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A MEDICAL ADDRESS

ON

THE BENEVOLENCE OF MALTHUS,

CONTRASTED WITH

THE CORRUPTIONS OF NEO-
MALTHUSIANISM.

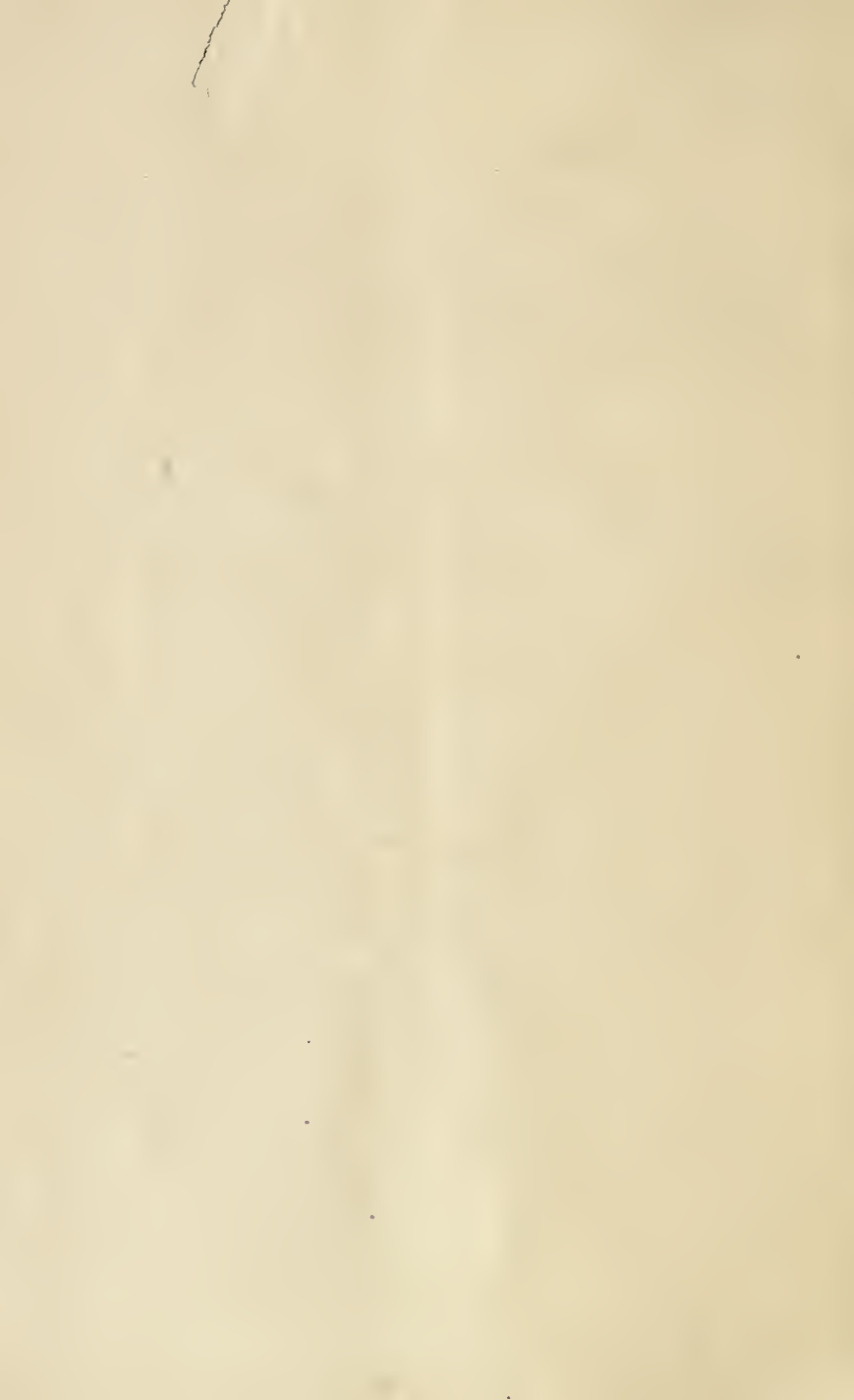
BY

DR. ELIZABETH BLACKWELL.

Printed by Request for Private Circulation.

LONDON :
T. W. DANKS & CO., STEAM PRINTERS, 71 DEAN STREET,
SOHO, W.

1888.



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INTRODUCTION.

A PAINFUL experience of the results which may follow upon any practical reference to the subject of the size of families occurred to me in 1870. In that year I had been invited to address the Working Woman's College, and chose as my subject, "How to Keep a Household in Health." After referring to many other conditions of health, I dwelt on the importance of considering the influence of heredity in forming marriage unions, and illustrated, from a wide experience amongst the poor, the cruelty of bringing sickly children into the world. I then made the following statement:—

"Another important point for parents to observe in securing good constitutions to their children is not to burden the household (of which the mother is the centre) with more children than it can bear. This subject is largely under the control of established physiological laws, which should be known to parents; and the wife's health and happiness should be considered of paramount importance."

That was the whole statement.

A clever literary lady who was present, sent to the *Pall*

Mall Gazette of that day a garbled report of this statement. Almost immediately letters began to reach me from various classes of the community—Members of Parliament, army officers, clergymen, &c.—some enclosing fees, which had to be returned (as I never correspond on this subject), and all requesting full and minute information as to how to prevent the increase of children. But a more serious evil was the attitude then assumed by a portion of the medical profession. It was the time when a brave attempt was being made in Edinburgh to open the Profession to women in Great Britain, and the difficulties to be encountered were immense. A celebrated physician in the Edinburgh Medical School, since dead, seized the occasion of the opening address to his students, to denounce the movement for giving a medical education to women, asserting the bad use which was being made of medical knowledge by the first woman who had received a medical degree, saying, “There was Elizabeth Blackwell going about the country for the purpose of teaching women how not to have children.” Some of the medical papers followed suit in this coarse and false misrepresentation. The brave leader of the woman’s medical effort in Edinburgh, wrote me that much mischief was resulting to the work from the paragraphs which were going the round of the press, and begging me to contradict them. So I was compelled to publish an emphatic denial of the Professor’s unmanly misrepresentation of my remarks, and challenge him to prove his misstatements, which of course he was unable to do. This unpleasant episode occurred in 1870. When, three years later, I published my first serious warning to parents on the danger of neglecting the sexual education of their

children, this subject naturally came up again, and I wrote some pages on the true view of the ante-natal responsibility of parents, a subject of very grave importance. So little however, was then thought of the wide reaching character of sexual purity, that an intelligent lady friend assured me that my name would be "a forbidden word in England" if I published the "Counsel to Parents."

Remembering the obloquy with which my former reference to the size of families had been received, I struck out the pages bearing directly on this subject, fearing that they might prejudice the main purpose of my book. *

It is therefore only after mature consideration that I again take up this population question; for I am convinced that the time has arrived when it is the duty of the Christian physician to pronounce a clear judgment on this matter, and state the right views and methods respecting the increase of the population, and the regulation of family life.

I have referred to the painful experience of 1870, because the difficulty of clearly stating the truth on this delicate subject still exists, and it is made all the more difficult on account of the erroneous and even obscene teaching which is circulated enormously in the present day.

It is however because there are distinctly right and wrong courses of practical action that may be pursued; and

* This work, now published under the title "The Moral Education of the Young, in Relation to Sex," was refused by fourteen of the leading London publishing houses; and the chief lady member of the house that first undertook its publication, threw the book into the fire, and desired that the edition should be suppressed.

because they are the wrong, not the right courses which are being so widely advocated, that I am compelled as a conscientious physician to give serious warning to women.

Information and advice of a most injurious character are being spread amongst young men and women by printed literature, by cheap periodicals and lectures, by trade advertisements of chemists' shops, and special depots.* It is not only by such methods that wide spread mischief is being done, but mixed conferences, meetings of the young, and familiar conversation on topics formerly considered too private and personal for common talk, are now carried on with a superficial knowledge, and ignoring of natural reserve, that form a remarkable feature of the present time. When, in addition to these sources of corruption, we find our Government unable to devise any method of restraining the infamous publication of obscene books which sell in unlimited quantities, we see that social life is in serious danger of decay.

In England the popular advocacy of checks to population has been of much slower growth than in France or the United States. But the social community of nations has so increased within the present generation that international influence grows steadily, both in good and bad; and the diffusion of imperfect self-knowledge on the population question is now spreading with the injurious rapidity of a moral Canada thistle, choking healthy human growth.

* I learn from trustworthy chemists that the most profitable portion of their trade is cut off, when from conscientious scruples, they refuse to deal in French appliances, urged upon them at cheap wholesale rates by male and female foreign agents.

THE POPULATION QUESTION.

THE subject of the rapid increase of the population must be considered under two aspects, viz. :—first, under its social aspect, which chiefly deals with the welfare of the poorer classes ; and, secondly, under the physiological aspect, which requires a knowledge of the subject of procreation, and this creative faculty being the joint work of men and women, necessarily brings up the sexual relation. These two parts of the subject cannot ultimately be separated, but this latter aspect is one that many persons shrink from, who do not hesitate to support the social necessity as they believe it to be.

Respecting this social side of the subject, any one considering it seriously is bound first of all to answer the question, “ Is it necessary, under any circumstances, for parents to limit the size of a family ? ” I think that it is so necessary.

In a new country the great primitive work of cultivating the soil, and subduing the hostile forces of nature, require an increasing population to conquer those forces ; there we see the necessity of that great command, “ Be fruitful and multiply, replenish the earth and subdue it.” But in an old country, where the conquest of nature is completed by

industry and science, a new command is issued, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness," that "all these things may be added unto you." The conditions have changed in the older nation; the aim to which the human race is tending through all its mysterious and troubled history, becomes clearer. The moral and intellectual development of human beings is seen to be the purpose of the Divine Government, and an ever-increasing number of persons in the higher races of mankind, seek both consciously and unconsciously to carry out the Divine purpose. The welfare of the human race has now become an object of passionate devotion to large numbers of thoughtful men and women.

It will be found, therefore, as the race grows and conditions change, that it *does* become necessary for the welfare of children, to consider whether it is right to multiply them without thought of responsibility.

In all that may now be said in condemnation of dangerous physiological errors, the utmost sympathy is felt for those who are profoundly impressed by the social misery they see around them. The physiological side of the question is only very imperfectly understood by such persons, for the majority of people, who are not physiologists, cannot realise the dangers which may arise from certain practices. But everyone can be shocked by the horrible misery of the slums. It requires no education or study to understand the intolerable distress of our crowded towns, and our destitute peasantry. A powerful appeal can easily be made to popular sentiment from the social side of this question. Superficial reasoning may lead to the conclusion that if there were only one-third the people, there would be two-thirds less misery. To diminish the population and circumvent nature by clever contrivances, may thus be made to seem a royal road by which to travel away from poverty and its evils, and make a short cut to prosperity. Recognising fully the benevolent intentions of many of those

who are now supporting Neo-Malthusianism, and their loyal desire to help women, it can nevertheless be shown how the present persistent ignoring of the moral law in the population question is tending towards sexual degeneracy. The benevolent intentions of old Malthus recognised the power of the human being to exercise self-command. This rational view is being replaced by the advocacy of unrestrained lust in Neo-Malthusianism. It can be shown that Neo-Malthusianism concerns itself especially with a false view of the physiological side of the question, and is using the social aspect as a blind to the benevolent, and a vantage ground from which to base attacks upon marriage, parentage, continence, and christianity. What is now styled the "Art of Neo-Malthusianism," as developed in the numerous books, pamphlets, &c., very widely circulated, inevitably leads to a debasement of womanhood such as we only find in the last days of every decaying civilisation.

At the outset of this inquiry a criticism of Malthus himself must be made. It is necessary to draw a broad distinction between the false assumption on which this benevolent clergyman based his reasoning, and the wise practices by means of which he hoped to mitigate the terrible evils which he saw spreading around him. All Malthusians accept a false view of the terrestrial conditions of this life. They take as their text the fallacy, that the reproductive power of human beings is greater than that of the lower animal and vegetable life, which serve as food for the human race; they therefore believe that the multiplication of human beings must be checked from fear of starvation. This is a double error. The lower creation used for food multiplies with enormously greater rapidity than any possible increase of human beings; consequently it is not the niggardliness of nature in relation to food supply, which produces social misery. It is our ignorance of true economic laws in relation to land and labour, respecting the production and distribution

of food ; and our tardiness in applying rational methods, as we discover them, to the arrangements of human industry, which are the chief causes of the present appalling misery of the great masses of the people.*

In the time of Malthus the old and selfish errors of political economy had not been seriously called in question. Co-operation, with all that it may lead to, had not triumphantly asserted its strength against unlimited competition. Malthus could not realise the progress in thought of a later age, and thus his wise counsels were based on the false motive of fear of starvation.

But whilst rejecting the fallacy on which the old Malthusians base their teaching, we may as Christian physiologists accept that teaching on the nobler ground of parental responsibility and the welfare of the family, which is the corner-stone of national prosperity.

Human procreation possesses a double relation, viz. :— first, a relation to the race ; and, second, a relation to the individual. In the former character, as the inevitable method of continuing the race, it is a great Providential law whose mysteries we by no means comprehend, and which is placed quite beyond the control of the human will ; but as an individual act, our power and responsibility are great. The wise principle that Malthus teaches is that premature marriages are wrong, that parents must realise the responsibility that attaches to parentage, that they must by their acts, honestly fulfil this responsibility, and that the number of children born in a family should not be a haphazard affair, the result of selfish or thoughtless sensual indulgence. On the contrary, it should involve a tender and rational exercise of great power of procreation,

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* Important proofs of this are given in an article in the *Nineteenth Century* for June, 1888, entitled "The Coming Reign of Plenty."

which in the human being possesses the distinctive human mark of self-control.

In considering the subject of procreation in its relation to the individual, the beneficent educational uses of parentage to the individual must be realised, and the irreparable loss that human society would sustain, from the absence or serious diminution of the parental relation. Parentage is the most potent and persistent civiliser and educator of our race. This is a positive and weighty fact, which serves as a guide, and also as a warning, in studying the social aspect of the population question. There is no other influence that will compare with the deep-seated and unique power of parentage, in breaking down the narrow unsocial barrier of exclusive individual selfishness. There is no other influence so potent in raising men to a higher moral status. Much has always been said and written about maternal love, but there is a very deep significance in the persistence with which the Hebrew scriptures exalt the power, the supreme beneficence of fatherhood, and there is a profound reason why universal Christendom is taught to address "Our Father who art in heaven." It is a special lesson to men. The mother, by the inevitable facts of her nature, when that nature is not corrupted, is moulded into tenderness and providential watchfulness over the weak and helpless; her nature is a harmonious whole, and as a beneficent general rule, all women are potential mothers. But nature does not so inevitably educate men. It is only when his first-born child is laid in his arms, that the man awakens fully to the wonder and infinite tenderness of paternity. The character of the childless woman does not suffer from the absence of that beneficent discipline and development which come from parentage, as does the character of the man. It is very instructive to observe how unmarried or childless women replace by adoptions or by pets their unexercised natural affections.

The educational influence of parentage as a fundamental fact in human progress, must be borne in mind with all the reverence which is due to it, when we seek to remedy the hideous perversions of natural sentiment which we find in our unhuman slums. It is not by destroying parentage, but by teaching its responsibilities, and by restoring its educational influence upon the adult, that we must hope for progress. It is by the humanity of old Malthus, not the corruption of the new school, that reformers must act.

There is, therefore, a fundamental reason in the unchangeable constitution of the human being, why parentage is necessarily connected with sexual intercourse. Any failure to realise the Divine purpose in this joining together of cause and effect, amongst the mass of mankind, any efforts which tend to diminish respect for the parental relation, and destroy the perception of its essential sacredness, must be disastrous to the welfare of a nation.

The more fully this subject is considered in relation to the whole of human life, the more serious will be seen to be the evil effects of corrupt teaching upon this vital subject of sexual relations. The systematic endeavour to divorce the natural sequence of cause and effect in these relations, by establishing childless unions, by avoiding the trouble and care of children, and by exercising lust without the tenderness and responsibility which convert it into love, constitute a dangerous perversion of intelligence; for it is an attack upon the method by which the Creator gradually develops even the lowest forms of mankind, through parentage.

In seeking therefore to bring into the freedom of humanity, not only the swarms of poor fellow creatures sweltering in city slums, but all classes of human beings struggling in the slough of unrestrained lust, we must reverently study Nature's laws, as they are gradually discovered in relation to parentage. It is not by selfishly or thoughtlessly exercising a physiological function and then unnaturally endeavouring

to destroy its effects, that we can hope to raise the condition of an overcrowded population.

The moral difference between violating a physical function to gratify unrestrained indulgence, and studying that function in order to submit to its wise restraints, is immense. In this difference is found the wrong of the Neo-Malthusians as opposed to the right of old Malthus. It is the difference which exists between the short sight of materialism, and the clear sight of Christian physiology which recognises the supremacy of the spiritual nature and aspirations of man, over the limitations of his physical nature.

As it is necessary that this vital difference, which affects practical action, should be clearly understood, it will be necessary to speak as freely of physical function as in a medical lecture room, I shall make no apology for doing so, because the dearest interest of womanhood, her position as wife and mother, are now threatened.

It may be asked why are such structural details as I am about to enter into, necessary for persons who are not physicians, and particularly for women, whose natural instinct and religious education would lead them to shrink from methods of action, which substitute the indulgences of lust for the mutual reverence and devotion of love?

But those who would doubt the necessity of such instruction, fail to realise the gravity of the crisis upon which we have entered, or the extent to which this moral epidemic of Neo-Malthusianism has spread.

It is a pitiful thing to find clever women blindly accepting the statements of sensual men; and flippantly spreading gross errors, from whose results in all their wide bearing, I believe they would shrink with horror, if only their intelligence were sufficiently trained to perceive them.

To meet this mischievous superficiality, I see no way but to address ourselves directly to women, and show them

slowly and patiently all those physical facts, upon which our Christian life is built, as upon a rock.

Accepting then the social fact, that in densely crowded populations, and in many struggling families, during the continuance of our present imperfect social organisation, children as well as parents suffer deplorably from inability to secure the conditions of decent living ; and that in all classes a wise foresight should be exercised by parents as to the best interests of their families, it is necessary to consider the physiological facts, which constitute the second aspect of the population question. For if it be true that it is often a duty to limit the size of a family, at once follows the vital question, How is this to be done ?

I therefore ask now for consideration of the plain physical aspect of the important function of procreation. This may startle those who are not accustomed to study our bodily structure ; for to all higher natures, the hierarchy or government of our physical by our spiritual faculties is a fundamental fact. To such, the transfiguration of our lower by our higher powers is so essential a method of existence, that it may seem unnatural or unworthy to separate them.

But plain speaking has become indispensable to any radical method of cure, applicable to the widespread moral disease which is based upon erroneous physiology.

The essential material fact in procreation is the contact of the semen of the male with the ovum of the female. If this contact do not take place, conception is impossible. Knowing this positive fact, and that contact is produced by the penis of the male entering the female passage, and there discharging the semen, the Neo-Malthusians teach that it is very easy to prevent conception. They lay the duty of doing this upon the woman. They state that it is quite a simple thing for the woman to prevent conception by stopping up the upper part of the vagina, or passage of the female, where the mouth of the womb rests, by introducing a piece of

sponge or india-rubber into the vagina, so that the semen which is ejected into the vagina by the male, may not pass high up and enter the uterus or womb. The directions given by these persons also state that by syringing the vagina with some astringent lotion after sexual intercourse has taken place, the semen will be washed away or destroyed before it can enter the womb to carry on the work of impregnation. They argue that by the employment of these means an unlimited amount of sexual intercourse may be carried on, by any man and woman without risk of conception.

This is the essential point in the teaching of Neo-Malthusianism. It is not any counsel in regard to limitation in sexual intercourse, nor self-command according to the dictates of reason and affection; nor delay of premature marriage, as Malthus advises, which are enjoined by the Neo-Malthusians as the great remedial measures for what may be considered a too redundant population, but the possibility of unrestrained indulgence without incurring the risk of consequences. This is the doctrine which is being sown broadcast amongst the people by ceaseless activity of propagandism.

These methods, it will be observed, require precautions to be taken solely by the woman; both preparation before the sexual act is entered into, and precautions to be immediately applied after it is over. The woman is to prevent the natural or possible consequences of the conception which may result from the man's special act.

In these instructions of the Neo-Malthusians it is, however mentioned, that indulgence in sexual intercourse without risk of offspring may also be obtained, if the male associate in the act withdraws from the woman before the semen is ejected; or if before connexion he cover the penis with a sheath. But these practices are discouraged by Neo-Malthusians as inconvenient to the man.

It is very important to note this fact ; for the determination increasingly manifested by these new corruptors of society to throw the responsibility of conception, and the burdens of pregnancy exclusively upon the woman, very plainly indicate the tendency of Neo-Malthusianism, and the degrading subjection to which its teachings would reduce women.

Right-minded women may here be tempted to exclaim, such shocking and disgusting proceedings must be exceptional ; surely it is not necessary to compel us to take note of them.

This is a grave and ostrich-like error ; for this corruption has spread into all classes, and reached all ages, and the poison is infecting our social atmosphere. Right-minded women, therefore, who care for the young, or possess social influence, must know the facts of our physical nature as well as its spiritual aspect.

Let me give the proofs of the extent of this corrupt teaching. They are so numerous that selection becomes difficult—

There is a work which was published anonymously in 1854, by a “Doctor of Medicine,” which may be called the Bible of Neo-Malthusians. This work, of 604 closely written pages, has been exerting its baleful influence by repeated editions ever since that date, more than a generation ago. In the last edition—the sixty-first, issued in 1886—this “Doctor of Medicine” writes as follows :—

“The withdrawal of the penis immediately before ejaculation takes place (which is very frequently practised by both married and unmarried men) is apt to produce nervous disorder and sexual enfeeblement and congestion, from the sudden interruption it gives to the venereal act, whose pleasure, moreover, it interferes with. The use of the sheath also, dulls the enjoyment, and frequently produces impotence in the man, and disgust in both parties ; so that

it also is injurious. Any preventive means, to be satisfactory, must be used by the *woman* (author's italics), as it spoils the passion and impulsiveness of the venereal act, if the man have to think of them."

Here, in this chief teacher of the Neo-Malthusians, the cloven foot is fully revealed. This popular author who, in many parts of his book, denounces marriage as the enslavement of men and women; who sneers at continence, and rages at Christianity as a vanishing superstition—all under a specious pretence of benevolence, and desire for the advancement of the human race, here clearly shows what he is aiming at, and what his doctrines lead to. Male sexual pleasure must not be interfered with, male lust may be indulged in to any extent that pleasure demands, but women must take the entire responsibility that male indulgence be not disturbed by any inconvenient claims from paternity. Whatever consequences ensue the woman is to blame, and must bear the whole responsibility.

A doctrine more diabolical in its theory and more destructive in its practical consequences, has never been invented. This is the doctrine of Neo-Malthusianism.*

Many are the indications showing how the evil seed thus sown in 1854 is bearing fruit at present.

It is a noteworthy though deplorable sign of the age, that many intelligent women are deluded by the sophistries, now actively promulgated by lust.

The most widely known lady advocate of this doctrine, blindly following corrupt male instruction, writes as follows, 'In France the check most generally used, is that of withdrawal

* The French nation which leads corrupt modern society in the acceptance of a double standard of sexual morality and which carries out the results of this heresy with clear and pitiless logic, has always obstinately refused to grant "la recherche de la paternité," and denies any investigation as to the fathers of illegitimate children.

but many doctors regard this action on the part of the man, as injurious to the nervous system." So, misled by an honest wish to help over-burdened women, but without the enlightenment of wide medical experience, she too falls into the snare. She lays upon women the responsibility of taking measures that male lust shall be satisfied without danger of trouble from offspring; and gives in detail preventive measures of a character most injurious to health.

Another clever but medically ignorant woman (author of "Scientific Meliorism,") whose book has been widely praised in the press, scatters all through her work such instruction as the following.

"In conscious evolution, sexual functions cease to be regarded as essentially allied with propagation." "By use of artificial checks, parentage and propagation of disease may be avoided, and individuals free to marry as spontaneous impulse dictates." "Where animalism is strong and love of offspring deficient, the cares of parentage are not desired, and will be easily and intentionally avoided by artificial checks." "Diseased persons may be allowed to marry but not propagate, &c." "Early marriage is necessary, it should precede rather than follow after the student life," "but dissolution of marriage should be as free a transaction as its formation." But I need not continue quotations showing gross physiological and medical ignorance, as well as utter blindness to the methods of moral growth. It is, however, necessary to realise our dangers, when such books are not only highly recommended by the press, but are made the text book for study and discussion in mixed societies of the young, and are written by teachers of youth, and above all, by women.

One of the latest publications put forth and steadily advertised, is by a gentleman in good society, engaged in active social propagation of his views both publicly and privately amongst ladies and gentlemen, he writes as follows: "We hold it un bearable that church or society should in any

official form interfere with lovers. . . . In the society of the future, if the birth is sanctioned the State should guard its child-bearing women. An un-sanctioned birth would receive no recognition from the State, and in times of over-population it might be necessary to punish both father and mother." This author remarks, "free sexual union seems to us the first outcome of socialism as applied to sex." Now as such punishment for child-birth could only be applied to the woman, it being impossible in the reign of free lust to ascertain paternity with certainty, we see here another indication of a spreading conspiracy against the honour and happiness of womanhood.

The tendency of such teaching is to prepare for the subjection of women to an immeasurably more hopeless condition than now too often results from the present inequality of our marriage laws. Similar indications as to inevitable practical results are found in another modern pamphlet written by a distinguished French man, and translated by an equally distinguished English woman. This pamphlet advocates the abolition of all laws for the punishment of seduction, and recommends instead, as follows, viz. :—"A law which should allow women to contract prospectively for the support of the possible fruits of union, before the risks of maternity were incurred."

I might multiply indefinitely the proofs of this widespread corrupt teaching, but the foregoing specimens are certainly sufficient, and must convince all thoughtful persons of the social misery which they would produce when put into action. I wish now to call attention particularly to the injury to health, from following out the measures urged upon women by Neo-Malthusians.

I will first examine the false and dangerous physiological teaching of these active propagandists.

As a physician of forty years' experience of medical practice amongst women, I assert the truth of the following propositions.

1st. There is no known method of absolute security from conception, if the semen of the male is once allowed to enter the vagina of the female.

2nd. Any attempt by non-professional persons to introduce mechanical appliances into the vagina, for the special purpose of preventing conception, will generally result in failure.

3rd. The use of astringent or poisonous injections to destroy the semen, is highly injurious to the physical health of women.

4th. The frequent excitement of the female generative organs by sexual intercourse without the natural action of the semen on those parts, produces special forms of disease in the female.

I will consider these propositions seriatim.

1st. It is popularly supposed that the passage leading to the womb, is a short, straight, smooth-lined passage easily washed out. This is a physiological error. The vagina is a very curved or crooked passage, thick, being capable under the slow and painful process of labour, of distention to the size of an infant's head. In its ordinary state, however, the sides of this passage are narrow and folded together. The thick mucous membrane which lines this passage, is rich in follicles and absorbent tissue. It is, moreover, marked by longitudinal and transverse folds, which whilst facilitating the enormous distention that takes place in child birth, change its character from the ordinary smooth mucous membrane of other organs, leaving inequalities and hiding places in its apparently smooth structure.

It is thus described by the experienced French gynæcologist, Courty : "The interior of this organ, *i.e.*, the vagina, or passage leading to the womb, is remarkable for the transverse elevations of its mucous membrane, which form folds or wrinkles in its substance. These folds, extending from each side, join together in the anterior middle

line, and form a projection or column, which extends through the whole length of the organ. These folds and columns give rise to innumerable little furrows, which may become reservoirs containing infectious matter of various kinds. This peculiar structure of the mucous membrane is required by the great distentions to which this organ is necessarily adapted."

Besides these inequalities of the mucous membrane, which produce hiding places in its surface, another quality in the structure of this organ must be noted, which directly bears upon the question we are considering. This is the large amount of contractile and erectile muscular tissue that enters into these parts. The distention and congestion produced in the female generative organs by sexual intercourse tends to arouse their muscular activity, and the specific action which semen exercises upon them continues the contractile movement towards the uterine, after the conjugal act of the male is over. That is, the direction in which this muscular substance contracts under the stimulus of the semen is designed to carry that secretion on, in the direction where it can aid in the work of procreation.

The spermatozoa also, endowed with vibratile activity, may hide in the folds of the mucous membrane, or be projected against the lips of the uterus by the great force of the sexual act, and conception may take place, in spite of the speedy use of vaginal injections to wash the semen away.

The use of water by both sexes after union is a wise sanitary custom often adopted. This has no relation to the dangerous advice of injecting poisonous drugs for preventive purposes. Any addition to the water injection, of alum, sulphate of zinc, or other powerful drug for the purpose of destroying the semen, would also destroy in a short time the health of the vaginal structures. The fact that these powerful injections may sometimes be resorted to temporarily in states of disease, in no way invalidates the assertion, that they

would prove highly injurious to the health of the woman, when habitually resorted to, or when used during the condition of involuntary natural congestion which the sexual act produces.

If the second advice of the Neo-Malthusians has been followed, and some mechanical substance, such as sponge, india-rubber, or other foreign body has been introduced before connection takes place, no absolute reliance can be placed on such endeavours to prevent conception.

In the first place, by the introduction of any foreign substance, an unnatural pressure is exercised upon the extremely tender internal parts of the female during sexual intercourse. I have found both version of the uterus and flexions of its neck upon its body, as well as serious inflammation, produced by the continued use of such appliances. But if this risk be run, the difficulty of applying and maintaining such a foreign body *in situ* is insuperable. Even if the substance has been skilfully placed over the mouth of the womb, the most carefully adjusted foreign body is liable to be displaced during the unconscious violence or commotion of the sexual act. The semen, whose vitality under favourable circumstances continues for hours, may still find its way into the womb after the foreign substance is withdrawn.

When however, the difficulty of introducing and adjusting these foreign substances by anatomically ignorant people, is understood, the real deception and cruelty of these false doctrines, preached under specious appearance of benevolence, will be apparent.

The finger of even the ordinary student of medicine, who has a perfect theoretical knowledge of anatomical structure, is entirely confused in making a blind exploration of any internal part. In relation to this part of the human body there are special difficulties to be overcome before the various parts of this passage, and their exact position can be recognised. Without such recognition any attempt to

block up the entrance to the womb, is mere guess work. The soft irregular and collapsed condition of the walls of this passage, its length, which is often apparently greater than the ordinary finger, its curved shape always leading the uninstructed in a wrong direction; the difficulty of recognising the very small closed aperture leading into the uterus; the varying direction which the uterine mouth takes, assuming a different position in different individuals, and changing its position in the same person, sometimes inclined backwards or tilted upwards or leaning to one side—all these are obstacles that cannot be overcome by persons ignorant of practical anatomy. Indeed, the organ is often so placed that a skilled medical practitioner has great difficulty in bringing it into the end of the speculum when investigation is necessary. All these combined difficulties which make digital examination by an unskilful hand utterly worthless, are yet increased if the individual attempts to make a personal examination. I have never known such personal exploration correct. Again and again, patients have imagined some swelling or morbid condition of these parts in what was perfectly natural; and no physician would trust the introduction of a suppository or medical application to a patient if its exact contact with the os or cervix uteri was essential, yet it is an exact contact that is needed for the purpose aimed at. What I distinctly maintain is that exact application of any foreign substance to the mouth of the womb, and its maintenance there during the sexual act, is necessary, if such attempt to prevent conception is to have any chance of success. The supposition that the mass of poor women can be thus trained to limit their families, that the responsibility of so doing is to be laid upon them, and that they are to be blamed for not succeeding, appears to me the most insulting and cruel mockery that has ever been thrown at our much-tried poor sisters.

The fourth proposition which I have laid down is this,

viz., that the frequent excitement of the female generative organs by sexual intercourse, without the natural action of the semen on those parts, produces special forms of disease in the female.

To understand the reason of this, it must be stated that certain physical changes take place in the uterus as the result of sexual intercourse, as well as after pregnancy and childbirth, so that the appearance of the organ varies in the unmarried, the childless married woman, and the mother of one or of many children. The physical differences observable in these different states are well marked, so that it is possible for the skilled practitioner to recognise from the appearance of these parts of the body, to which class the individual belongs. Sexual intercourse affects especially the lower segment or neck of the uterus, which fits into the upper part of the vagina, enlarging that segment. If in due time pregnancy follows the act of union, then the whole organ becomes naturally and harmoniously developed. The danger of certain displacements (to which I shall refer later) is avoided, because no one portion of the organ remains unduly enlarged.

Probably many women would hardly know what is meant when I state that masturbation, or self-abuse, is unhappily frequently practised by young women as well as young men, and that the disastrous consequences of such an insidious habit, when it has become confirmed, are a source of serious warning to patients by physicians. Now masturbation means the frequent excitement of the genital organs and endeavour to produce the sensual pleasure of sexual spasmodic action by one individual alone. In the healthy human intercourse of conjugal life, love is the first condition of intercourse. Sexual intercourse should never take place without that strong and tender feeling which draws two human beings into a life union. Marriage-love deepens as life is passed together, and oneness of interests, and the unique tie of

parentage become established. The quality of this love changes. Its early excitement is gradually transformed into a profounder and stronger sympathy, as the unity of life takes the place of the first new experiences. But it remains love, more tranquil but deeper, and without this marriage-love all sexual intercourse is degrading. If intercourse is enforced on either side it becomes rape.

There is a physiological reason for the necessity of profound tenderness in love, it is the necessity which Christian physiology teaches. Tender love is a mental quality, and the attitude of the mind to the nervous system, excites or diminishes the electrical force generated in the nervous system. The entrance of love into the nervous substance of the human body creates additional force in that substance. The mind thus supplies to the body the additional amount of nervous force which is necessary for the interchange of physical sympathy. It is through love that the physical action and reaction take place beneficially to both man and woman in the conjugal relation, strengthening not exhausting. But in masturbation both the love impulse which creates nervous force, and the physical interchange, are wanting, whilst the opportunity for solitary indulgence is unlimited. The indulgence of lust without its ennobling master, love, always tends to become a diabolical tyranny over the nature of man, which nature is a spiritual and physical compound.

Now the man or woman who makes careful preparation for sexual intercourse, by endeavouring to arrange mechanical appliances to prevent the natural contact of semen with these parts, enters in many respects into the category of masturbators, and many of the physical evils which attach to that unfortunate class will in time afflict such a person.

In fact the physical appearances of the female masturbator's internal organs, are identical with those of the married woman, where precautions have always been taken to prevent conception.

There are three kinds of derangement to health, either of which may and does frequently follow upon the excitement of the genital organs without the natural sequence of union. These are congestion of the os uteri, flexion or version of the uterus, and nervous exhaustion from frequent excitement without the restorative effects of complete union.*

The two forms of injury to the uterus, viz, flexion and version, will often take place from the frequent exercise of the conjugal act in incomplete sexual union. Flexion is the bending of the slender neck of the organ upon its body, for when the whole organ has not been proportionately developed by the natural process of child-bearing, its neck may be completely curved upon its body.

Version is the permanent displacement of the whole organ from its natural position, for this part necessarily is not attached immovably as are other organs; and frequent pressure in a wrong direction, either backwards, forwards, or to one side, will produce the injurious displacement of version.

I need not enlarge upon the various forms of suffering produced by version, flexion, and congestion of the uterus. Suffice it to say that they may disable the woman in many ways for the practical duties of life; may cause sterility, and often produce that wearing and constantly-recurring suffering of painful menstruation, a suffering so agonising that a woman will often gladly submit to a dangerous operation which destroys sex, in order to escape from such periodical torture.

Again, frequent excitement of the generative organs in an unnatural manner, leads to nervous exhaustion, to hysteria, or

* I do not dwell here upon the unnatural parchment-like condition of the vaginal mucous membrane observed in many female harlots, where the tissue is so disorganised that it cannot absorb virus into the system of the individual, but only transmit it to the vicious companion.

even insanity, or to other perversions of the mental and moral nature. Both masturbation and imperfect sexual union, are unnatural conditions. The healthy woman who loves her husband, finds in the loving relation of marriage both mental and physical support.

It is a great fact that we must learn to recognise that in sexual intercourse as ordained by the Creator, men and women give to each other ; there is a mutual exchange of mental and physical effects, in this natural relation. Marriage is an unnatural relation, if it is entered into with the determination never to have children, and a childless union is a risk to the physical health of the woman. It must be clearly recognised that the changes of form and structure which take place in healthy pregnancy, strengthen the whole organ, the uterus, in relation to sexual intercourse ; they prevent danger of those flexions, &c., from the non-development of the whole organ, to which I have referred when frequent excitement and sexual intercourse take place, without this harmonious development of the organ.

Of course, it will be clearly understood that I give full weight, to the various diseases which now result from unfortunate pregnancies, and lyings-in. Many of these, however, are due to what must be called the sexual drunkenness of present marriage relations, which we see so lamentably frequent around us.

I now only speak of positive physical facts and real dangers, which result from the foolish and presumptuous attempt which is being made to persuade women that they can circumvent their own organisation, by preparing themselves to be the passive instruments of lust.

What then is the right way of exercising foresight, and considering the size of the family in relation to the best interests of all concerned.

Human marriage must be regarded as a life companionship, in which the satisfaction of physical desires forms a

secondary, not a primary part. When so entered upon, love will direct its relations, for the good of the two joined together in this unique union. The ancient legal oppression which is still upheld under the title of "conjugal rights," is a remnant of that old lustful subjection of the physically weaker to the stronger, which is disappearing in the higher moral development of our age, and the gradual approach of genuine Christianity. The old Common law has not recognised women. Christian law will do so. The man joins himself to the woman in loving companionship, and her constitution henceforward, must determine the times of the special act of physical union.

The periodicity which governs both the male and female physical natures, is much stronger and more marked in the female organisation. As child-bearing is the woman's special and exclusive power, her wishes and welfare must determine the size of the family. It is gradually becoming clear to this age, that rape may be committed in marriage, as well as without legal sanction. A man who commits rape in marriage is even a meaner criminal than one who exposes himself to the just punishment which is attached to violence outside marriage. In Mr. H. Arthur Allbutt's book (for publishing which he was expelled from the Profession), he takes for granted that rape in marriage is universal. The opening sentence of this "Handbook" is as follows:—"From the first marriage night no woman under forty-five years of age can consider herself *safe*." If the full meaning of this is understood, it is an acceptance of human degradation below the level of the brutes. Sexual congress without refinement and delicacy is brutal not human; but sexual congress with violence, is not brutal but diabolical.

All moral regulation of the size of families, must be connected with, and largely depend upon the peculiarities of the female constitution.

In this important subject of procreation, no one can speak

with scientific precision, and lay down absolute rules respecting its complete method of action. It has been wisely said by one of the most skilful and experienced french physicians :* “In this most delicate matter, no opinions put forth, reconcile all facts. We are obliged to confess that there is a mystery in this subject that our most ingenious theories fail to enlighten, and which will probably always escape our most careful investigations.”

Irregularities of structure also, in individual cases, will not unfrequently, set at defiance our ordinary calculations.

“We are ignorant of why some well-formed women remain sterile ; why some women who have been married several times, had no children by the first husband, although they have by later marriages, and when, as has been observed sometimes, the first husband has had children by a former marriage.”

Practical experience, however, has shown us that there is a very intimate relation between certain physical states of the female generative organs, and the aptitude for conception. This fact is so well established, that if generally acted upon, it is quite certain that the increase of the race, as a whole, would be diminished.

The striking observations made by Raciborsky the famous German physician, in a former generation, have been amply confirmed by later investigations, and by the experience of physicians who have taken the trouble to carefully sift testimony on this subject.

The fact established by Raciborsky and later observers is the following :—

“The period when conception is most likely to take place is near the time of menstruation, either just before it, or during a few days after the time. The essential female organs of re-production are at that time specially prepared for their work.”

* See Cazeaux “Des Accouchemens.”

It is not asserted that conception in the human race, is necessarily limited to this interval of time ; for it is true that great stimulus of the organs, produced at any period of the month, may bring about a similar congestion, or special aptitude for conception. Much experience, however, proves the truth of the statement, that conception is much less likely to take place during that period of the month when the generative organs are quiescent, and not congested by the occurrence of the monthly function.

From medical testimony and practical observation, we can lay down the following law which should be known to all young married persons, viz. :—

That the periodic character of the woman's constitution regulates the probability of conception to so great an extent, that if sexual intercourse only took place during the quiescent period, that is,—from two or three days after the complete cessation of menstruation, until a day or two before its return,—the rapidity of human increase would be very greatly diminished.

By this law higher and lower sentient beings are brought into harmony, and woman assumes her due place as the regulator of sexual intercourse. Throughout the animal world, procreation is governed by the will of the female. Not violence, but gentleness, is shown by the male to the female. Her refusal or desire guides sexual intercourse amongst the lower animals.

To raise the human race to this higher animal level from which it has fallen, is a special task of advanced physiology, which can show the physical method and reason of this redemption.

The foregoing physiological law is then, in my judgment, the one great truth which needs to be universally known and acted upon, by all persons who enter upon the solemn and ennobling association of Christian marriage. It is a truth full of hope, and promise of indefinite progress ; for all

nations have hitherto perished through the abuse and degradation of women. The regulation of sexual intercourse in the best interests of womanhood, is the hitherto unrecognised truth of Christianity, towards which we are slowly groping. When it is fully accepted a fresh spring of vigour will have been discovered for the human race.

Let it be clearly understood that self-command over the sexual instincts is quite as important to man as to woman. It presupposes that beneficial self-discipline of youth, which preserves manly strength, and establishes a Providential hierarchy over the faculties, *i.e.*, the government of the lower, or material, by the higher or spiritual powers of the human being, to which hierarchy alone, the Creator has attached the permanent welfare of the race.

The sexual drunkard is a slave to lust. Any man who has become such in youth, enters in chains upon the marriage relation, and imposes the burden of those chains upon his wife and family.

Let women realise this fact, as their sons and daughters grow up around them, and the period of their marriage approaches!

To the man who enters chastely upon marriage the observance of the law of union here laid down will be no intolerable burden, but on the contrary, a source of self respect and conscious strength. It is only those unhappy ones who have sinned against their bodies before marriage, who will be compelled to regain their lost honour by painful and long continued self-discipline.

I have purposely confined my remarks to proving what the health and dignity of women demand in relation to themselves, but this address would be incomplete without reference to the health of men.

The assertion made by Neo-Malthusians in relation to the evil effects to a man's health caused by withdrawal before ejaculation takes place is, as stated by them, an unproved

assertion. The Profession does not contain the series of careful medical records on which such a broad statement can be based. To form an accurate judgment it would be necessary to separate men into classes. Distinction must be made between those licentious men who seek unlimited indulgence in sexual excitements, whether in or out of marriage, and those healthy and tender husbands who respect their wives personality.

To the former class undoubtedly the warning and condemnation will apply ; for the uncontrolled indulgence of the sexual instinct is always dangerous, and generally injurious to physical health. The man who gives way to this keen excitement uncontrolled by reason and affection, but resolved, by withdrawal, to avoid the claims of paternity, will undoubtedly injure health. But this is not the case with the husband, who thinking as much of his wife's welfare as his own physical satisfaction, occasionally exercises this right of withdrawal out of loving regard.

It must be distinctly understood that the healthy and chaste man preserves entire control over this function. He knows instinctively when the moment for withdrawal arrives. The full satisfaction of this act of union with all its mutual magnetism, has been gained before the final moment is reached. In my judgment although the constant resort to this practice is selfish, dangerous, and fraudulent; yet its occasional exercise with mutual assent, and under special circumstances, is a right whose wisdom marriage love can alone determine.*

The truth in relation to practical action, both in regard to the use of water injections, and of withdrawal, in exceptional

* There is no parallel between such exercise of reason and affection on the part of husband and wife, and the refusal of the ancient Jew to follow the custom of his tribe and marry his sister in-law. In Chap. II of "The Human Element in Sex," the physiological error is noted which underlies the older idea of procreation.

cases where the regulation of the size of a family has become necessary I believe to be as follows:—The use of plain water as a hygienic practice after sexual congress, is a tonic and beneficial custom for both sexes. There are cases also where the use of tepid injections after intercourse with the object of avoiding conception is entirely justifiable. If the observance of the law of the female constitution has failed, but the health of the parents, or circumstances which can only be determined by the tender consideration of the married pair themselves, render it important that no further addition to the family shall take place; it is not wise to divorce husband and wife, or lay the restriction of celibacy upon loving and faithful partners. Both the occasional withdrawal of the man, and the employment of tepid water injections by the woman, form a wiser course of action than the enforcement of total abstinence.

In this most intimate relation of life, where the parties love each other, there are many circumstances peculiar to individuals, which cannot be reduced to rule. There are temporary conditions of health in both husband and wife, where the regulation of intercourse must be left to the instinct of true affection, or occasionally to the wise counsel of a trusted physician. For, as no two individual experiences are exactly alike, so circumstances will often arise which require medical counsel adapted to the individual.

In this important subject no written statement can ever meet all special cases. This fact alone shows the physical mischief which must be done by the flooding of our streets with Neo-Malthusian leaflets; but the moral evil is incalculable. It is both an outrage on decency to strip off the reverence with which true love clothes its expressions, and it is criminally misleading to scatter false physiology broadcast under a hypocritical pretence of benevolence.

In the dangerous assault which is now made upon the Family, it appears to me to be the duty of the Profession to

lay down the right rule of conduct in marriage, and to plant the danger signal of sound physiology, where ignorance or selfishness lures the unwary to moral and physical destruction.

We derive the following conclusions from a careful study of physiology :—

Marriage without love, or with the unnatural resolve to avoid procreation, is dangerous to the physical health of women.

Sexual intercourse before the constitution is consolidated, is injurious to the individual and to the race.

Virginitv in man and woman, permanance of union, and the educational influence of parentage, are essential conditions of the marriage state, through which state alone the highest civilisation can be maintained.

From the outset of marriage the wife must determine the times of union, this is the only natural method of regulating the size of the family. Through the guidance of sexual intercourse by the law of the female constitution, the increase of the race will be in accordance with reason, and our highest welfare.

The habitual or frequent practice of withdrawal, is physically and morally injurious to both parties.

The methods recommended to women by Neo-Malthusians are ineffectual, and if widely practised will subject women to a more degrading slavery than has hitherto been devised by the insanity of lust.

The foregoing conclusions are based upon the ineradicable principles of our human constitution, in its progress from lower to higher conditions.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

THE HUMAN ELEMENT IN SEX; a Medical Inquiry into the Relation of Sexual Physiology to Christian Morality. (Churchill.) Price Two Shillings.

THE MORAL EDUCATION OF THE YOUNG IN RELATION TO SEX. (Hatchard.) Price Two Shillings.

CHRISTIAN SOCIALISM. (Moral Reform Union, 2 Leinster Place, W.) Price Threepence.

THE GREAT ECONOMIC BLUNDER; the Purchase of Women (Moral Reform Union, 2 Leinster Place, W.) Price Sixpence.

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