Working of Birth Control

The need for Birth Control is often as urgent in the families of college graduates as in those of the poor, and it is because they practice a wise control that they hold a position which lays them open to the strictures of some Eugenists. These letters, written to Mrs. Sanger, illustrate this great value of Birth Control.

Value of Proved Methods

Pennsylvania

You will be pleased, I know, to learn what the improvements in contraceptive technique for which the American Birth Control League clinic has been so largely responsible, have done for our family.

When we were married my wife had just graduated from professional school. She was working with me in the laboratory. I was a research fellow in one of our great Eastern medical schools from which I had graduated two years before. We wanted children, but my wife wanted desperately a year or more of work uninterrupted by the responsibilities and distractions of family life.

In medical school, we students had been lectured to at length on the indications and technique of therapeutic abortion, but not one word had we had in lecture or textbook about the prevention of conception. Now, however, I sought advice in the Faculty and we acted on such advice as was received.

We had no conception of the ignorance at that time (1922) of the profession in general and even of the faculties of the teaching schools in regard to effective methods of contraception, an ignorance which is now happily being dispelled by the educational work of the American Birth Control League and Maternal Health Committee clinics, Dr. Cooper's book on "Clinical Contraception", etc. When, therefore, my wife found herself unexpectedly pregnant it was a terrible shock. She was bitter, resentful, and terribly despondent during the entire pregnancy. Her digestion became so upset and her prostration such that I put her to bed and stayed home to try to take care of her. Finally we had to give up and send her back to her family for a time.

The memory of that experience haunted her long afterward and my wife will always feel cheated, I am afraid, of the happiness of a period of uninterrupted professional work. Meanwhile we learned contraceptive technique from a physician trained in the American Birth Control League clinic and with it freedom from the dread of a repetition of the first experience. When our first child was about two years and a half old we decided on a second, selected the best time, and a fine boy arrived within

a week of the time chosen more than a year before. My wife's mental and physical state were incomparably better during the voluntary than during the unwelcome pregnancy.

Meanwhile my wife's sister fell in love with a young professional man. She had been almost a nervous invalid since a very severe disease of childhood, and we had all assumed that she could not marry until much later. Yet they so obviously and deeply needed each other that both the family physician and the specialist who had had my wife's sister in charge advised the marriage, on condition that her child-bearing could be adjusted to her physical capacity. We sent her to a doctor trained in the American Birth Control League clinic. The marriage took place. About six months later they felt able to have a child, and a son was born in due course. He is now about a year old, bright and far above normal in size and weight. My wife's sister is able to do all her own housework, beside looking after the baby. Her faith in herself and her own possibilities has been greatly strengthened by her happy marriage and her healthy baby. She is incomparably better physically and mentally since her marriage. Her marriage would not have been possible, I believe, without Birth Control.

S

Avoiding a Calamity

New York

On account of the inadequacy of the salaries paid by colleges, my husband, the year after we were married, decided to give up teaching and to go into a business which offered the prospect of better remuneration. But he had to start in at the bottom of the ladder, with a salary too small to support in comfort even the one child we already had. The birth of a second child during the next year or two would have been a real calamity. Fortunately we were able to avoid any addition to our family, and, safe from interruption by pregnancy, I took up teaching. In this way I eked out our meagre income until my husband's salary was raised. Then I resigned from teaching, and we had another child. Birth Control had enabled us to tide comfortably over a period which, without it, would have been one of great economic stress.

E

Planning a Family

Connecticut

In reply to your questions concerning the planning of my family, I should like to say first that I envy the younger generation which will enjoy the fruits of research into contraceptive methods. Such research is a direct consequence of your fearless championship of Birth Control in the early days, when to champion it meant persecution, and when Birth Control in its every aspect was utterly neglected both by scientists and by the medical profession. Had we had the more modern methods of Birth Control, married life would have been pleasanter and more satisfactory both to my husband and myself.

Still, we were among the more fortunate few who had full knowledge of the methods of Birth Control as they were practised in the nineteenth century, and when we married, we resolved to have four children, equally divided in regard to sex. I cannot take any credit for the success we achieved in this latter respect, for the efforts we made to secure girls, resulted in each of our elder two being boys, and when we gave up trying to affect the sex at conception, the next two babies were girls. After the birth of the fourth we rigidly practised Birth Control for the remainder of our married life. As I was exceptionally fertile, I have no doubt that without precautions, I might have equalled my mother's toll of nine, or that of her sister where the family numbered thirteen.

As for the result. With four children we were able to give them a happy childhood, while I still went on with my chosen work of teaching. When the youngest was fifteen, and her sister little more than sixteen, my husband had a very serious illness, from the effects of which he never recovered. Growing worse as the years went on, he became unfit for any work, and finally died before the girls were through college. His illness and the education of the children strained our resources to the uttermost, but I was able to secure good work, work which did not take me much from home, and we passed through these troubled years without disaster. Had the family been larger, I certainly could not have succeeded in doing this, and the children would have had to go to work without finishing their education. As I look at them now—all making good places for themselves in the world, in business, or as husbands and wives and parents, I feel that they would have had good reason to resent the coming of more brothers and sisters who would have crowded them out of their opportunities.

Personally also I feel that a larger family would have interfered greatly with the close relationship between myself and my husband. My husband was a student and writer, and it rejoiced him constantly, that in spite of his responsibilities as a father, the limited size of the family made it possible to pursue his special line as historian, without the pressure of constantly having to make money out of all his writings. Never was there a more united or happy marriage!

A

Correspondence

Editor, BIRTH CONTROL REVIEW

I believe that doctors and nurses should be permitted by law to give contraceptive information, and have often argued to that effect.

Today by a curious and hypocritical kind of class privilege the rich and well-to-do easily get Birth Control information denied to the poor or bootlegged to them often in dangerous form. On every account this situation should be ended. Emphatically it is not the business of Catholics or Protestants to legislate their ecclesiastical opinions in this matter into civil law.

NORMAN THOMAS

This letter is a reply by Norman Thomas to a letter addressed by a friend of Birth Control to each of the Presidential candidates. We have as yet seen no reply from the candidate of either the Democratic or the Republican party.

ENCOURAGEMENT

Chicago

Editor, BIRTH CONTROL REVIEW

Dear Friends

May I venture to thank all who are taking part in making the REVIEW! The July number is a gem.

Again thank you all!

H S

The English Journal, Chicago

(Organ of the Nat. Council of Teachers of English)

Editor, BIRTH CONTROL REVIEW

Your Journal is splendid. Don't give it up, until you are sure you can get something better.

H D R



THE BURDENED CATHOLICS

"I think that the frightful—I repeat 'the frightful'—burden rightly laid on the average Catholic citizen by way of Catholic doctrine concerning birth restriction tends to break down the allegiance of thousands whose shoulders are not exceptionally strong. I know many who argue (illogically, but still) 'In this point I cannot—anyway I do not—observe Catholic rules. Had I not better therefore chuck the whole thing?' Would I not be a hypocrite not to do so—"

Rev C C MARTINDALE, S J,

(Foremost Catholic apologist writing in England today) in "*The Commonweal*", Feb 28, 1928

Briffault's "The Mothers"

By HAVELOCK ELLIS

THIS huge work, covering in its three volumes nearly 2,500 pages, and representing an enormous amount of labor, was published a year ago.* It has attracted wide attention, but that attention has by no means always been favorable. It has secured high praise from a few, but more often it has been received coolly or with hostile criticism. It was first called to my notice, immediately on publication, by Mr. Austen Harrison, formerly the editor of the *English Review* and himself the author of books on women's questions, he wrote to me of "The Mothers" with enthusiasm. But when I later came to read reviews of the book I found that by most of the critics it was belittled. Now, after an interval, it seems worth while to investigate the cause of this attitude and to inquire how far it was justified.

The author of "The Mothers", so far as one can learn, is a physician who comes from New Zealand (though the name indicates a French origin), he is not known in connection with medicine, but is the author of several non-medical books, and it is clear that he is a person of intensely active mind who has moved much about the world, was in the trenches during the war, and has acquired wide interests. He is now settled in London, and states in a brief pathetic passage of the Preface, which wins the reader's sympathy, that the present work has been "completed amid great suffering. The flight that began with still youthful buoyancy has been brought to a conclusion on broken wings", adding that he has "worked single-handed and been spared no drudgery."

UNDER all these circumstances, it could not but be a pleasure to congratulate Dr. Briffault without qualification on bringing to a conclusion a great and memorable enterprise. His main thesis is that the part played by woman at the early stages of human culture has been under-estimated, because, since we live under a long established patriarchal order, only to-day undergoing modification, we find it hard to understand how there could ever have been a time when the influence of woman in the community, based on descent in the female line, was equal to, or greater than, that of man, so that what may be called a matriarchal order prevailed. This was rendered possible by the great fact of maternity at a period when paternity was uncertain and even unknown (conception being attributed to other causes), and to all the various industries, sentiments, and activities, of the first importance for early man, which radiated from maternity (and among its irradiations Briffault, with many other writers, counts love), while, before war had developed, or the idea of property passed beyond its elementary phase, there was

no occasion for the dominance of man. So that "the social characters of the human mind are, one and all, traceable to the operations of instincts that are related to the functions of the female and not to those of the male." With a settled agricultural life, the development of war, of property, and the initiation of a family life in which the husband founded the home and brought the wife into it, an almost revolutionary change occurred in the social order.

That is a thesis which is not new and has often been vigorously opposed at various points as contrary to many established facts. But, while it is impossible to speak with certainty regarding the social life of early man, there may yet be much in the argument which contains possible and even probable truth, often overlooked and needing to be brought forward in order to modify the common tendency to set up a patriarchal order as almost a law of nature. It has usually been associated with Bachofen, who wrote nearly a century ago, with much erudition, though without the benefit of the more critical information which has since been accumulated, and in an atmosphere of mysticism which served to discredit with most later investigators the primitive gynococracy, or rule of woman, which he believed he had discerned, there are still many who more or less follow the views put forward by Bachofen, while other authorities of at least equal or greater weight, while admitting the frequent existence of descent in the maternal line, deny the conclusions that have been drawn from it. There was, therefore, ample room for an investigator who, recognizing the pioneering insight of Bachofen, would discard his romantic extravagance, and seek to give force to the argument he presented in a more moderate form and in the light of later information.

IT IS unfortunate that Dr. Briffault, in taking up this task not only with enthusiasm and industry, but a notable equipment of acute intelligence and varied outlook, should have been seriously handicapped by defects of literary temperament. I say "literary temperament", because I know nothing whatever of his personal temperament. It is the writer alone whom I am able to take into consideration.

Dr. Briffault, it is clear from his previous books as well as from "The Mothers," is a writer who is temperamentally attracted to the paradoxical. This is not the same as being heterodox, for a thinker may wander from the orthodox path without putting himself into violent opposition to it, and even without knowing that he is wandering. But to be paradoxical involves a deliberate and violent challenge to what is regarded as orthodox. A previous work, "Psyche's Lamp," Dr. Briffault himself described as a challenge to the most fundamental of all

*Robert Briffault, *The Mothers: A Study of the Origins of Sentiments & Institutions*. London: Allen & Unwin. New York: The Macmillan Company.

notions, that of individuality, which he considered a mere abstraction, and he there precluded his later attack on the patriarchal social order by abolishing the conflict with what he called the "patriarchal universe" Dr Briffault likes to feel that he is standing alone against the world. He puts forward this thesis as his own discovery, without explaining that, though not in precisely the same form, there are a number of distinguished workers in this field who, in one form or another, have argued along similar lines to his own. Indeed, of some of the most notable of them he speaks disparagingly, and even his solitary tribute to Bachofen is relegated to a footnote.

As regards the protagonists on both sides, one may add, it seems characteristic that Dr Briffault never attempts to estimate the relative weight of their opinions. He quotes a vast number of authors—between two and three thousand—but he seems unable to see the trees for the wood. There are a dozen or so workers in this field in recent times to whose judicial opinion much weight must be attached, even if they are not accepted, but there is no sign that Dr Briffault distinguishes them in the jungle, even when they favor his own views, he is liable to treat any of them with a supercilious air of easy authority, or, if he distinguishes, that is only to be known by the frequency with which he attacks them.

THIS literary temperament may be described as hyperesthetic. Dr Briffault is intensely alive and sensitive to the ideas that strike him. But he responds to them excessively. So that while he is perpetually putting forth views that, though they may not be new, have been freshly realized by himself, and may well contain overlooked elements of truth, he tends to put them forth extravagantly—frequently with the aim of contradicting somebody else—and so, in the eyes of the judicious, he is apt to prejudice a point that was well worth making. To take a simple and obvious example, he insists, more than once, on the opposition between the sexual impulse and the mating impulse, and is even hereby carried to the wild assertion (which he elsewhere contradicts) that in savage matings there is no sexual selection. If he had been content to say they were *distinct*, we should agree that here is a distinction we must always recognize. But it is not enough for Dr Briffault to point out, as he rightly does, that the two impulses are distinct, such a mild statement he fails to find sufficiently extreme, and twenty pages further on he asserts that there is "direct contrast and antagonism."

These hyperesthetic reactions are specially notable in Dr Briffault's attitude towards fellow-workers, and they are the more pronounced the more eminent the worker who calls them out. Professor Westermarck, perhaps the most distinguished authority in this field, and a worker who possesses in the highest degree those qualities of judicial caution and moderation in which Dr Briffault is not conspicuous, is repeatedly called out for pedagogic castigation, and never with the smallest recognition of the great

qualities which have assured for Westermarck's history of marriage its high reputation. The criticisms, it is possible, may often be justified, but I may note that I tried to verify one of them, where Dr Briffault reprovingly states that Westermarck gives "an incorrect reference to H. H. Ellis." But on looking the point up the reference is found to be perfectly correct, the in correction is Briffault's. In another place, where an absurd argument is attributed to another cautious and distinguished authority, Dr Moll, the absurdity is found due to an extravagant twist which has been given to Moll's statement.

IT MAY be simplest for me to illustrate these traits of Dr Briffault's mind by his method of treating a statement of my own. Many years ago I pointed out that the primitive rule of exogamy—or marriage outside the immediate group—may have its biological basis (though not its complete explanation, for there the active human intelligence came into inventive play) in the fact that the mating impulse is felt more strongly towards comparative strangers than towards those who have been brought up in the same household, or have been companions from childhood. This is not, as Dr Briffault thinks, a "theory", but a statement of fact which most people can confirm out of their own early experiences. It is not specially a phenomenon of civilization, for it rests on an instinctive basis which is independent of culture. It is a common experience in all isolated communities that when a young woman from outside is introduced she has, without the exercise of any coquetry, all the young men at her feet.

In disputing this fact, Dr Briffault fails to see that he thereby deprives his own conception of primitive society of its biological basis, and leaves it in the air, for his view is that, in the first stages of human life women always chose as their sexual partners men who were strangers and whom they refused to live with, preferring to live with their children among their own blood relations. That the immature instincts of children tend to have what is, not quite correctly, termed an "incestuous" direction, is, thanks to the Freudians, now well recognized, it is equally well recognized that, with the attainment of adolescence and the normal susceptibility to the stronger attractions of the less familiar mating objects, there is a sharp reaction against the immature and childish tendencies, and a horror of incest arises. All this is, to an impartial observer, simple, natural, and universal. It represents the general rule, to which there are of course endless exceptions, early "fixation", more or less pathological, which are never overcome. To bring them forward, as Dr Briffault does, to invalidate the general rule is idle and scarcely intelligent, though, in order to strengthen his opposition to my representation of this rule, he states that I had put it forward as "indispensable", needless to say, I have never said anything so absurd. Impelled by the same motive, he makes the equally baseless assertion that I had been referring "exclusively to the operation of the sexual instincts of the male." On the contrary, this instinct is

probably even more marked in the female, and numberless women, when urged by a suitor they have known from childhood, have felt, and often said "I am very fond of you, but I don't want to marry you—I know you so well" In other words, they feel that such a union would have a kind of "incestuous" character Dr Briffault, however, might seem to belong to that class of controversialists who hold that we should reply not to what our adversary actually said but to what he ought to have said if we are to triumph over him

THAT supposition would be unjust for it is probable that Dr Briffault is simply carried away by his special temperament to excesses which he had not deliberately planned But we may now realize why it is that his achievement in producing this memorable work has not been received with all the applause which it may seem to merit He has unfairly disparaged the fellow-workers before whom, in the first place, his book naturally comes for judgment, and — unkindest cut of all — he has even contrived to alienate in some measure the very sex which he has come forth to champion His aim is the justification of the primitive place of women in society, at a period when culture was not the outcome of masculine activity but mainly an achievement of women "Social organization itself was the expression of feminine functions Those social sentiments without which no aggregate of individuals can constitute a society were the immediate derivatives of the feelings which bind the mother and her offspring, and consisted originally of these, and of these alone Upon them the superstructure of humanity, and the powers and possibilities of its development, ultimately rest" But in the establishment of the patriarchal system and the civilization bound up with it—for neither of which he feels unqualified admiration and both of which he seems to think likely to disintegrate in their present form—Dr Briffault can assign but a small part to woman, while he magnifies the part women have played in primitive magic, and makes no attempt to conceal the facts, which are indeed undisputed, concerning the licentiousness of women among various uncivilized peoples It was no doubt inevitable that such a champion should arouse horror in the breasts of many feminists who still cherish the ideals of prim feminine respectability which are said to have prevailed in England during the Victorian age

WHEN we have thus disposed of Dr Briffault's critics by accounting for their existence, and at the same time put aside his own theories concerning the sexual order of a Palaeolithic age from which no documents for proof or disproof exist, it is possible to speak of this work with genuine admiration Every page of it may be read with enjoyment, and there are few readers who will not derive knowledge or suggestion from some of them, provided they approach them with an alert critical sense This author possesses wide-ranging interests,

supported by an immense and indiscriminate familiarity with their literature (which he generally quotes with marvellous accuracy), and combined with an athletic intelligence which moves easily in this wilderness of quotations, constantly throwing out new ideas or reviving old ideas, illustrating them from a fresh angle or attaching to them an unexpected importance Moreover, this book is the work of a brilliant writer, one may even say a literary artist, and if his ideas are at times obscure and he sometimes contradicts himself, there is no obscurity in his expression Every chapter may be read with ease as well as with pleasure

It is characteristic of the author's intellectual grasp that his eagerness to penetrate to the origins of society does not preclude an insight into the present "We live," he remarks in his final chapter, "in a patriarchal society in which patriarchal principles have ceased to be valid" We cannot, even if it were desirable, return to any earlier order, but we can mould the future Men can unlearn the patriarchal theory, and women—mothers in the spirit even when not in the flesh—can learn that "all racial ideals that are worth while are ultimately identical with their own elemental instincts", in throwing off their economic dependence they are rescuing from the like thralldom the deep realities of which they were the first "mothers" Both sexes alike, putting aside all efforts to impose their own ideals on the opposite sex and substituting mutual co-operation for sex antagonism, can work together for the future evolution of society They can so organize marriage that it ceases to be an "institution" for the State to regulate, and assumes new forms which the State cannot institute, though it is its duty to register them It is towards new forms of marriage that existing conditions point Individual men and women differ profoundly in their fitness for one form or other of sexual association, what is in a given instance desirable is quite unsuitable in others" This final chapter may be read with profit even by those who are least inclined to assume a primitive rule of women

When from this final standpoint we survey "The Mothers" we cannot fail to recognize that, notwithstanding all the criticism his work has been subjected to, Dr Briffault may view with satisfaction the outcome of his labor and thought He has produced a book which no investigator in these fields can henceforth afford to neglect

If men have any obligations in respect to beings not yet born, these obligations do not consist in bringing them into the world but in making them happy They have for their object the general well-being of the human race, of the society in which they live, and the family to which they belong It is a childish idea that the obligation of human beings is to overburden the earth with useless and unhappy creatures

CONDORCET

Book Reviews

HEREDITY AND HUMAN AFFAIRS, by Edward M East New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1927

PROFESSOR EAST'S exceedingly instructive book should be welcomed by all readers of the BIRTH CONTROL REVIEW. It is of interest to learn what an investigator in genetics, as well as a student of sociology, has to say of current human problems. General principles of heredity are presented in palatable form and much information is given relative to the inheritance of human traits. Recent experimental work on the ever-interesting problem of heredity and environment is discussed in a chapter showing how these two factors are collaborators in the determination of characters. Other interesting chapters are concerned with marriage between near kin, and racial traits.

Eugenicists will be especially interested in the discussion and data presented under the chapter headings — Genius, Mediocrity, and Education, The Lower Levels of Humanity, The Survival of the Underman, and Immigration. "Genetics gives fair warning to the sensible but timid social worker, to the short-sighted physician, to the perverted Comstockian, and to the sophists of the church, that civilization is in a dangerous situation, for which only one remedy is specific. Devise proper methods for safeguarding its use, if you will. But see that it is used to reduce the survival of the unfit, or the next generation will hold you to account."

All who have read "Mankind at the Crossroads" will welcome another opportunity to read what Dr East in his stimulating and breezy style has to say about matters of the greatest human interest.

P W WHITING

THE FATHER IN PRIMITIVE PSYCHOLOGY, by Bronislaw Malinowski New York W W Norton & Company, Inc

DR MALINOWSKI'S book is a detailed study of the Trobrianders, people inhabiting the Trobriand Islands, a coral archipelago lying to the northeast of New Guinea. It is an extremely interesting account of comparative mores and reveals the social and psychological mechanisms of a group of non-Occidental peoples.

For us the most interesting institution in the Trobriand Islands is marriage and the regulation of family life. It is a truism that one group or form of organization will look with disdain and suspicion upon the customs of an outside group. This attitude holds in particular toward the marriage rites. We continue to respect and sanction only the Biblical form of marriage and all that it implies. All others appear destructive and wicked, only because we interpret social customs foreign to us in the light of our own surroundings and traditions.

The Trobrianders have an altogether refreshing and withal, a logical explanation of their existing social order. The father was described to Dr Malinowski by the natives as a stranger. He has a purely social definition, his biological significance remains unknown. The child belongs to the mother. She feels it in her body and then feeds it with her milk. For this reason all kinship and social relations are reckoned by the mother and the women therefore enjoy a considerable share in tribal life, in certain economic, ceremonial and magical activities.

The Trobrianders have no knowledge of physiological facts. The whole of the birth process happens between the spirit world and the mother. The ingress from the outer world of the incarnated spirits results in pregnancy. In this way we have a new theory of the origin of human life and of child birth, perfectly co-ordinated and self-sufficient.

The unmarried girls lead as complete a sexual life as the married women but it is an abomination for them to have children. Prenuptial motherhood is not tolerated, not because it is associated with sexual guilt but because there is no social father. A free translation of a native answer would seem to indicate that natives have no understanding of the connection between the sexual act and child birth.

"Not at all, the missionaries are mistaken, always unmarried girls continually have intercourse, and yet have no children."

There must be marriage in order that there may be fatherhood. In the case of unmarried girls, there is no father to the child. Dr Malinowski says

"If you try to inquire who is the physiological father of such a baby, you simply talk nonsense to a native."

One native who had remained away from home for a few years, returned to find that in his absence his wife had borne two children. The husband did not accuse his wife of having taken a lover. He believed that she was visited by a blessed spirit, and thus solved the problem of adultery.

The natives know nothing of Neo-Malthusian practices and when a visitor speaks of them, they are greatly amused. The number of illegitimate children is surprisingly small. Dr Malinowski found no answer to the question but adds

"Can there be any physiological law which makes conception less likely when women begin their sexual activity early in life, lead it indefatigably, and mix their lovers freely?"

An anthropologist would probably enjoy life among the Trobrianders but a missionary undoubtedly loses nights of sleep trying to reclaim the sheep who have so naively strayed from the God-given fold.

GERTRUDE DONIGER

FATALISM OR FREEDOM, by C Judson Herrick, 1926, W W Norton and Company, New York

IN their larger and modern sense the mythical Fates may be pictured as the mosaic of parental characters passed along a predetermined mechanism into determinate embryology, grown through gestation to a birth and development in an environment fixed by the social inheritance of the parents, associates, schools, churches, or business, developed as an adult by sex association, marriage, and reproduction, completed as a life circumscribed by the complexes developed in youth. But is this pattern thus rigidly woven? Is it wholly a natural process or can we admit a younger sister of destiny, Freedom, into our pantheon of Nature?

The biological formulation and analysis of this problem is set by the author for discussion.

The book is divided into six chapters. The first presents the problem. The second, Biological Control, deals with the environment in which a body lives and the internal organization of the individual. The third takes up human control, particularly control of human behavior through mental power. The last three chapters deal with Freedom, Natural, Human and Real, each contributing to the proof that the freedom of which we speak grows up within the life of the individual. It faces change from day to day. In the development of vigorous, sturdy, aggressive character it thrives and plays a mighty rôle. In this progressive movement the particular choice, which is the battleground of freedom today, is left in the rear tomorrow. Habit enters, what I am free to choose today becomes or forms the unconscious automatism of tomorrow. Thus, in the author's words, "of all the fates that control my destiny the youngest sister (Freedom) is by far the most comely and the most significant."

JOHN W. GOWEN

THE RATE OF LIVING, by Raymond Pearl, New York Alfred A Knopf

AN interesting, novel approach to the vital question of what factors in the organization and functional performance of life make for its duration is contained in this recent book by Dr Raymond Pearl. Small flies are used for these studies. These flies will exist and have their being in milk bottles. Their thread of life is short, making it possible to fully observe it. The deaths plotted against age make a death curve closely similar to that of man. Finally, this form may be easily controlled, making critical experiments on this intricate problem possible. An important, informative chapter on the practical husbandry of these forms is presented as furnishing an essential background for all such biological experimentation.

The exposition now bears upon three great factors—environment, particularly population density, heredity and inherent vitality—in their relation to life's duration.

Crowding or density of population shows a marked effect on length of life. In all of the experimental work no other environmental factor produces such wide alterations in life's duration. The discovery that high degrees of crowding shorten life was expected on general grounds, but the clear-cut evidence that minimal population densities are not optimal was an unexpected result. Clear evidence demonstrating a definite relationship between genetic constitution and longevity was found. This is interpreted to mean that duration of life is the expression of the total functional-structural organization of the individual and that it is this organization which is inherited. Duration of life is thus one of the many objective manifestations of the inheritance. Finally, the broad fact is demonstrated that difference in inherent vitality—the activity of living things which is an expression solely of their innate organization—has the same type of distribution among individuals when measured as total duration of life or as growth. This inherent vitality appears to take the form of total potential capacity of the organism to perform vital action in the absence of exogenous energy. This may be measured as total duration of life or by rate of growth. The experimental analysis of this relation between rate of growth and duration of life in the same individual leads to the conclusion that it is inverse. Or, finally, that in general the duration of life varies inversely as the rate of energy expenditure during life.

The broad nature of the problems and insight by which the analysis is made will undoubtedly attract and be of much interest to the critical reader.

JOHN W. GOWEN

A MANY SIDED VOLUME

A VOLUME such as that containing the Proceedings of the Des Moines Conference on Social Work*, is a library in itself. Its 736 closely printed pages include some of the most important contributions to the new science of dealing with social maladjustments to be found anywhere in print. It is regrettable that the type is so small and the arrangement so uninviting that the chances of its being read and studied by any large public are slight. But social workers, whether present at the conference or not, will, it is to be hoped, turn to it for help and guidance, and the wisdom contained in the volume will gradually become part of the equipment of every leader in this field. There is one great lack in regard to this equipment. The conference, for reasons of policy, refused to discuss Birth Control, and social work which neglects this most important and fundamental principle will soon be as antiquated and imperfect as would be the general methods of charity work of the early nineteenth century.

*Proceedings of the National Conference of Social Work at the Forty-fourth Annual Session, held at Des Moines, Iowa, May 11 to 18 1927. The University of Chicago Press.

Periodical Notes

The *Nation and Athenaeum* (London) in its issue of July 28, discusses the question of maternity leave for married teachers. This question came to the front a short time ago through the action of the Manchester Education Committee. Last year, the Committee made a regulation excluding married teachers. This was over-ruled by the City Council. This year in an effort to discourage married teachers, the Committee ruled that a married teacher must retire from work five months before the birth of her baby and must remain away for twelve months afterwards. Immediately there was a flood of controversy, those opposing this regulation of the private life of married women and this effort to deprive them of their chance of earning a salary while their babies were little made an appeal to the City Council to use its authority again and not to permit the Education Committee, in an indirect way, to secure its object of excluding married teachers with children from the schools. The effect on the birth-rate in the ranks of teachers is pointed out, and the Committee is accused of injuring the future race by "denying motherhood to some of the best physical and mental types of women in the country." The opponents of the mother-teachers, on the other hand, declare that these women need "saving from themselves", and argue that only by such a regulation will their babies get the care to which they are entitled.

The answers of 100 men to the question "What is Wrong with My marriage?" which were analysed by Dr G. V. Hamilton and Kenneth MacGowan in the July issue of the *Woman's Home Companion*, are followed up in the August number of the same periodical by the analysis of the answers to the same question by 100 women. It is noteworthy that a larger proportion of the women than of the men found the basis of their marital troubles in physical dissatisfaction. It may be surmised that one reason for this difference lies in the fact that more women than men go into marriage without understanding its sexual aspects. Better sex education for both men and women is evidently needed if marriage is to be successful.

The same writers discuss the 200 answers of men and women in an article in the August *Harpers* under the title "Marriage and Love Affairs." The aspect under consideration here is the love affairs of men and women with other women and men than those whom they married. According to the answers, there was an average of almost seven love affairs apiece for the women, and slightly lower than this for the men. Of the 200 men and women, 51 men and 45 women considered their marriages successful. After a searching analysis of the replies, the writers conclude "that there are so many unsuccessful experimenters in the field of love and romance, not alone because it is

only half-illuminated for childhood and adolescence, but also because it is full of roped-off places that are unintelligently labelled. The signs read 'Evil', 'Unclean', 'Murky', 'Must be entered furtively if at all, even by adults', and 'Keep out'! They ought to read 'The Management wishes to make this field a place of joyous exploration for you. There are a few hazardous areas in it, and others which you cannot fully enjoy without first learning something about them. If you wish to supplement your own common sense with truthful and explicit information about these areas, you need only ask questions or consult the guide books'."

In these days of pessimism concerning marriage it is refreshing to read such an article as that by Dorothy Dunbar Bromley in the August *Good Housekeeping* on "Some Successful Marriages." These marriages hardly represent the present generation, for, to be sure that a marriage is successful, it must stand the test of time. But it is evident that modern tendencies towards admitting the right of the woman to her individuality and her own interests will promote the chances of happiness in marriage in the future.

The August *Graphic Survey* contains an interesting article by Alice Evans Cruz in which she sketches the migration of a typical Mexican family into the United States. The difficulties which these immigrants bring for social workers, school teachers and officials are vividly presented. The family consists of father and mother, ten children and an old grandmother. The eldest daughter marries at fifteen, and begins at once to increase the already overgrown family. Fortunately in this special case, the wise old grandmother, seeing how badly they fitted into their new surroundings, contrived to secure the return of the whole family to Mexico.

Eugenical News for August reports on the Exhibit on the Surgery of Sterilization of the Maternal Health Committee, at the Minneapolis meeting in June of the American Medical Association. A paper on "The Surgery of the Insane and Feeble-Minded in California" was read by Dr. Robert Dickenson of the Committee on Maternal Health.

At the close of his paper Dr. Dickinson offered a resolution that "the Section on Obstetrics, Gynecology and Abdominal Surgery recommend to the American Medical Association that it organize or take part in an impartial and thorough investigation of sterilization from the point of view of medicine, surgery and preventive medicine." This resolution was passed and will now go to the House of Delegates of the American Medical Association for further action.

Soviet Birth Control Policy

An Answer to "Baring the Door."*

By HAROLD Z BROWN and JESSICA SMITH

BIRTH CONTROLLERS who are shocked by Soviet Russia's "barred door" to their propaganda should close their eyes, take a deep breath, and count ten. Then a second glance may go far toward explaining the inexplicable.

Why is it that with Birth Control information obtainable free, with no questions asked, in every Soviet clinic, Soviet officials thunder

"We are opposed to Birth Control as a political doctrine, and will not tolerate propaganda. Malthus is abhorrent to us, and we cannot admit that overpopulation is ever a cause of poverty. The capitalist system is the sole cause of poverty?"

Why should a country so enlightened in its thinking on social problems deny its public platforms to Margaret Sanger, and refuse family limitation a place in its social philosophy?

The answer is that one must not be astonished to find sane, liberal, flexible practice often coupled with narrow unyielding theory in the Soviet Union. The Communists are the fundamentalists of modern politics and sociology. Like their Tennessee confreres in the religious field, they permit no infidelity in matters of doctrine. And they are vigilant to challenge any attempt by Malthus to take the credit justly due Marx for all the wrongs and ills of modern civilization. But—another point of similarity with their Tennessee brethren!—if one's faith is manifestly waterproof one may expect latitude in mere conduct.

So it is that we find the dictators of the proletariat, after scotching the spirit of Malthus as manifested in Mrs. Sanger, heading off across lots. If we follow we shall observe them engaged in conduct far from unbecoming to Malthusians.

Birth Control is not merely tolerated by the Soviets. It is advocated—if not as a policy, then as a concrete measure here and now. That is just as effective, even if less satisfying to Malthusian fundamentalists.

There is complete freedom of dissemination of actual contraceptive information in the Soviet Union. When I was in Moscow last November, urchins were hawking Birth Control treatises on the streets as they hawk newspapers here, crying what, as nearly as I could gather, was the Russian equivalent for "Extry! Extry! How not to have babies!" Books published by the government publishing house and approved by the government censorship advocate contraception *in opposition to abortion*.

Nor is Birth Control information kept "hermetically sealed" by the clinics until individuals ask for it. In the "consultations" each doctor is instructed to give contra-

ceptive information to all who need it, whether for medical or social reasons.

A particular effort is made to educate peasant women to properly space the births of their children. They are urged to nurse their babies for the full term, and to avoid another pregnancy during the infancy of their children. This implies contraception for an extended period after each birth. And the officially-urged figure of at least three children from every healthy mother implies limitation of most families to about that number.

Equal sanity and practical sense is shown in the Soviet policy towards abortion. While fighting abortion with every weapon of education and publicity at their disposal, the Commissars are far too intelligent to legally outlaw it. Soviet authorities not only permit abortions for social as well as for medical reasons,—they perform them!

Their position is that abortions are harmful, evil, and must be rooted out, but until there is some really effective way of preventing them, let them be done legally by qualified doctors, under sanitary conditions, and with the best chance of recovery and the least chance of infection. They fully realize that repression in these matters avails nothing, and that education alone will kill abortions.

So if a Russian woman has valid social or medical reasons for desiring an abortion she can get it at a public hospital at public expense. Among concededly valid social reasons, as distinguished from medical ones, are inability to support the coming child, inadequate facilities for housing or care, probable interference by the coming child with the welfare of existing children, or even an expected change of residence to another city, which may make it inadvisable to have a child at a given time.

If a woman's reasons for desiring an abortion are not convincing to the health authorities, she may have recourse at her own expense to a private physician, and the only legal restrictions on his performing the operation are those governing his professional qualifications.

Apart from the high philosophical considerations above set forth, there are some practical reasons for the Commissars' objections to crusading Birth Controllers. One is fear that unregulated Birth Control propaganda may outstrip their campaign of education in proper methods and their building up of clinic equipment and personnel. This might strengthen the tendency toward abortions—which they are determined to end.

Undoubtedly another reason is the known Communist aversion (to put it mildly) toward non-official, non-Party propaganda which may deeply influence the minds of the people—even though such propaganda may be in direct line with the Communist program.

*See BIRTH CONTROL REVIEW for April, p. 115

News Notes

UNITED STATES

California

DR HENRY G BRAINERD, widely known physician and alienist and good friend to the cause of Birth Control died at his home in Los Angeles on July 22. In his will, he left a fund of \$30,000 to provide an income for the Los Angeles Mothers' Clinic, of which he had been one of the founders and promoters.

On August 5, at the First Baptist Church at Oakland, a sermon on China was given by Rev Dryden L Phelps, and was broadcast over KGO, the most powerful radio station in the West. Dr Phelps laid much stress on the over-population difficulties of the Far East, and stated that Birth Control was the only salvation for China and India, and that Baptist missionaries were endeavoring to teach parents that a few children for whom they could care were preferable to many children and starvation.

Every phase of Birth Control and companionate marriage were discussed at the School of Adult Education held at Mills College, Oakland, August 13-25. The speakers included Protestants, Jews and Roman Catholics.

CANADA

THE Alberta bill which provides for the sterilization of the feeble-minded has now become law. It contains the valuable provision that, if the patient is capable of giving consent, his consent must be secured before the operation is performed. If not capable of giving such consent, the consent of the husband or wife of the patient, or the parent or guardian, if the patient be unmarried, must be secured. If there be no guardian, spouse, or near relative, the case must be submitted to the Minister of Health. The law applies to all inmates of mental hospitals, and special note is taken of those cases which would be suitable for discharge if there were no danger of their perpetuating their defects in their progeny.

Alberta is the second province in Canada to provide for the sterilization of the mentally defective, as Manitoba passed an act to the same general effect a few years ago. The Alberta Act is in several respects an improvement on the act of the sister Province.

ENGLAND

THE British Medical Association held its annual meeting at Cardiff the last week in July. In at least one of the sections—that on Medical Sociology—Birth Control came in for serious attention. This was during the discussion of a paper on the falling birth-rate given by Professor Crew of the University of Edinburgh. In this

paper Dr Crew discussed the law of Population Growth as enunciated by Professor Pearl of John Hopkins, and applied the law, which was based on experiments with *drosophila*—the fruit fly—to human beings. His conclusion was that if the birth-rate constantly exceeded the death-rate, "there must be increasing inefficiency ending in famine," and that it was for human societies to decide whether the control of population should be through such catastrophe or by orderly control. In the discussion, Dr Collier stated that he "would no longer sit on the fence as regards Birth Control and he hoped the profession would not." "The Medical Society of Oxford," he added, "had decided to welcome a Birth Control Clinic, provided it was properly administered and the society was represented on its management. At Cambridge there was already a well-established clinic whose chairman was the late Regius Professor of Medicine and an ex-president of the Royal College of Physicians."

GERMANY

ACCORDING to recently published statistics the birth-rate in Berlin which has been steadily falling, reached its lowest level in 1927. The figures show that 44,433 children were born in Berlin last year, while 50,479 persons died. This means that the birth-rate is 10.63 per thousand while the death-rate is 12.08. During the year the city's population would actually have decreased by 6,046 but for the arrival of new residents from the provinces and foreign countries.

Books Received

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF SOCIETY, by Frank Hamilton Hankins, Professor of Sociology at Smith College. The Macmillan Co., New York.

LE BETAÏL HUMAIN, by Victor Marguerite, Ernest Flammarion, Paris.

SEIJI NOMA, "Magazine King" of Japan. Tokyo, Dai Nippon Yubenkwai, Kodansha. Pamphlet.

A sketch of his life, character and adventures.

BIRTH CONTROL OF HUMAN SLAVERY, by John Kane, Hill Publishing Co., Los Angeles. 25 cents.

This little pamphlet of 26 pages, gives a vigorous defense of Birth Control and makes a formidable attack on its opponents. It is written in easy colloquial style and appeals to the "man and woman in the street."

PROGRESS AND PLENTY, by William T. Foster and Wad-dill Catchings. Pollak Foundation for Economic Research, Newton, Mass.

An appeal for a Government Department which should gather and disseminate true information concerning production and consumption. Such information would be useful in determining the optimum population of states and countries.

REFLECTIONS OF A DOCTOR

Editor, BIRTH CONTROL REVIEW

May I give my view regarding those who are opposed to Birth Control?

Having had several years of experience in the local government venereal disease clinic, having charge of the Davenport Visiting Nurses' Skin and Venereal Disease Clinic, and being at present Director of the Scott County Skin and Social Disease Clinic, I see and have seen the urgent need of some harmless and inexpensive method for the prevention of pregnancy of those who are financially, mentally and physically unfit to care for children that are born to them. In fact they are not capable of properly caring for themselves, and their children will be born with syphilis, or blinded with the germs of gonorrhea, in numbers far greater than they suspect. All social workers and overseers of the poor know the facts—the sufferings and misery that these poor unfortunates undergo, sanctioned in many instances in some denominations, by their religious advisers.

Having seen the numbers of these unfortunates, and heard their pleas for some method of preventing pregnancy until they are cured of transmittable infections, makes me ask that all charitable associations, church workers, and overseers of the poor who are spending taxpayers' money be encouraged to make every effort to determine the underlying cause of the poverty and pauperism in their respective communities.

My personal opinion is that it would be possible to determine the facts by having records made of each pauper, criminal, or person asking charitable aid in each community. These records to be made by those by whom aid is given, and showing name, age, nationality, occupation, weekly income, number of dependents, what aid has been given in the past, what church they are members of, and if they themselves are not active members, of what church their parents were members, or what religious training they have had. When their church affiliations have been determined, the matter should be taken up monthly with their religious directors, and a meeting of all religious organizations should meet once each month to learn the numbers of church members who are being helped and induce the churches to get these members instructed as may be deemed necessary and advisable. There is no doubt that each community has paupers and those living on charity, and each community has varying percentage of members of this and that Church. When the facts have been determined, each can give all possible aid to others in trying to remedy the causes found.

Churches, which have the maximum percentages of criminals and paupers, should be known to the charitable organizations, and tax payers, and the directors of such religious organizations should be shown that it is their fault, and remedies should be insisted upon for overcoming such deplorable conditions.

ROBERT EMMETT JAMESON, M D

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—ALICE HAMILTON, M D *Harvard Medical School*

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