

# BIRTH CONTROL

WHAT IT IS ■ ■ ■

HOW IT WORKS ■

WHAT IT WILL DO



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# BIRTH CONTROL

WHAT IT IS  
HOW IT WORKS  
WHAT IT WILL DO

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THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE  
FIRST AMERICAN BIRTH CONTROL CONFERENCE  
HELD AT THE HOTEL PLAZA, NEW YORK  
NOVEMBER, 11, 12, 1921

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.....	1
PROGRAMME OF CONFERENCE.....	9
FIRST SESSION.....	12
Margaret Sanger.....	14
Dr. John C. Vaughan.....	18
Dr. A. B. Wolfe.....	21
Reynold A. Spaeth, Ph. D.....	29
Dr. Adolphus Knopf.....	31
Dr. Abraham Myerson.....	36
Dr. Alice Butler.....	37
Dr. Lydia Allen DeVilbiss.....	39
Dr. Adolph Myer.....	46
Discussion .....	48
SECOND SESSION—	
Dr. Aaron J. Rosanoff.....	53
Roswell H. Johnson.....	56
Dr. C. C. Little.....	58
Virginia C. Young.....	60
E. C. Lindemann.....	66
Hayette W. Dilla.....	74
J. O. P. Bland.....	82
Discussion .....	85
THIRD SESSION—	
Lothrop Stoddard.....	94
James Maurer .....	102
Harold Cox .....	111
Discussion .....	119
FOURTH SESSION—	
Dr. C. V. Drysdale.....	123
Dr. Andre Tridon.....	139
Herman M. Bernelot Moens.....	148
Mary Winsor.....	151
Petitions .....	157
Discussion .....	158

TABLE OF CONTENTS (*Continued*)

THE PUBLIC MEETING.....	163
Harold Cox .....	164
Margaret Sanger .....	170
IS BIRTH CONTROL MORAL, SYMPOSIUM.....	175
Edward Carpenter .....	176
Havelock Ellis.....	177
Dean Inge.....	177
Samuel Hopkins Adams.....	179
Katharine Anthony.....	180
E. C. Barker.....	180
Bernard I. Bell.....	181
Edwin W. Bowen.....	182
Frederick A. Bushee.....	182
Pearce Butler .....	182
W. B. Cannon.....	183
Will Durant .....	184
Warner Fite .....	184
Franklin H. Giddings.....	186
Ernest H. Gruening.....	186
Cosmo Hamilton .....	188
John Haynes Holmes.....	188
Fannie Hurst .....	189
Mary Johnston .....	190
David Starr Jordan.....	190
Ben. B. Lindsey.....	191
Owen R. Lovejoy.....	193
Eden and Cedar Paul.....	193
George Foster Peabody.....	195
Charles Edward Pell.....	195
Mary Scharlieb .....	198
Mary Kingsbury Simkhovitch.....	200
John S. Sumner.....	200
Virginia Terhune Van de Water.....	202
W. F. Willcox.....	203
Dr. Norman Haire.....	204
THE AMERICAN BIRTH CONTROL LEAGUE, INC.....	207
Principles and Aims.....	207

## INTRODUCTORY NOTE

THE First American Birth Control Conference, like every great landmark in the history of human progress, grew out of an idea. For years Mrs. Margaret Sanger, and her little band of faithful helpers, had been engaged on the lecture platform, in the columns of the *Birth Control Review*, in thousands of communications with individual men and women, through the selling of literature on the streets, and even in jail, in the uphill task of bringing Birth Control to the attention of the public. In the summer of 1921 she sent out a letter addressed to people prominent in biology, medicine, economics, sociology and social service, and also to well-known business and professional men, writers and educators. About five hundred of these men and women were asked their opinion as to whether the time was opportune for a national conference on Birth Control and whether in case such a conference were held, they would be willing to help financially, by contributing papers, or by personal work in connection with it.

A surprisingly favorable response was received from these letters. Replies were received from 40 per cent. of the persons addressed and opinion seemed overwhelmingly in favor of the calling of a conference. In view of this response, it was arranged to call the First American Birth Control Conference to meet in New York, November 11, 12, and 13, 1921. From among those who had signified their willingness to aid, a large Conference Committee was formed, with Mrs. Margaret Sanger as chairman. The Committee was made up as follows:

### THE FIRST AMERICAN BIRTH CONTROL CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

MARGARET SANGER, *Chairman*  
JULIET BARRETT RUBLEE, *Vice-Chairman*  
ANNE KENNEDY, *Executive Secretary*





Mrs. William Spinney	Mrs. Walton Martin
Mrs. Charles Tiffany	Sara Messing Stern
Mrs. Ernest Poole	Mabel Wood Hill
Florence Bayard Hilles	Andrew H. Green
Laura Hickox Young	Mrs. William A. McGraw
John C. Vaughan, M.D.	Theodore Dreiser
Mrs. Arthur L. Lawrence	Mrs. Samuel Lambert
Miss Martha Davis	Mary Winsor
Mr. Robert M. Lovett	Florence Guertin Tuttle
Mrs. Minturn Pinchot	John Hays Hammond, Jr.
Mrs. Simeon Ford	Helen Thomas Flexner
Mrs. C. C. Rumsey	

In arranging the Programme the Committee did not limit itself to the United States. Twenty-four papers in all were presented, and all but three were read at the Conference by their writers. The three exceptions were the paper of Professor Lindeman of North Carolina, read by Mrs. William A. McGraw; that of Dr. C. V. Drysdale of London, read by Dr. Roswell Johnson, and that of Professor A. B. Wolfe of Texas, read by Dr. Sidney E. Goldstein. Two of the speakers were from England—Mr. Harold Cox, Editor of the *Edinburgh Review*, who came at the invitation of the Conference Committee for the sole purpose of speaking at the Birth Control Conference, and Mr. J. O. P. Bland who was in this country in connection with the Disarmament Conference at Washington. A paper was read by Professor Moens of Holland, and the rest were from American men and women from New York, New England, the Atlantic States, the South and the Middle West.

The papers covered the scientific, economic and political and social aspects of the question. The medical aspect was discussed at a meeting open only to members of the medical profession, held on Friday evening, November 11th. This meeting revealed the interest taken by the medical profession in the subject. The room assigned for the gathering was crowded to the doors and many people stood throughout the prolonged session. Another point brought out was the very general ignorance among doctors concerning hygienic and efficient contraceptives. As no branch of medical training undertakes to give instruction concerning such contraceptives, this ignorance



ought not to be a matter of surprise. It is noted merely to show the need of research and clinical experience. The record of the proceedings at this meeting has not been published, but is in the possession of the American Birth Control League.

The question of the Morality of Birth Control was reserved as the subject for discussion at a public meeting, arranged to be held on the evening of November 13th. Through the arbitrary and illegal action of the police this meeting was broken up before the speakers had a chance to begin their addresses; and two women—Mrs. Margaret Sanger and Miss Mary Winsor—were arrested and taken to the police court. They were released on their appearance the following morning, as it was clear that they had committed no offence. Hearings on the outrage were demanded by a committee of independent citizens, interested in the right of free speech and free assembly. The demand was granted but hearings dragged along for three months, without disciplinary action against the offenders responsible for breaking up the meeting being taken by the city authorities.

The meeting was hastily rearranged to be held the following Friday, November 18th, at the Park Theatre. This time there was no interference attempted. The theatre was filled to capacity and huge crowds were turned away. The programme as arranged for the Sunday night meeting was carried through, the principal speeches being given by Mrs. Margaret Sanger and Mr. Harold Cox.

As a preliminary to the public meeting, Mrs. Sanger had sent out some weeks previously a letter asking for replies to the four following questions:

1. Is not over-population a menace to the peace of the world?
2. Would not the legal dissemination of scientific Birth Control information through the medium of clinics by the medical profession be the most logical method of checking the problem of over-population?
3. Would knowledge of Birth Control change the moral attitude of men and women toward the marriage bond,

or lower the moral standards of the youth of the country?

4. Do you believe that knowledge which enables parents to limit their families will make for human happiness and raise the moral social and intellectual standards of the population?

The letter was sent to 200 prominent men and women, and about fifty detailed replies were received. A selection from these replies is given at the close of the volume.

Exhibits illustrating every phase of the Birth Control question were on view in an ante-room during the whole time over which the Conference extended. The Guide to the Exhibits is given below. The Conference Committee was indebted to Dr. Harritte M. Dilla, member of the Faculty of Economics and Sociology of Smith College, Mass., for the collection of material and arrangement of the charts and folios. The photographs included in Part V, Division 1, were prepared and presented by Mr. Lewis Hine of the National Child Labor Committee.

## PART I.

### EVIDENCE OF PRESENT SOCIAL WASTAGE

#### DIVISION 1. INFANT AND MATERNAL MORTALITY

- A. Twelve charts showing most fatal groups of diseases in twelve cities of the United States. Based upon the international detailed disease list, Mortality Statistics, 1921, of the Census Bureau.
- B. Chart showing these groups of diseases for United States as a whole.
- C. Twenty charts showing relation between infant mortality and number of children in family, order of birth, employment of mother, earnings of father, rental paid, housing condition and congestion. Based upon the Field Studies of the Children's Bureau in seven industrial cities.
- D. Ten charts showing comparative rates of infant mortality in ten cities of the United States. Based upon the Statistical Report of Infant Mortality for 1920, in 519 Cities of

the United States, published by American Child Hygiene Association.

- E. Chart showing Maternal Mortality in the United States.

#### DIVISION 2. FAMILY PEDIGREES

Twelve charts showing persistence or reappearance in family descent, of predisposition to tuberculosis; affections of the mucuous membrane; deafness, especially otosclerosis; venereal infection; mental defect; psychopathic and neuropathic instability. Based upon family charts from Davenport, Goddard, Healy, Jeliffe and White, and Rosanoff.

#### DIVISION 3. SOCIAL MALADJUSTMENT

- A. Three charts showing the extent of insanity, and the relation between insanity and economic condition. Based upon the Reports of State Hospital Commissions for the Insane.
- B. Six charts showing relation between juvenile and adult delinquency and congenital psychopathic or neuropathic instability, poverty and size of family. Based upon Healy, Breckinridge and Abbott, and publications of the Bureau of Social Hygiene.
- C. Chart showing correlation between actual and mental age of children coming before the Psychopathic Clinic of the New York City Juvenile Court.
- D. Selections from One Hundred Neediest Cases.

### PART II.

#### THE FOUNDATIONS OF BIRTH CONTROL

##### DIVISION 1. BIOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

- A. Six charts showing the processes of maturation, reduction and fertilization of the germ cell, and illustrating the continuity of the germ plasm.
- B. Six charts illustrating the operation of Galton's Law of Ancestral Inheritance, and the Mendelian Law of Dominant and Recessive Traits.

These charts are based upon plates from Davenport, Guyer, Thompson, Walter and others.

#### DIVISION 2. MEDICAL FOUNDATIONS

Folio Collection of excerpts from professional treatises on Gynecology and Obstetrics, establishing the fact of injurious effect upon pregnancy of such pathological states of the mother as tuberculosis, heart and kidney disease, pelvic deformity, and venereal infection. These statements have been selected from scientific works by such authorities as J. Whitridge Williams, M.D., Reuben Peterson, A.B., M.D., E. Heinrich Kisch, M.D., Howard Kelley, A.B., M.D., LL.D., F.R.C.S., Barton Cooke Hirst, M.D., J. Clifton Edgar, M.D., Thomas Watts Eden, M.D., and Joseph E. De Lee, M.D.

#### DIVISION 3. ECONOMIC AND SOCIOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

Folio Collection of excerpts from technical works on economic and social problems by such authorities as Carver, Taussig, Seager and Seligman, Gillin, Henderson, Healy, Mangold, Popenoe and Johnson, Ross and Warner.

#### DIVISION 8. INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION

Folio Collection of Material and Maps showing the famine conditions prevalent in various countries, with special reference to the outlook for maternal and child life of the future.

#### DIVISION 5. HUMAN FOUNDATION

- A. Folio Collection of Letters from Mothers selected as representative of 50,000 letters setting forth the overwhelming health and economic problems that confront the families of the middle and poorer classes in America today.
- B. Three large charts showing the reasons presented by 1250 families for their adoption of the plan of limitation. These families are representative of the middle and poorer classes of our society, and the reasons assigned will be noted:—economic condition, health of mother, health of children, health of husband.



## PART III.

THE SCIENTIFIC CLINIC—THE GOAL OF THE BIRTH  
CONTROL MOVEMENT

## DIVISION 1.

## HISTORY AND CHARACTER OF THE CLINICS OF THE WORLD

Folio Collection of material relative to Holland, Australia, New Zealand and England.

## DIVISION 2. THE PRESENT SITUATION IN AMERICA

Folio Collection of material showing legal obstructions in America, Federal and State, their origin, operation and results.

## PART IV.

## AUTHORITATIVE OPINIONS UPON BIRTH CONTROL

FOLIO COLLECTION of statements of views of accepted authorities, Scientific, Medical, Economic, Sociological, Ecclesiastical, and Literary.

## PART V.

## DIVISION 1. SPECIAL EXHIBITS

Collection of photographs of various racial types of Motherhood in America, and views of home conditions under which this maternity and infancy succumb to disease and squalor.

## DIVISION 2

- A. A series of twenty-five large charts presenting international vital statistics, prepared in England for the Conference. These charts are, it is believed, the latest presentation of the relation of birth and death-rate to net increase of population in those countries where vital statistics are available.
- B. Chart showing birthrate in rich and poor quarters of four European cities.

Two social events formed part of the programme of the First American Birth Control Conference. The first was a dinner

at the Hotel Plaza, given on Saturday evening, November 12th. Mrs. Juliet Barrett Rublee was toastmistress and the principal speakers were Mrs. Margaret Sanger and Mr. Harold Cox. In addition to these speeches there were greetings from several guests representing foreign countries, among them, China, Japan, and India. The dinner formed a brilliant winding up to the scientific sessions of the Conference, and a curious prelude to the unexpected police action of the following day.

The other social event was a reception and tea on Sunday afternoon, November 13th, given to the delegates and guests of the Conference by Mrs. Ernest R. Adee, at her home at 161 East 70th Street, New York City.

—A. G. P.

#### PROGRAMME

#### FIRST AMERICAN BIRTH CONTROL CONFERENCE

NOVEMBER 11th—18th, 1921

#### *Sessions of the Conference*

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 11

9:30 A. M. Registration of Delegates and Guests.

10:00 A. M. Opening Session.

Address of Welcome

Edith Houghton Hooker, *Chairman of the Sessions*

Opening Address

Margaret Sanger,

*Chairman First American Birth Control Conference*

#### PRESENTATION OF PAPERS

Dr. John C. Vaughan, New York City—*"Birth Control Not Abortion."*

Dr. A. B. Wolfe, University of Texas, Austin, Texas—*"Sources of Opposition to Birth Control."*

Dr. Reynold A. Spaeth, School of Hygiene and Public Health, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Maryland—*"Birth Control as a Public Health Measure."*

Dr. S. Adolphus Knopf, University of New York and University of Paris, New York City—*"Eugenics and Birth*

*Control in Their Relation to Tuberculosis and Other Medico-social Diseases.*"

Dr. Alice Butler, Cleveland, Ohio — "*Individual Woman's Need of Birth Control.*"

Dr. Frederick C. Heckel, New York City — "*Evil Results to Motherhood Through Lack of Birth Control Information.*"

Dr. Lydia Allen DeVilbiss, Washington, D. C. — "*Medical Aspects of Birth Control.*"

Dr. Abraham Myerson, 483 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. — "*The Inheritance of Mental Disease.*"

Discussion.

2:30 P. M.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS

Dr. Aaron J. Rosanoff, Clinical Director, Kings Park State Hospital, Kings Park, Long Island, New York — "*The Question of Birth Control Discussed from a Psychiatric Standpoint.*"

Dr. Roswell H. Johnson, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, Pa. — "*The Eugenic Aspect of Birth Control.*"

Dr. C. C. Little, Carnegie Institution of Washington, Cold Spring Harbor, Long Island, N. Y. — "*Order of Birth and the Sex Ratio.*"

Miss Virginia C. Young, 17 Beekman Place, Inc., New York City — "*The Problem of the Delinquent Girl.*"

Prof. E. C. Lindeman, North Carolina College for Women, Greensboro, North Carolina — "*Birth Control and Rural Social Progress.*"

Dr. Harriette A. Dilla, Smith College, Northampton, Mass. — "*The Greater Freedom by Birth Control.*"

Mr. J. O. P. Bland, London, England — "*The Population Question as Illustrated by Asia.*"

Discussion.

8:00 P. M. Private Session on Contraceptives for Members of the Medical Profession by invitation only.

Dr. Lydia Allen DeVilbiss, *Chairman.*

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 12

9:30 A. M.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS



Dr. Lothrop Stoddard, Brookline, Mass.—“*The Population Problem in Asia.*”

Mr. James Maurer, President Pennsylvania Federation of Labor, Harrisburg, Pa.—“*Birth Control and Infant Mortality: an Economic Problem.*”

Mr. Harold Cox, London, England—“*War and Population.*”  
Discussion.

2:30 P. M.           PRESENTATION OF PAPERS

C. V. Drysdale, O. B. E., D. Sc., F. R. S. E., London, England,  
President of the Malthusian League—“*National Security and Peace*”

Dr. W. F. Robie, Baldwinville, Mass.—“*Some Thoughts on the Medical Aspects of Birth Control.*”

Dr. William J. Robinson, New York City—“*Infanticide, Abortion and Birth Control, the Three Stages in the Limitation of Offspring and Control of Population.*”

Mr. André Tridon, New York City—“*Birth Control and Psycho-analysis.*”

Professor Herman M. Bernelot Moens, Holland—“*Dutch Opinions.*”

Miss Mary Winsor, Haverford, Pa.—“*The Birth Control Movement in Europe.*”

Discussion.

Reports and Resolution.

Adjournment.

7:30 P. M.   Dinner—Hotel Plaza Ball Room.

#### NOVEMBER 13

5:00 P. M.   Tea at the home of Mrs. Ernest R. Adee,  
161 East 70th Street, for Delegates and Guests.

8:00 P. M.   Public Mass Meeting, Town Hall.

#### “BIRTH CONTROL—IS IT MORAL?”

(Meeting held November 18th, Park Theatre, after raid on  
Town Hall by police.)

## SPECIAL EXHIBITS

Hotel Plaza, Room 134

Pictorial Appeal for the Motherhood of America

By Lewis W. Hine, New York City.

Preliminary Exhibit showing Biological, Economic, Sociological Foundations of Birth Control.

Harriette A. Dilla, Ph.D., L.L.B., *Chairman of Exhibits.*

## PROCEEDINGS

## SESSION I.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 1921

EDITH HOUGHTON HOOKER, *Chairman*

## OPENING ADDRESS

**T**HE CHAIRMAN: My friends, in the name of the American Birth Control League I bid you welcome. In the name of common sense and humanity I bid you welcome as well.

The time has come, I think, when Americans and the people of all the world must realize that the most important problem on earth is the problem of population. After all, it matters little what we do in after life if we are not born right in the beginning, and the purpose of this conference, as I take it, is to discuss ways and means of bringing reason into the realm of reproduction.

All of us must agree that the most important institution in any community is monogamous marriage; that after all the home is the backbone of the state, and that unless the home is properly safeguarded by all rational means, we cannot hope to build as good a nation, or as good a world as we could if reason did dominate there.

I think that as the background of monogamous marriage, Birth Control is an absolute essential. Because now we see homes upon homes broken up, wrecked and ruined as the result of unthoughtful reproduction. If we wish to build our nation right, we must first set our own homes in order, and

the purpose of this conference is to begin at the beginning, and to set about the task in the right way. Until women feel this, until all of us feel this, there is little that can be done in this realm, because after all the problem does touch women even more closely than it does men.

As we recall it, once upon a time we were in the same state as the woman who was called upon by a man living nearby to come over to help his wife, who was very ill. This man rushed in to the friend's house, to Mrs. Blank "Come and help me. My wife is ill and I need help." It was in the cold gray dawn, and Mrs. Blank arose and dressed herself with great speed, and hurried down, and as she passed through the entrance she stubbed her toe and fell. The man turned to her in despair and said "Hurry. Come on, don't wait till you get up."

In the days gone by that was precisely the predicament women were in. They could not get up, so to speak. They were not asked. They had no power. And although they might have had the right idea, they could not put the idea into effect. But now with woman suffrage in effect, it may be possible to straighten out some of the legislation that has gone before, and to bring some sort of order out of chaos, into this most difficult sphere.

The purpose of this conference is, I take it, two-fold: First, to bring together the common-sense people who can be reached and to take definite action with regard to our future course. And, secondly, to serve as a nucleus of publicity so that the light may go into the darkness, and many people who had heretofore been wholly in ignorance of the possibility even of Birth Control may see the light and gain new courage.

I wish here to commend the courage of those who have come to attend this conference. Because, it does take a certain amount of courage to come out for a new cause, and in America Birth Control is in that category. Courage is the first essential, I take it, in all forward looking movements, and it is well for us to realize that without courage it is impossible to make progress. If we merely sat still and accepted the dictates of our confederates, if we merely stood in one spot and had not

the courage to go forward, we would never achieve much in this world.

I have now to introduce to you a woman who has shown courage, who has realized that the most important thing in the world was to go forward constantly, to work against that monster, prejudice, which everywhere blocks the road to progress, and who has had the vision to see that America must become enlightened, must come to realize that the children of the future are the important asset in this nation and that they must be safeguarded from the very commencement—a woman who has realized that the most important thing in any nation is its little ones, such a woman is the one whom I now introduce to you, Mrs. Margaret Sanger.

#### Margaret Sanger

I AM glad to join in the welcome that Mrs. Hooker has given you. I cannot tell you how much this conference means to me. I cannot tell you how long I have looked forward to it—how long I have hoped that the great day might come when intelligent, representative American men and women might gather together to discuss our great problem. The fact that you are here is enough to show me that intelligent interest is now awake, and that along with it come hope and courage and determination. Our conference has aroused far more wide-spread interest than we had dared to expect. Our work in organizing it has shown, as nothing else could, that our years of agitation and fighting—thankless, discouraging, endless battling against prejudice and hypocrisy—have made their impression. I cannot tell you with what enthusiasm we have all been inspired by the letters and answers we received while getting up the Conference. I cannot tell you how much I appreciate the sympathy and assistance of all those of you who are here, and of the thousands of others who have written us and encouraged us to go ahead with this great work.

The idea in calling this Conference was to bring together not our old friends, the advocates of Birth Control, whose



worth we know and whose courage has stood the test of opposition; but rather to bring together new people, with other ideas, the people who have been working in social agencies and in other groups for the same results as we, namely a better nation and the banishment of disease, misery, poverty; delinquency and crime. The time has come to cease propagating these evils, if our civilization is to survive. Everywhere we are confronted by the fact that poverty and large families go hand in hand. We see the healthy and fit elements of the nation carrying the burden of the unfit who are increasing in numbers—an increase which threatens to wipe out the fit and healthy population of our land.

And so we rejoice to have, here, you who are representing other social activities, health agencies, and we hope that you will give us new ideas, as we hope that you will also find inspiration here to help you to further your own work, your own cause. Let us try to make this a true conference. It is your *duty* to confer. All of us who have come here, some of you from great distances, are animated by intense and active interest. I believe that the most valuable phase of our all-too-brief meetings will be the discussion of the papers. Brief as the discussion must be, much can be said in a few words. We have therefore decided not to present all the papers sent us, but to select those most suggestive, those that throw new light on problems interrelated with Birth Control.

We are in a condition of society today, not only here, but practically in every country of the world, where the masses of the unfit have propagated to such an extent that our intelligence is not able to grasp or cope with the conditions so created. We have been putting the energy and efforts of our healthy and fit into bricks and mortar. We have erected palatial residences for the unfit, for the insane, for the feeble-minded,—for those who should never have been born, to say nothing of their being permitted to carry on the next generation. Now the time has come when we must all join together in stopping at its source misery, ignorance, delinquency and crime. This is the program of the Birth Control movement. This

is what the Birth Control advocates intend to do—to stop at its source those processes which are making for a weakened and deteriorated race.

There are two instincts which have ever guided the destiny of mankind. These instincts are hunger and sex. The instinct of hunger has received consideration in practically every civilized country and man has adapted his institutions to meet its needs. But the instinct of sex has been ignored. Now I claim, and most of us who make a study of the subject know, that this instinct is just as deep, just as fundamental, as the instinct of hunger. It cannot be crushed. It cannot be denied. But we must understand it. We will then utilize it, as we utilize music and prayer for our highest powers and for higher illumination.

The question that confronts us is: "Is it desirable that man shall control this instinct?" Is it desirable that this instinct be satisfied without increasing the population of the world? Will mankind be benefited by obtaining control over this instinct? And is it desirable that in satisfying it, we shall decide whether offspring be the result or not? A further question is: Is it desirable that the unhealthy, the unfit, the feeble members of the community propagate their kind and fill the world with their children? Is it right for these to populate the world, as has been done, or shall some stringent measure be taken to stop this if we are to survive? After discussing these questions, the next question to be discussed will be the possibility of bringing about the results that we desire. We all know that knowledge is power. Man has a right to all knowledge. Ignorance is not a virtue, nor is it a safeguard against immorality. If there is knowledge which enables man to control birth, then it is right that he should have this knowledge and should be able to obtain that result.

This conference will discuss these two subjects. We must first establish the principle of the right to Birth Control. We must encourage the acceptance of this principle by other agencies and organizations, and the inclusion of it in their

programs for peace, for social betterment and for a better world.

The idea of Birth Control is not new. It has been advocated from almost the very earliest history of man. We know that Plato and Aristotle advocated it. It has been advocated by practically all the greatest philosophers and thinkers of all times. But the idea in the past of limiting their numbers was a little different from that of today. The methods employed in the past were mainly infanticide, and abortion; while today we desire to prevent conception. This new idea is making headway in practically every country in the world. The Birth Control movement in the United States has been the greatest instrument for spreading this idea, this modern scientific idea. Already we have groups in China, in India, in Mexico, in South America, to say nothing of groups in Germany, England, Scandinavian countries, Italy, Russia and Hungary. This new idea is taking its place in the social body, and I think we can say that America has recently been the leading country in this new idea of Birth Control.

This is the first Birth Control Conference ever held in this country, and we have a very elaborate program, and our aims, as we understand them, are based upon scientific principles. We intend to organize the thinking population of this country. We intend to have active groups in every city. We know that while people have privately believed in Birth Control, and have agreed with us in their own minds, they have not had the courage to come out and speak or work for the principle, and the time has come when this must be changed. The time has come when the intelligent members of the community must come forth and work with us in making this a national program. We want to have the restrictive laws both federal and state repealed. And we stand very definitely on the demand that Medical Profession shall give this information. We stand definitely on the principle that this question of giving information is not a question of free speech, but it is a question of scientific technical knowledge. We want the medical profession to give to women the most scientific advice obtainable.



It was only a few years ago, you know, that obstetrics was considered unimportant enough for any woman to take care of. A woman giving birth to a child was left to her neighbor to come in and deliver her. The medical profession did not consider the matter dignified enough for them to look after. Until now, the same thing has been true of contraception, and we are going to make the control of birth a scientific subject. We are going to put it into the dignified field of science where it belongs.

Our definite aim is to repeal the laws so that the medical profession may give to women at their request knowledge to prevent conception. We believe that with the assistance of the intelligent members of the community we can bring this about in a very short time, but we need your help. We need your courage. We need you to come out and stand with us on our platform. We also want your guidance, your assistance, your suggestions. None of us think that we know it all. We know that you, in your special lines, have experience by which we can benefit, and we want your cooperation. In other words we want to join together to make this country the greatest country in the world. We want to make this a country where every member of the community is an independent, self-reliant, courageous individual who will take his place in the nation, and the nation in its turn will take its place in the forefront of the nations of the civilized world.

### BIRTH CONTROL NOT ABORTION

*By Dr. John C. Vaughan, New York*

**M**ADAM CHAIRMAN and Fellow Workers:

Various estimates, made by those entitled to know, place the number of abortions performed each year in the United States at from 500,000 to 3,000,000. This wide range in numbers is due partly to the difficulty in gathering statistics and partly to the difference in opinion as to what should be classified as abortion. I feel therefore that we should use an arbitrary and exact definition of abortion, one allowing no

chance of misunderstanding or side-stepping, one so clearcut at both ends that our foes, as well as our friends, will know exactly what we mean when we use the word "abortion." To me abortion means the termination of the intra-uterine development of a fertilized ovum, and, using the word as so defined, I would like to have the following statement introduced as a permanent plank in our platform:

*The bringing about of an abortion should never be necessary; can never be moral; and must rarely be legal.*

I am aware that to reach the level represented by such a plank a great deal of educational work will be needed—for the male, as well as for the female; more frequent and careful examinations must be made of possible and prospective mothers, and more control and understanding must be taught to the fathers.

With this understanding of the term abortion, it should be easy to explain the difference between abortion and prevention of conception; but before going into this I will briefly state a few general facts regarding human reproduction, which it is necessary to keep in mind. These facts are:—First, Each girl baby at birth has in her ovaries roughly 50,000 cells of a certain type. These cells are the direct offspring of the fertilized ovum from which she grew and are therefore the direct descendants of her male and female parents. Her relation to them is merely that of a host. They receive nothing from her during their life except environment. At puberty these cells commence to be thrown off at the rate of one a month. One of these cells, fertilized, is capable of developing into an individual. Hence each woman warehouses the possibilities of 50,000 new human beings within her at the time she reaches puberty. Yet how few of these can she bring into actual existence even under the most favorable circumstances!

The male germ cells, on the other hand, are multiplying all the time in countless millions, and as only one male cell can enter the ovum on fertilization, we see that whereas not more

than one female cell in 5000 has any chance of developing into a human being, of the male cells only one in many millions has the possibility of so developing. Therefore, if for any reason we find it advisable to keep apart the male and female elements, we are only doing on a very small scale for the betterment of the human animal what nature is constantly doing in the most lavish manner. It can also be seen that these cells, both male and female, which are kept apart, are incapable of developing into human beings. Unfertilized they are no more worthy of consideration than the many cells shed from our skin each day; than the cells lost in menstruation, or those composing the hair which we shed or cut away.

I see no reason why the interposition of some moral, chemical, or mechanical means to keep the male element away from the female element can be considered immoral, nor why such an interposition should be made illegal. Any means used to keep the male and female elements from uniting is a preventative or contraceptive. But when once fertilization has taken place, then all the possibilities of a new soul, a new individual, are opened up, and an individual life is started that should be covered by the same protective laws that cover all human beings. The same laws that protect adults protect children. It is no less a crime to kill a baby than it is to kill an adult. Why should it be any less a crime, why should it be more moral or legal to destroy a life in its intra-uterine stages than it is after these stages are over and the baby has been born? And I say again that from the time the ovum is fertilized until the infant passes out of the uterus any destructive interference with it must be considered abortion, and that abortion should never be necessary, can never be moral, and must rarely be legal.

It can readily be seen that the definition we have adopted brings within the classification of abortion the many cases of so-called delayed menstruation that are brought about by manipulation, medication or some one of the common devices so well known to those in the medical profession.

Time does not allow me to enter into the discussion as to

whether it is more or less moral, or whether it should be more or less illegal to destroy an individual pre-natally, or to destroy it after birth by allowing it to come into a world where it cannot have the freedom of mind and body that alone can develop a soul. But I will take time to state that as long as children, brought into the world, are throttled by poverty, racked by inherited insanity, snuffed out by inherited diseases, wasted by wars and by our social system, thoughtful mothers choose abortion, when they feel it necessary, unless they are given some better alternative.

No one can doubt that it is better to prevent crime and immorality than it is to attempt to cure the criminal, and as abortions have steadily increased regardless of the fear of death and of threats of punishment, both legal and religious, I maintain that there is only one safe and scientific way in which to handle the situation, and that is to prevent abortion from being necessary. Therefore I demand that we be given the right to instruct those who find it necessary for any reason to refrain temporarily or permanently from having children and that we be given freedom and help in order that we may find the best methods of prevention of conception.

#### SOME SOURCES OF SENTIMENT AGAINST BIRTH CONTROL

*By Dr. A. B. Wolfe, Dept. of Economics and Sociology,  
University of Texas*

THE Dallas News for October 14, 1921, printed a half-column editorial upon the report that the Disarmament Conference would be asked to consider Birth Control as a means of lessening the chances of war. "As a serious proposal," the News said, "that may be a joke . . . The proposal is too unlikely of serious consideration for anybody to get serious about it." Hinting broadly that Birth Control advocates are fools, the editorial goes on to class the Malthusian theory as a conception of "pseudo sociology," and concludes that "it would be as well to regulate the imagination or



arbitrate the moon" as to discuss population limitation at a Disarmament Conference.

Such exhibition of flippant ignorance and inherited prejudice are common enough in the press. Their high frequency rate suggests that the Birth Control movement will do well to analyze carefully the sources of sentiment opposed to it, in order to deal with them more effectively.

Only a few of the major sources can be touched upon in the present paper, but these few are deeply rooted in institutional history, and both authoritatively powerful and subtly influential in perpetuating those vast and inscrutable undercurrents of conservative and dogmatic prejudice which every progressive movement has to battle against.

Sentiment against Birth Control is in large part derivative from a century old prejudice against the Malthusian theory of population. Malthus' Essay was first published in 1798 as a polemic against communism. In this first edition, Malthus recognized only two checks to the overgrowth of population—the positive checks, war, famine and misery, and the preventive check, which boiled down essentially to "vice." This exceedingly cynical view was stated in hard and fast terms. Providing it were true, it was an unanswerable argument against communism; but if it were true, it was also by implication something of an indictment against the Deity, whom the theology of the time regarded as omniscient, omnipotent, and all-merciful. Malthus felt this horn of the dilemma and tried to get off by explaining it away on weak metaphysical grounds.

Practically the entire English clergy rose up and smote him for publishing a blasphemous and sacriligious book. It was clear to them that God would not send new mouths without hands and food to feed them. To assert that starvation and vice are part of the order of nature, which is that of God, was a heinous business.

In the second edition, 1803, Malthus introduced his "moral restraint" check—a preventive check not classifiable as vice, and one to which it would seem the most exacting moralist could not object. But the logical loophole offered by moral

restraint got scant attention, partly because the clergy never had questioned that the Genesis command to increase and multiply was an injunction still obligatory, and partly because few of them read the book. Perhaps, too, they were in a position to have some unexpressed doubts as to the effective reality of moral restraint.

Anyhow, the sentiment of the church, both Protestant and Catholic, from that day to this has been strongly against the idea of the possibility of over-population and bitterly against any artificial limitation of offspring.

The landed gentry and the business interests, however, hailed Malthus as a Daniel come to judgment. They wanted low wages, and here was a man who justified this desire by showing that payment of anything more than subsistence wages was useless because the excess would simply result in more children and continued poverty. Naturally the growing hand of humanitarians pushing for child labor laws and adequate public relief of the poor did not take kindly to any such doctrine. So another train of sentiment against "Malthusianism" was started.

In America, naturally, no one could take Malthus seriously. We were thirteen miserable little colonies strung out on the Atlantic Coast, with a vast hinterland of those "unbounded natural resources," in the capacity of which to support a limitless population the patriotic American has scarcely yet ceased to believe. As late as the 1880's, the professor of moral philosophy at Harvard, motivated by a combination of "unbounded" Americanism and theological postulates, wrote a long condemnatory essay on "Malthusianism, Darwinism, and Pessimism." Pride of growth has been an American trait. Anything which questioned the rationality of that pride has been resented. There will be few real estate agents members of the Birth Control League.

These historical influences, set out here in perhaps somewhat too definite relief, sentiments not sharply focussed nor pointed directly against the Birth Control movement, of which the great masses are but dimly, if all conscious, constitute, I

believe, one of the greatest impediments to the early adoption of a rational population policy.

Other sources and centers of sentiment, more definite, and consciously aimed directly against Birth Control, exist, however, and are equally powerful.

The most obvious of these is the church, with its inherited prejudice against anything bearing any relation to Malthus. Historically considered, the moral code of the church is non-pragmatic, and based on precedent and authority. Generally speaking, its methods of debate and reasoning have been non-inductive, dogmatic, and doctrinaire, not to say at times casuistic and supremely oblivious to facts.

The conservative view of the church, more or less sharply and authoritatively formulated in the church disciplines, is that all mechanical (some say *all*) contra-conceptual means of limitation are "unnatural," and hence immoral and sinful.

Compelled to compromise with the logic of facts and with advancing knowledge and reason, the church now seems willing to grant the "moral restraint" of the sacrilegious Malthus as a permissible mode of limitation. Malthus himself never hoped for too much from this check, and the modern clergy betray similar doubts when they intimate the heavy demand it puts on human character, when they go on to argue that because "a moral duty is difficult is no reason for setting it aside."\* They confess the doctrinaire and impractical quality of their code, for they know, or ought to know, that such a "duty" is, and will continue to be, set aside by all save a negligible handful of the most "spiritual" faithful. Surely, nothing can be more illogical, or in the end less moral, than to insist, in the face of demonstrated tragical misery, injustice, and sex slavery, and of the literally awful economic and political results sure to flow from indefinitely continued population increase, upon a moral precept, however sound in the abstract, which ninety-nine per cent of the population will ignore.

Ecclesiastical argument as to "natural" and "unnatural" con-

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\*English Birth Rate Commission, Problems of Population and Parenthood, 1920, p. xlvii.



duct exhibits a curiosity of clerical logic which would be comical if it were not so tragically dangerous in its possible effect.

According to clerical reasoning, it is "natural" to use the reason to avoid unneeded and unwanted children, provided the method involve denial to the instinctive physico-spiritual functioning of conjugal love. (Parenthetically one must in charity observe that the clergy are deplorably ignorant of psychopathology.)

But the moment the reason finds simple, harmless ways of limiting the birth rate without incurring the neuropathological strain incident to the thwarting of the most powerful and fundamental natural instinct, the reason becomes "unnatural." The sex instinct is natural, the desire for children is natural, the desire not to have more children than can be given a fair start in life is natural, possibly the desire to avoid international piracy and war is natural, the furthering of these desires by moral restraint is rational and natural, but to use the reason to further them by simple contra-ceptual means, harmless to health and costless in point of nervous strain, is "unnatural." The distinction is a fine one and I confess my logical vision is not microscopic enough to see it. Yet upon it is based a vast amount of authoritatively inspired sentiment against Birth Control. Thus millions of unwanted babies are born, thousands of women are made involuntary mothers, and a future heritage of international conflict is laid on the world, all to justify a piece of scholastic dialectics.

If ecclesiasticism, with its male-made morals and logic, constitutes one very definite center of dogmatic sentiment against Birth Control, two other equally powerful, though less frank, and perhaps less effectively organized agencies of opposition, lie in nationalism and commercialism.

Historically, nationalism and mercantilism developed concomitantly. Frederick the Great averred that the people are like a herd of deer in the park of a great nobleman; they have no other function than to multiply and fill the enclosure! We

do not put the matter quite so bluntly today. The English Birth-Rate Commission says:

"It might be thought that Great Britain might be a more comfortable place to live in [with less population] . . . But in the event of a war similar to that which we have just experienced . . . what would happen to our Empire. . . . Unless we add to our numbers, for how long shall we be able to fulfill our obligations in the face of recent developments of race ambitions? [in India and Egypt?] . . . The greatness of an Empire consists not in the heaping up of wealth, or even in the establishment of universal comfort, but in the possession of multitudes of healthy men and women who will enable it to maintain its position and influence among the nations."\*

If this means anything, it means that the state is end and the individual mere means, and that national greatness is measured by capacity to whip an adversary, or chastise recalcitrant dependencies, and lies in size and power, not in the happiness of citizens. The words are different, but the tune is that of Frederick the Great. Its modern title is "A Place in the Sun." We need not dwell upon the militaristic "race-suicide" diatribes of the late Theodore Roosevelt, or the extreme solicitude of the nationalists and militarists behind the French Repopulation Commission to raise the French birth rate. Their thought dwells not on how to raise the French standard of living, nor on how to attain peace and good will, but only on preparation to lick Germany again. Similar canvassing of vital statistics, with similar ends in view, occupies many a mind in Germany.

The simple fact is that militant nationalists, from Julius Cæsar on, have always insisted on encouraging unlimited multiplication, usually of course, for "defensive" purposes only. If you desire an honest analysis of population growth as an excuse for territorial aggression, read the first few pages of Plato's Republic, penned some 2300 years ago.

The military demand for large populations involves any

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\*Problems of Population and Parenthood, 1920, pp. lxxvi.

people that listens to it in a vicious circle. We must breed like rats to defend ourselves from other people who are breeding likewise to defend themselves against us. The more people we breed, the more land we must have. Hence to keep up our defensive program, we must attack some other people and take part of their territory. Such was the logic of Germany; such, apparently, is that of Japan, such must be the outcome of the philosophy of size and power everywhere. A more immoral and a more futile conception of the function and value of national life I cannot conceive.

The vicious circle of militaristic nationalism is paralleled by another in the logic of nationalistic commercialism. Employers everywhere, under a system which, in spite of the almost universal presence of monopoly and price fixing agreements, still retains some elements of competition, naturally prefer cheap labor to dear. The situation is more favorable to them when there are more workers than there are jobs. When there are more jobs than job hunters, wages go up and profits and interest tend to go down. Consequently, employers have ground for desiring a redundant laboring population. Competition for foreign markets intensifies the desire for cheap labor. The usual argument is that we cannot secure and retain foreign markets without a plentiful supply of cheap labor at home. A large labor supply depends upon multiplication. Hence, other things equal, that country is in the best situation with regard to foreign commercial competition which has the largest population.

Now see where this lands us. We have to have cheap labor to secure and retain foreign markets. Hence, we must not limit our multiplication. Then, presto change, comes the reason why we must push out for foreign markets. We must have these foreign markets to keep our great population employed.

Just here comes the rub—and incidentally the close relations between the business interests and the foreign offices. For other nations besides ourselves have to have these same foreign markets to keep *their* huge populations employed. Friction

and conflict are bound to ensue. Hence the commercial as well as the patriotic value of military power, the basis of which is numbers.

Thus we are involved in two interlacing vicious circles, the logic of one of which is traceable to Chauvinistic nationalism, that of the other to special economic interests which greatly influence, if they do not absolutely control, governmental policy and public sentiment.

It is not to be supposed that business men will argue as frankly as this against population restriction, but military men will, and do; and the business interests tacitly take the position indicated. That precious triumvirate, the short sighted, profit-seeking business man, the secret diplomatist, and the flag-waving munitions manufacturer, will not be slow to classify all Birth Control advocates as foolish fanatics and dangerous "radicals."

Birth Control is not a mere matter of difference between conservative and progressive sentiment, nor of closet philosophy. The population problem is a matter of the life or death of civilization. The whole world is astoundingly ignorant of the fact that at our present rate of population growth—a doubling in the past century, 1.16 per cent annually just before the war,\* we are headed toward unspeakable things. Assuming an increase of 1 per cent annually, the world's population, now approximately 1,700,000,000, would be in 1970 2,796,000,000, in 2021 4,598,000,000, and in another hundred years 12,437,000,000.† If anyone believes that the present rate of increase can be maintained without involving the world in chronic famine and war, he has a better imagination that I can lay claim to.

In a remarkable series of studies, Professor Raymond Pearl, of Johns Hopkins University, has shown by mathematical and statistical analysis that the upper limit of population in the

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\*G. H. Knibbs, *The Problems of Population, Food Supply and Migration*, *Scientia*, Vol. xxvi, 1919, p. 485.

†*Ibid.*, p. 486.



United States, at anything like our present standard of living is below 200,000,000.‡

At the present rate of growth we shall reach that point in a few decades. What then? Breed to kill and kill to breed?

It would seem, after all, the leading metropolitan daily of the Southwest to the contrary notwithstanding, that Birth Control is a matter to which the Disarmament Conference might with benefit to the future prospects of civilization, devote some slight attention.

### BIRTH CONTROL AS A PUBLIC HEALTH MEASURE

*By Reynold A. Spaeth, Ph. D.*

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Baltimore, Maryland)*

**I**N DISCUSSING Birth Control as a public health measure we deliberately exclude for the moment such questions as morality, religion, and economics—including the matter of war and peace. Each of these questions is vital to public health in a specific and important way and the discussion of each is bound up with the consideration of Birth Control. But they are not within the province of the physiologist concerned directly with particular problems of public health. In the School of Hygiene and Public Health of the Johns Hopkins University, we are particularly striving for the assured health of the community; with the prevention rather than the cure of disease; with the causes that make for infant mortality, epidemics, industrial diseases. We offer courses and engage in research in every branch of scientific knowledge that throws light on the causes of ill health,—the dangers of improper home and industrial environments and the best ways of combating disease at its source and preventing its spread.

The public health viewpoint is essentially non-partisan. It would be obviously unpractical to apply sanitary measures

‡R. Pearl and L. J. Reed, On the Rate of Growth of the Population of the United States since 1790 and its mathematical representation, *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science*, Vol. 6, 1920, pp. 275-288; R. Pearl, The biology of death, *Scientific Monthly*, September 1921, pp. 193-213. See also two able articles by Prof. E. M. East of Harvard University: Population, *Scientific Monthly*, June 1920, pp. 603-624, and The Agricultural limits of our population, *Scientific Monthly*, June 1921, pp. 551-557.



exclusively in the homes of the wealthy and educated. But public health is concerned not only with the prevention and control of disease, but ultimately with every factor which contributes to the health of individuals in all walks of life.

We must admit that by limiting the number of their offspring both the health and happiness of the well-to-do are frequently increased. If we could prove that this practice was on the whole injurious among the educated and wealthy, we might make out a case against the further dissemination of contraceptive information. The advantages, however, especially in the twenty-five hundred to seven thousand dollar groups, which include the vast majority of university men and women, are many and obvious—we need only recall the higher standard of living, the proportionately greater attention received by each child in the small family and the better health of the parents—that in my opinion public health authorities must see the urgency and wisdom of extending these advantages to individuals on more modest intellectual and economic levels.

In order to meet the terrifying economic combination of a large family and a small income, the wives of industrial workers frequently themselves enter industry. Under these circumstances a pregnancy is peculiarly demoralizing. Industry has no particular place for the expectant mother, nor, it must be admitted, has the pregnant woman any particular contribution to make to industry. Even though a good worker, she is at best an unstable asset, for no method of job analysis or scientific management, has thus far succeeded in establishing any guiding principle for her behavior. We know that her metabolism is profoundly changed and that she frequently shows an abnormal sensitivity to fatigue. The latter is certainly not diminished by the realization of the additional physical and economic burden about to fall upon her shoulders.

At this point, the problem of hyper-fecundity may become directly associated with that of venereal disease. In their dread of further pregnancies, women, both in industrial and

non-industrial life, frequently feel compelled to wink at extra-marital sexual relations on the part of their husbands.

Psychiatrists are familiar with the profound psychopathic disturbances that often result from the conflict between fear of pregnancy and the desire to maintain the marital relation intact. Here the problem reaches out into the great field of mental hygiene, a field in which intelligent doctors of public health are required to have more than a casual knowledge.

Physicians frequently claim that contraceptive knowledge is widespread among even the poorest families. The difficulty is that such families fail to take practical advantage of their knowledge. What they really lack is sufficient imagination to appreciate the grave economic consequences to their immediate family that will result from the birth of an additional child.

This point is probably well taken. No sane advocate of Birth Control as a public health measure believes that the population problem will be solved by distributing contraceptive information, even under the most favorable circumstances and to the most needy. But that at least is an initial step. A long campaign of education and enlightenment in matters of economic and social values and responsibilities must follow. In this campaign for sanity and self-consciousness, public health officials must play an active part.

### BIRTH CONTROL IN ITS RELATION TO DISEASE

*By Dr. S. Adolphus Knopf*

*University of New York*

*Author of "A History of the National Tuberculosis Association."*

*(Extracts. Introduction, consisting of an analysis of conditions attending the prevalence and spread of tuberculosis, omitted for lack of space.)*

**T**HERE are also a number of useful citizens, men and women who are slightly affected with tuberculosis, knowingly or unknowingly, and whose tuberculous condition can only be detected by a most careful examination. They may marry after their recovery, which is reasonably sure to take place if timely and properly treated. However, a predisposed

woman should never marry a man who has the above described habitus phthisicus, and vice versa. When two individuals whose physique indicates a tuberculous tendency marry, their offspring rarely escapes the tuberculous disease. A single pregnancy in the woman predisposed to tuberculosis does not necessarily mean a development or aggravation of her condition, or a tuberculous infant, especially when the father is strong and vigorous, providing of course the mother has proper hygienic and dietetic care for a sufficient time prior, during and after confinement. On the other hand, frequent pregnancies, following each other in rapid succession, will surely undermine the mother's health, aggravate a predisposition or an existing slightly tuberculous condition, and will most likely bring into the world feebly and strongly predisposed children.

All this means that the solution of the tuberculosis problem is not possible without judicious, humane, and scientific birth control. Only healthy parents can procreate healthy children. When the children are too numerous so that most of them, and particularly the latter born, had no chance to develop into mentally and physically strong men and women, they in turn will have children frail and subject to disease.

In an admirable address entitled "The True Aristocracy," contributed to the recent Eugenics Congress, my esteemed friend, the distinguished Vice-Chancellor of the University of Liverpool, Prof. J. George Adami, very justly says that under modern conditions through the larger families of the unfit, the race is deteriorating and not improving. He suggests a selective mating among the physically, mentally and morally sound.\* I have taken a careful history of many cases of tuberculosis covering a period of 25 years, and this has revealed to me that with surprising regularity the tuberculous individual, when he or she comes from a large family, is one of the latter born children—the fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth, etc. The healthiest children, as a rule, are those of young people who married at a comparatively early age. Eugen-

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\*Scientific Monthly, November, 1921.

ics has amply proven this and here again birth control enters as a factor. Young people, strong and vigorous, would gladly enter wedlock if they would know that it was within their power to have only as many children as they could well provide for.

At the time of the marriage, the minister or magistrate who conducts this sacred act, or better yet, the official who issues the license, should hand to the couple a carefully prepared pamphlet containing instructions in parenthood and the duties and obligations this involves. Of course, no license for marriage should be issued except to such as have been found physically and mentally fit to become the fathers and mothers of the future generations. Individuals physically below par should be advised to delay marriage, and if that seems not feasible, they should be advised to delay having children until both, husband and wife, are physically in fit condition.

It is not necessary here to go into the details of the many moral advantages of early marriages, such as the diminution of prostitution and venereal diseases. Even in our well-to-do and healthy families, considered our best American stock, and where larger families would be no burden, early marriages are unfortunately not encouraged. The opponents of birth control love to dwell on the theme of so-called race suicide. If this is applicable, it should only be spoken of in such instances where health, wealth and culture abound and still family limitation is practiced to a very appreciable and deplorable degree. Birth control in cases of a distinctly tuberculous father or mother, among the poor and underfed, is not race suicide but race preservation.

We lose in this country about 50,000 children annually from tuberculosis. What heartache and suffering the births and the deaths of these 50,000 little ones, in many instances even unwelcome, have caused to the parents is difficult to conceive. There are overwhelming statistics to be found everywhere, showing conclusively that the larger the family, and particularly among those in moderate or poor circumstances, the



greater is the death rate among the children. As to the economic loss which the commonwealth sustains from bringing into this world thousands of children mentally and physically crippled, I will confine myself to tuberculosis alone where we have been able to calculate, at least approximately, what this unthinking procreation costs. I stated above that 50,000 children die annually from tuberculosis in the United States; figuring the average length of life of these children to be seven and one-half years and their cost to the community as only \$200 per annum, represents a loss of \$75,000,000. Such children have died without having been able to give any return to their parents or to the community. Who will dare to calculate in dollars and cents the loss which has accrued to the community because so many mothers died of tuberculosis when an avoidable pregnancy was added to a slight tuberculous ailment in a curable stage.

As eugenists we are interested in the possible results of birth control. Should our laws become more tolerant in this respect? Should birth control clinics become a general feature as they have been in Holland and are now in England? Should these clinics function not only to help the poor and sick woman to prevent too frequent pregnancies but also to help the healthy, childless wife who longs for offspring but hesitates to seek or cannot afford to pay for private expert advice, to have her often curable sterility overcome? If our government should be willing to spend as much money, or even a good deal less, for the study of the best possible and most careful means of preventing conception, the study of temporary or permanent sterilization of those temporarily or permanently unfit for parenthood,\* and on the other hand encourage the study of the causes of sterility and their cure in otherwise physically, mentally, and morally sound parents, so as to improve the human race in general, as it is willing to spend to improve our animal industry, what would be the result?

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\*Henry H. Laughlin: "Eugenical Sterilization in the United States;" *Social Hygiene*, October, 1920.



In answer to this question and in defense of my advocacy of a judicious birth control, I should like to quote just a few statistics from Holland:

“What is the physiological effect of voluntary artificial restriction of the birth rate? In Holland where the medical and legal professions have openly approved and helped to extend artificial restriction of the birth rate, the health of the people at large is shown by its general death-rate, which has been lowered faster than in any other country in the world. At the First Eugenics Congress, held in London in 1912, it was stated that the stature of the Dutch people was increasing more rapidly than that of any other country—the increase being no less than four inches within the last fifty years. According to Official Statistical Year Book of the Netherlands, the proportion of young men drawn for the army over 5 ft. 7 in. in height has increased from 24½ to 47½ per cent. since 1865, while the proportion below 5 ft. 2½ in. in height has fallen from 25 per cent. to under 8 per cent.”\*

What effect has judicious birth control had on the tuberculosis death-rate in that benign country? In a little over a decade Holland reduced its death-rate from tuberculosis by over 40 points per 100,000; in 1904 its tuberculosis death-rate was 184.3 per 100,000 and in 1915 it had fallen to 144.1. Even in the United States, the country which perhaps stands foremost in the attack on the environmental causes of tuberculosis, the death-rate was higher, in 1915 being 145.8 in the registration area. What would it have been had we followed the advice of the distinguished President of the Second International Eugenics Congress, Major Leonard Darwin, the illustrious son of the illustrious Charles Darwin! In his opening address President Darwin pointed out that there could be no race improvement without combating both environmental and eugenic causes at the same time. Had we in the United States attacked our tuberculosis problem also from the eugenic side, I believe the result in the reduction of our tuberculosis death-rate would have been so startling as to arouse the hope of an absolute eradication of the disease.

In a statement issued a few years ago by Dr. Haven Emerson, then Health Commissioner of the City of New York, and

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\*C. V. Drysdale: “The Small Family System: Is It Injurious or Immoral?” Published by B. W. Huebsch, New York.

one of the best known authorities on hygiene and social welfare work, he said that any physician who does not give advice to his patient which will, if followed effectively, save her from any surgical risk, is not living up to his responsibilities. He further said:

"The patients of the tuberculosis clinics are, in all intents and purposes, under the personal care of the clinic physician. Wherever the patients' health might be jeopardized by the unavoidable risks and strains of pregnancy, such patients may, according to my understanding of the law, be informed as to how to avoid conception."

I have said that without birth control we will not prevent tuberculosis. I go further and say that without birth control the number of insane, mentally deficient, syphilitics, and criminals will not decrease. The support of these defectives costs the State of Massachusetts 35 per cent. of its income, and the cost of maintaining such institutions in the United States in 1915 was no less than \$81,000,000. (Fisher.) Yet our institutional care for this class of dependents in asylums, prisons, reformatories, hospitals, etc., is only sometimes curative, somewhat more often only palliative, but rarely preventative. Birth Control scientifically studied, judiciously imparted, and carefully supervised, would in addition prevent such social and economic catastrophes as wars and famines, would decrease underfeeding and insanitary and insufficient housing, all of which are the precursors not only of tuberculosis, but of typhus, cholera, etc., and last but not least, of that social discontent undermining the very foundation of our civilization.

### INHERITANCE OF MENTAL DISEASE

*By Dr. Abraham Myerson, Boston, Mass.*

*(Unfortunately only a synopsis of Dr. Myerson's paper is available.—Ed.)*

**I**NSANITY is not a unit but is an abstract idea, having no existence in itself. What exists are mental diseases which are distinctly different in type and often of different biological natures.

The statistics are presented to show the marriage rate of the various classes of the insane in which it is shown that the

acquired mental diseases do not lessen the marriage rate, whereas the congenital types show a marked lowering of the marriage rate. A consideration of the mental inheritance of normal and abnormal is presented, showing that the normal frequently have psychopathic heredity.

The types of mental disease in ancestor and descendants as well as of members of the same fraternity is given. It is shown that mental disease rarely can be traced over three generations and in the majority of cases only in two. The tendency of mental disease to change from generation to generation is shown. Certain mental diseases are not hereditary while others have a strong tendency to run in families.

It is a mooted question whether or not we are dealing with true heredity in the transmission of mental disease. The writer takes the stand that as a working hypothesis we are dealing with diseases of the stock from which the stock may recover or from which it may perish just as the individual may either recover or die from his diseases.

## THE INDIVIDUAL WOMAN'S NEED OF BIRTH CONTROL

*By Dr. Alice Butler*

I AM not going to apologize, but I must explain to you a misunderstanding. I was asked to prepare a paper for the evening program. Later I had a letter from the committee asking me to take part in the discussion on a subject here named. Not knowing that I was to have a paper this morning I came unprepared. I will give you a few pages from my diary, which I think will compensate for my neglect.

Just yesterday afternoon, the wife of an attorney, the mother of four children, two boys in college in the east, one in high school in Cleveland, and a little girl,—I think she is twelve years old,—sat in my office in desperation. She was two weeks overdue. A tiny little body, forty-four years old, and she just did not know what to do. And when I tried to explain to her perhaps her condition was the beginning of the menopause, she said "Yes, doctor, but I am not sure. What shall

I do?" And when we talked about prevention, I realized that she had methods that were not reliable. And that little woman walked out of my office, desperate as to what might be, but which I did not believe was; but there was no comfort that I could give her at all. She positively refused to be comforted. As I thought of the nights and weeks ahead of her before the problem was really solved, and solved to her liking, I was just touched, I could hardly endure it. What the woman needed was a safe, scientific, reliable contraceptive.

Last Saturday I had in my office a bride and groom. They were married in August, married for financial reasons. They felt that they could economize better by being married. She had signed up for twenty-one months of work. After two years they expected to begin raising a family and have a real family, but she was six days late. She had never been late before. She had not slept for three nights. Her eyes were swollen from crying, and her husband looked as dilapidated as she. We talked the matter over and there was not a thing to be done. They walked out of my office desperate, for I could do nothing else but say that I presumed she was pregnant, and the only thing for her to do was to face the issue, she and her husband to face the issue as best they could, and make the best of it. "The dear Lord does go before to make crooked places straight, and perhaps this child will be the dearest child that they ever would have, because children born early in wedlock, they say, are very dear." I gave her all that talk for comfort sake, but they were not comforted.

You know their need. A safe, scientific, reliable contraceptive.

Early in the summer a woman came into my office. They had just recently moved to Cleveland, I think they came from Akron, where her husband had formerly been employed in a rubber plant, which had now closed down. She was the mother of six children, the oldest being eight years old. He was without a job. The youngest was a baby nursing, and she was pregnant. And I assured her there was nothing that I could do but temper the wind to her shorn condition, that I would



see her through her difficulty, and make finances possible. She turned on me and assailed me because the medical profession would do nothing for a mother with six children, and the sixth a baby. You know what that woman needed.

So those are the individual needs of wives and mothers.

### MEDICAL ASPECTS OF BIRTH CONTROL

*By Dr. Lydia Allen DeVilbiss, Washington, D. C.*

A SHORT time ago an unusual article appeared in the Journal of the American Medical Association in which the writer stated in substance that "when it was discovered that a little crude oil properly applied to the surface of stagnant water prevented the development of the malarial and the yellow fever mosquitoes, the etiology and pathology of these diseases, for all practical purposes became subjects of mere academic interest."

Those who love mankind must hope for the time when humanity will discover and apply those few cents worth of contraceptive prophylactics which will reduce the appearance of the syphilitic foetus, now so common that it does not excite our interest, until it will be sought after as a specimen for the scientific museums. And along with the syphilitic foetus we hope will go into the category of rare specimens of human physical life, the diseased, deformed and ill begotten offspring of diseased, deformed and ill begotten ancestors.

When a limb of a tree becomes diseased and withers, the horticulturists cut it off. When an animal exhibits atavistic tendencies, the stockman sends it to market. When a human family breeds diseased, feeble-minded or otherwise defective offspring, society feeds, houses, clothes and provides free medical succor for them with the result that their offspring continue to reproduce themselves interminably and unhindered.

It should not be inferred that there is any disposition to find fault with society for any kindly consideration it may show its unfortunate members. If society should surround them with every convenience, every luxury, every environment con-



ductive to human happiness that wealth, intelligence and imagination can conceive, society has not then paid back these unfortunates the debt it owes them for having permitted them to be born.

Not one of us would care to accept all the wealth of the world and exchange places with the congenital idiot, or the congenital physical or moral defective. Few of us would want to come into the world into a family in which our coming was regarded as a tragedy; few of us would want to be born of a woman already depleted with too frequent child bearing and consequently not able to furnish us with the sinews of a good physical body; few of us would want even to be born into a family where our coming meant partial starvation for the other already too many mouths to be fed and where our life would be condemned to one long struggle for the merest physical existence. We cannot of course altogether judge according to our own standard what another might want or be happy with. However, the Golden Rule is still the highest known standard of ethical conduct.

And this much we know: That if America is appreciably to raise the standard of human physical and mental fitness then it is essential that every child born on her soil shall be born of parents at least free from serious inheritable and communicable diseases who are essentially sound in mind and body, and for whose children the necessary creature requirements may be procured. When children are born into families deprived of one or more of these essentials, it is America who must pay the penalty along with the unfortunate ones. It is not, therefore, merely in the interests of the unborn that we give this subject our consideration—however highly commendable that altruistic impulse might be—but it is of paramount importance in the interests of our own self protection and preservation.

In America in spite of severe laws and penalties for infanticide and abortion, and for the dissemination of information concerning the prevention of conception, a considerable practice of family limitation has developed, as is evidenced by the

undisputedly large number of abortions and the steadily declining birth rate over a considerable period of time. This reduction of the birth rate has been illegal, undirected and unintelligent. It has been severely selective, operating chiefly in the best American stock, resulting in the so-called American family. At the same time there has been no such appreciable decline in the birth rate among those living in extreme poverty, which is likely to be closely associated with degeneracy, or among the feeble-minded and other undesirable strains which are increasing at a rate faster than it is possible to build asylums, institutions and jails for them. In other words *in America, there has been Birth Control with a vengeance.*

This Birth Control is bound up with medical, sociological, religious, ethical and almost every other division of human thought and activities. It is a matter which concerns every human being as he develops into adult life. It shapes human destinies and the destinies of nations. Handled rightly, it can be the one greatest factor in the alleviation of human misery. Abused or handled wrongly it precedes destruction. It is therefore highly important that we assume a scientific study of the principles underlying the control of the birth rate and apply these principles for the improvement of instead of for the destruction of humanity.

The most sensitive index we possess to the social welfare of the community is the infant mortality rate. The analysis of the causes of death of babies under one year of age shows that one-third of the deaths occur at about the first month of life and are directly chargeable to influences operating before birth. Another third of these deaths occur in the first three months of life and are due to causes for which parental influences are responsible or to which they are largely contributory. In other words the deaths of two-thirds of the babies who die under one year of age are due generally to prenatal causes and one-third only to *all other causes combined.* Infant mortality rates generally do not include the deaths from abortions and stillbirths. If these were added, it might be easily assumed that half or

more than half of the babies who die under one year of age *never had a chance to live.*

From this analysis it will be easily seen that the usual and popular methods of reducing the infant mortality rates, baby weeks, health centers, milk stations, etc., etc., are devoted almost exclusively to the one-third who have survived the period of adverse prenatal conditions. The exceptions to this are the comparatively few maternal health clinics where proper prenatal and obstetrical supervision is available; and these are still for a large part limited to the out-patient departments of charity clinics, and to medical college hospitals.

The great wastage of human life recorded by the infant mortality rates cannot be computed in terms of suffering, misery and ill health caused the mothers, but its relation to the maternal death rate may be approximately known. The deaths of women from diseases and accidents of pregnancy and labor, if computed for the numbers of women of child-bearing age, is found to be several times greater than death from any other cause. The tragedy of this high maternal mortality rate is that diseases and accidents of pregnancy and labor are classed as preventable causes of death and that their rate has not shown any appreciable decrease in the last several decades. So that for every thousand women who give birth to a child, a certain number which may be computed die from causes which are classed as preventable and those who give birth to a child only to have it die before it reaches its first birthday have faced this risk unnecessarily.

With a reasonable degree of certainty, it can be predicted that the offspring of certain parents are likely to be born dead or die soon thereafter; or living they will not increase the healthy population, but are born to join the ranks of the incurables. And of the maternal deaths from diseases and accidents of pregnancy and labor, there is a certain percentage of women, so far as medical science is able to prognosticate, for whom pregnancy and labor means certain death. In fact, so dangerous are certain diseased conditions to the life of the pregnant women and her baby that obstetric authorities un-

hesitatingly recommend that an abortion be performed, but these same authorities do not discuss the desirability of preventing the conception.

In addition to the list of undoubted causes of great danger to the life of the pregnant woman and her baby, there is a much larger list of diseases and disorders of function where pregnancy is undesirable until the immediate condition is remedied, or the danger removed. The soldier is not permitted to go into battle if his physical and mental conditions do not seem likely to withstand the strain. *But the woman goes into the valley of the shadow to produce the soldier without regard to the life or health of either.*

Races are not improved, humanity is not uplifted, great changes are not effected *en masse*. It has to be a matter of reaching the individual units of the race and through improving them, the mass is leavened. And in anything which so peculiarly and intimately concerns the most private personal matters of an individual as the limitation of procreation, he must be approached by someone in whom he would most naturally repose his confidence in such matters—his family physician, the public health doctor and nurse, his minister, the social workers, his druggist, and maybe his friend and benefactor. And for conveying personal information and obtaining response from a national population, large organizations, national in their scope and already possessing the avenue of approach to the individual are essential for continued operation.

It is a common occurrence for a couple to consult their doctor, the public health nurse, or social worker when they are aware that a pregnancy is existing. Sometimes the consultation is regarding the health of the mother and child that the best conditions for the life and health of both may be maintained. Ofttimes it is for the purpose of finding a physician whom they may request to produce an environment in which the already fecundated cell may not further develop—in other words perform an abortion. If the exigencies of the situation warrant, the physician may do so, with considerable



cost of suffering to the mother and even the risk of her life and health, and at considerable professional risk to himself. From this consultation in a pregnancy already existing it is but a step further to a consultation of their physician by potential parents before rather than after the die of a future human being is cast. And it is to the credit of the intelligence and awakening conscience of increasing numbers of parents that they are questioning their physicians as to their physical and mental fitness for becoming responsible ancestors. And for those who lack the mental capacity or the conscience so to question for themselves, society for its own preservation must do it for them.

For this next step in the progress of human society, the medical and the public health professions must prepare themselves. The young men and women in medical colleges do not get preparation. They will likely learn no further than how most skilfully to perform abortion. Of the possibilities and methods of preventing conception, the students will likely continue to be kept in blissful ignorance by their professors. In fact the subject seems about as taboo in medical colleges as elsewhere. That physicians do obtain contraceptive information would seem to be a warranted conclusion which may be drawn from the small numbers of children that are customary in doctor's families. The next step is to free this information from harmful legal restrictions so that the doctor may make it freely available for his patients.

There is no panacea for Birth Control. There is no one simple, safe, infallible preventive. Those agents which under given conditions may act as contraceptives are likely to fail when the necessary conditions are not met. In other words contraceptive agents require an intelligent selection for their use and a common sense understanding of their application in order to be efficacious.

These factors are likely to prove constant. They constitute the chief reason why contraceptive agents as such are not likely ever to be advertised and sold openly as are some simple remedies; but are likely to have placed about them the same



kind of restrictions as are now placed about certain other so-called cures and preventives whose advertisement and open sale are prohibited by law because they delude the public into a safety which is not warranted. If there has not yet been discovered a safe, simple, reliable, contraceptive which may be successfully depended upon under widely varying conditions, any advertisement which conveyed such statement, and purported that such agent was efficacious for the purpose so stated would be fraud and deceit, and by creating a false sense of security would lead its victim to tragedy and misery and even to destruction.

The public must then perforce look largely to the medical and the public health profession to take the lead in the discovery and the application of contraceptive information. This is at once a big responsibility and a big opportunity which a few most courageous of both professions are trying to discharge quietly, unobtrusively and to the best of their ability—but not nearly so efficaciously as though they were permitted to do it openly. In only a few states are there laws which would prevent a physician from prescribing for his patient. But so long as the whole subject matter is under the ban of federal statutes relating to obscenity and criminal abortion, the average physician will hesitate to become associated with what may be construed as an illegal or an unclean thing.

The medical and the public health professions cannot be held wholly accountable for the condition of affairs. They are dependent on the public, not alone for the appropriation and the income for the support of their activities, but quite as much on the public for that cooperation and assistance which will make their activities effective. When the public makes it possible for the medical and the public health professions to carry out what they know so well should be done, and indeed when they *demand* that the profession do what they know how to do, the whole question will be satisfactorily in process of solution in a decade.

## CONSCIENCE AND BIRTH CONTROL

*By Adolph Myer, M. D.*

*Psychiatrist-in-Chief, Johns Hopkins Hospital*

I AM afraid my vocabulary has been taken away from me. It really is very difficult to speak on this proposition without one asking oneself, will this word really carry? Have we a right to think of scientific? Have we a right to speak of scientific? Have we a right to promise? And all that sort of thing. I am personally interested from the point of view of eugenics; and from the point of view of the happiness of those who live, we eugenists say that all of us are keenly interested in the problem of Birth Control in the sense of the development of a conscience with regard to procreation. It seems to me that as far as this conference upholds conscience with regard to procreation, there is not one intelligent being in the United States that is opposed or that would not give us his best wishes. If there is any difficulty, it must be about carrying out this program of developing and using a conscience with regard to procreation. When we come to the actual agitation, we have to admit that we take all that for granted; and we want to have one thing—I believe here again a large number of us is in accord—we want at least one thing, namely, that we shall be allowed to investigate and to discuss in perfect sincerity and with responsibility and legality, the question of how Birth Control can be attained. We have to recognize that we are dealing with individuals who are already grown up, and individuals who are growing up, moulded by inheritance, and by the circumstances of the educational environment, and that under these circumstances the ideal solutions which probably a great many of us, myself included, would favor and want to work for would not be practicable. So we physicians, when we find these distressing questions brought to us of ill health due to the blundering attempts to have Birth Control, we physicians find our greatest difficulty in that conflict of not being able to give legally and with the sanction of the good sense of the community, the

advice which we would be willing to give. We have to take our consciences as our guide, and suffer more or less perhaps in clarity of the advice, perhaps in the effectiveness of the advice owing to not being in the position where we could use our very best sense.

The greatest difficulties are two. In the first place, that it is impossible at the present time to limit the advice to where it is needed, where it is called for. In the second place it is impossible at the present time to give advice which would be fool proof. This may be a clumsy phrase, but after all it is exactly what I feel is the case.

Before coming here I happened to speak to one of my colleagues concerning the matter. He told me that today department stores are already supplying materials, not through the mails, but through possible channels, and that that arouses the suspicion that it is impossible to restrain or to restrict the advice to where it is actually needed. And where you give advice, you have to say that it depends absolutely on the carrying out of the advice, and that the unexpected may occur, and that therefore one should not put any dependence on methods of contraception where there is not at least the general existence of risk and the possibility of pregnancy.

That practically sums up what looks to me like the problem. How can we by organizing an educational scheme do as much as possible to prevent good and necessary advice from becoming something that will at once conjure up the antagonism of large numbers of people on account of fear that promiscuous use will be made of the information. I suppose that the average person will say that we have to trust human nature, that we have to face a certain amount of bungling, that by the proper kind of education we may hope to balance all these possibilities, and I frankly say that education will do more than legislation on things of this sort. To have freedom from sham legislation certainly would be a great first step towards a rational managing of the question. And to have those of us who are interested in the question under the strongest possible moral obligation to see that the constructive part is uppermost,

not the destructive part. That would be our private conscience—something that you cannot construct by legislation.

(Dr. Frederick C. Heckel's address on "Evil Results for Motherhood through Lack of Birth Control Information" is unfortunately not available for publication. It was given from brief notes, and no record was taken of it.—Editor.)

### DISCUSSION

Dr. Zion Liberman, of New York

**I**T WOULD seem from the fact that we have had so many physicians speaking—in fact, I believe that only physicians spoke this morning—it would seem that the medical profession is the one that leads the Birth Control movement. It would seem that the medical profession is in accord with this movement, and not only is it accessible to it, but it is the one that gives suggestions and will take us out, so to say, of the mire. As a matter of fact, those physicians who spoke today belong to a very small minority in the medical profession. As a whole the physicians are antagonistic to Birth Control. They are not only antagonistic, but they are ignorant of it. So much so, that a couple of years ago the Academy of Medicine of New York voted against a resolution for Birth Control, and we know that the physicians at large are very much opposed, from all sorts of point of view, to Birth Control propaganda. The real, and perhaps subconscious reason is, of course, the reason of personal interest. Birth Control makes for more health, for less disease. Birth Control makes for fewer babies, for fewer confinements, for less women's disease and babies' disease. I don't say that they are consciously from that point of view against Birth Control, but if we cannot help living in a society where profit prevails, we cannot help being on the side where our bread stays. As a matter of fact I don't believe that it is correct that we here should decide that Birth Control means should be given over to physicians, that they should deal with the means and with the spreading of it to the public, and so on, because they are not friendly to it, and from another point of view because medical science as such is not a preventive science. Physicians are taught to cure disease not to



prevent disease. As a matter of fact most of the medical profession are antagonistic even to public health work, which is preventive work, and there is no doubt a great opposition. The public health officials have always much trouble with the medical profession at large. So it is not to them that we have to appeal. We have to go to the public at large, to the people at large, and spread Birth Control propaganda among the people directly.

#### Dr. Knopf

I HAVE risen again, although I talked long enough, but I think I ought to defend the medical profession just a little bit. First of all, the gentleman is in error. It was not the Academy of Medicine who opposed or did not approve of certain Birth Control resolutions, but a County Medical Association. Secondly I protest against saying that the medical profession does not believe in prevention. I have been associated for twenty years with the National Association for the Prevention of Tuberculosis. I ask you laymen, and you ladies who are not physicians, to tell me whether the National Tuberculosis Association has prevented or not. It has reduced the mortality by more than fifty per cent. I ask you further whether the Mental Hygiene Association does not prevent disease? So I believe we are not as black as we have been painted.

#### Dr. Patrick, of Virginia

I WAS very much interested in the comments of some of these physicians. I agree fully with Dr. Knopf in all that he says with reference to the prevention of conception in tuberculosis and in syphilis. I have done in the State of Virginia what I could to educate the newly married couples, by showing them little booklets, by giving them some advice on this point. But there is one danger that I want to call your attention to, that some of us have overlooked. Your state registrar of New York in 1917 made a study of the statistics of New York state. He found that the native-born New York people have children at the rate of 17, while the immi-



grants who have come in from southern Europe, and whom we consider as undesirable, are bearing children at the rate of 90 to 91, as against 17. Let that condition continue for twenty-five, thirty, forty, fifty years from now, and where will the native American stock be. One of the speakers called attention to the fact that these people are not going to be reached by Birth Control on account of their religion. If that is the case, what are you going to do about the question of Birth Control? We don't need it amongst the native-born Americans, and as I look over this audience I don't see any that I would consider undesirable citizens. I am thoroughly in sympathy with the hygienic problem. I will go further than some of those who have spoken. I would even prevent by operative measures the propagation of some of the unfit, some of the mental defectives and some of the other kinds, and I would like to see our state adopt such a law as that. But when we come to spreading this information amongst the best class of our people, then I say, Will you please stay within the borders of New York. Don't go across the Hudson River into New York state where you have a birth rate of 17 a thousand amongst your native citizens, and for God's sake don't come into Virginia.

We have in one county in Virginia a birth rate of about 50 per thousand. Those are every one native-born Americans. There are hardly ten colored people living in that county. And those are the people which in Virginia and North Carolina and South Carolina that have produced such men as Abraham Lincoln, and Woodrow Wilson. That is the stock that will produce more men of that type, if they are only given a chance. What we want is education amongst those people whose children are being born at such a rapid rate, and they are dying because the health department has not yet been able to reach them. We cannot reach them because they are not educated. Because they don't attend the public schools; they haven't got the opportunity.

I am a member of the state health department. Dr. Flanagan wrote a letter in which he said that I was his father in state health work.

That is what I want to call your attention to. You are starting at the head, where you don't need Birth Control. They are doing it already. In one county in Virginia, in Fairfax county, we have a rate of about what they have here amongst the native New York State people. I wrote to the physicians of that county asking what the trouble was. They wrote back to me that they were not only exercising Birth Control, but were using abortion. They are holding their birth rate down, and that is the county that produces the most desirable citizens. We would like to have their birth rate increased up to 50 per thousand if we can. They are able to bear children; they are able to take care of them, and they are able to do it.

I married into a large family. My wife is one of ten, nine girls and one boy. That boy was afterwards speaker of the House of Virginia, and those nine girls are all mothers now, those that are married. Now suppose that mother had practiced Birth Control, where would those nine girls have been. I don't believe in Birth Control amongst people of that kind. But you can start down here in the slums of New York and do it.

#### Dr. Myerson

**I** WAS very much interested in the native stock argument. I thought the Indian was the only native stock. A short time ago my father and mother held their fiftieth anniversary. We are all immigrants. We came from southern Europe. Prima facie we are undesirable. Now in Cumberland, in various parts of Tennessee, in various parts of Kentucky, where there are pure Anglo-Saxons, you have a very large percentage of insanity and feeble-mindedness. In the corner of Massachusetts that borders on Connecticut—that part of Massachusetts gives us names of people who are reminiscences of the Mayflower—and I had the pleasure, doubtful, of treating people there who were feeble-minded. When I was at the Thornton Hospital, I made a study of feeble-mindedness in Cape Cod.

Now, I must object to the statement that we are giving the

advice in the wrong direction. I think he is a little bit over-exercised by the fact that Catholics are not going to exercise prevention. I made a study a little while ago of Catholics I know and they are having a typical family, American family, of one child, a dog and a parrot.

As soon as the foreign stock becomes Americanized, and that occurs in one or two generations, they learn from the rest. Take an immigrant Jew. An immigrant Jew comes of people who have six and eight children, and his descendants have two children. And despite the fact that the Roman Catholics stand against race control, the very people who protest against it in the legislature—the Irish Catholic legislators who protest against it, to prevent race control to come in as a legal measure—have a very small family themselves. I don't believe it is because of biological reasons. I am quite sure there are contraceptive measures there. As soon as the foreign stock becomes Americanized in the sense that it adopts the American culture, it adopts the American family too.

Dr. Johnson

**I** WANTED to ask Dr. Vaughan if he did not think that a raped woman was a fit subject for an abortion. There are more raped women than is supposed, because they sometimes don't make it public in order to prevent the damage to the individual's life. It seems to me that there is a case where the medical profession may very well admit it along with some of the other causes.

Dr. Vaughan

**I** THINK there are lots of cases, as I stated, where it is now justifiable to commit an abortion; such cases as advancing tuberculosis. But I still say that this society should stand firmly on the ground that abortions should never be necessary to perform. I admit there is a great deal society has to do before abortion can be done away with. That has nothing to do with my statement that it should not be necessary at all.

[Adjournment]

SESSION II.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 2:30 P. M.

MRS. M. TOSCAN BENNETT, *presiding*

THE QUESTION OF BIRTH CONTROL DISCUSSED  
FROM A PSYCHIATRIC STANDPOINT

*By Aaron J. Rosanoff, M. D.*

*Clinical Director, Kings Park State Hospital, N. Y.*

IT IS a matter of common knowledge that psychiatry has a strong practical interest in eugenics. Psychopathic heredity is the most important cause of mental disorders; and so the prevention of such disorders is largely a problem in eugenics.

As yet only a partial solution of this problem has been attained. The tendency has been to deal with it in a cautious and conservative way, in order to avoid the obvious danger of doing more harm than good. Of the measures that have been proposed—legal restriction of marriage, sterilization and segregation—only the last mentioned has been found at all widely practicable; and even it has serious drawbacks and is far from being wholly adequate.

Psychiatry is, therefore, at present in a position to welcome further suggestions.

The question which this paper is to deal with may be formulated as follows: *Assuming universal instruction in technique of Birth Control to be an established fact, what would be the effect upon the prevalence of mental disorders?*

I need hardly say here that Birth Control is not something new. It is as old as human history. But knowledge of its technique has never been equally distributed. In general it may be said that in all times persons favored by better endowment and education have had the more ready access to this knowledge. Also, in all classes of society, men have held greater power in this matter than women, partly because there has been less prudishness in male education, but more largely



because, for the male part, methods of contraception are so simple and so obvious as to be spontaneously discoverable by almost any one.

What I conceive to be new in this movement is the proposition that by universal instruction and training persons of all classes and both sexes be given the full power of Birth Control.

And so the question, as above formulated, resolves itself into two other questions, which are not so general and therefore more readily answered: (1) Under the conditions specified, would persons suffering from grave mental disorders refrain from having children to a greater extent than those who are free from such disorders? (2) Would the relatively increased prerogative of women under the new conditions result in checking or restricting propagation among psychopathic persons? These two questions require separate discussion.

(1) *Under the conditions specified, would persons suffering from grave mental disorders refrain from having children to a greater extent than those who are free from such disorders?* It is clear that, unless this question can be answered in the affirmative, Birth Control could be counted on possibly to reduce the absolute number of psychopathic persons, along with the general fall of birth rate, but not their percentage in the population.

The fact is that psychopathic persons have children, and often many children, not solely because of ignorance of contraceptive methods, but because of thoughtlessness, improvidence, inefficiency, lack of control, etc. Moreover, many of them passionately desire children, and, no matter how many they have already brought into the world, they continue to have more as long as they can, feeling in no way dissatisfied with the low standard of care which they are able to give them. All this is within the daily experience of psychiatrists.

It would seem, then, that while well balanced persons might be expected to make such use of Birth Control as to reduce their families and thus attain for themselves and their children a better ordered life of higher standards, psychopathic persons could not be expected to benefit to the same



extent. On this point we are, therefore, led to the conclusion that the percentage of psychopathic persons, instead of declining, would probably increase under conditions of general instruction in contraceptive methods.

(2) *Would the relatively increased prerogative of women under the new conditions result in checking or restricting propagation among psychopathic persons?*

The industrial and economic organization of modern society is such as to restrict greatly the freedom of play of sexual selection as a factor in race progress.

All things being equal, the respective role of the two sexes in the play of sexual selection is not the same.

Fundamentally, and aside from more or less ephemeral social compunctions, the male is concerned with scarcely more than superficial attractiveness or unattractiveness. He has, at the same time, the greater pressure of desire, so that his role becomes principally to overcome the resistances of the female.

In the role of the female, on the other hand, the most striking phenomena are resistances and discriminations; and with these there is a better natural endowment of discernment of personality beneath the surface.

In other words it is in the nature of things, that the male influence is for propagation in general, and the female for selection in propagation.

Psychiatric experience abundantly shows that while normal men often have for their mates feeble-minded women, normal women mate with feeble-minded men only by way of rare exception.

Under modern social conditions marriage and home building generally involve the economic dependence of women; and it is this that interferes with the free play of sexual selection.

It may be that the correct remedy for this situation consists in radical change of industrial, economic and social conditions. But it may also be that, by merely restoring to women, through Birth Control, their natural prerogative of

determining when and by whom they shall have children, a better selected race would result.

This seems a small crumb for psychiatry to contribute to the cause of Birth Control. But I would not have you think that I have come here to throw cold water on the proposition. Whether, from the standpoint merely of psychiatry, an advantage is to be gained through Birth Control or not, matters, after all, comparatively little: fundamental human rights are here at stake.

Personally, if I may be permitted to speak not only as a psychiatrist, but also as a man, I should say that the Birth Control movement ought to be regarded as one of many steps in our progress toward human liberation. Such questions as how it might affect industrial production, efficiency, national strength, etc., must appear to all lovers of liberty as essentially irrelevant.

If for the preservation of the existing order it is necessary to enslave women through involuntary parenthood, then there is something basically wrong with the existing order. This and every other remaining vestige of human slavery must be abolished: on this general proposition there can be no compromise.

It is a false argument which says that, if it be proved expedient to do so, involuntary parenthood shall be done away with. I say rather, if the heavens fall, it shall be done away with!

#### EUGENIC ASPECT OF BIRTH CONTROL

*By Roswell H. Johnson*

**I**T IS my task to contrast the effects on racial progress of (a) a continuation of the presents status in reference to Birth Control with the results that would follow; (b) a repeal of the present laws which purport to suppress it and a constructive effort to influence the distribution of Birth Control instead.

The present condition is one truly appalling. We have an alarmingly low birth rate from intellectually superior persons.

We have on the other hand a disproportionate contribution from the inferior.

No problem whatsoever is of more importance than the amelioration of this condition. Men of the future will have the characteristics of the super-fecund and will lack the characteristics of the sterile or sub-fecund. Our most pressing problem is to increase the birth rate from the superior and to decrease that from the inferior. The present laws attempting to suppress Birth Control utterly fail to hold up the birth rate among superiors. When we turn to the inferior, we find it one of the most important means by which their relative super-fecundity is kept up.

The evidence on this point is clear and direct. The reasons which impel the women who clamor for knowledge on Birth Control are poor health, insufficient time for proper recovery since birth of last child, and above all, financial inability to support the additional children.

We find then that economic pressure is the greatest potential force to hold down the birth rate of the relatively inefficient. Its failure to be more effective is the unbidden child. Let all children be bidden children and at once there will be a marked reduction of the children in the harassed homes.

Three elements which tend to interfere with this result are rapidly being reduced: (1) the extreme simplicity of need, such that some individuals of very low earning capacity do not feel their restriction of income. The rapid spread of communication and universalization of similar clothes and manners which replace the old local simplicities and provincialisms is making not only all nations and classes more and more alike in their spending habits, but giving them similar attitudes toward all things, including the dislike of very large families; (2) the spread of child labor laws which has gone on very rapidly and is still in progress, together with a marked simultaneous increase in the cost of rearing children are rapidly cutting down the number of families where large families "pay their way"; (3) there is a rapid increase of social capillarity progressing the world over by which parents

know their children can climb out of their own social and financial class if the child possesses the requisite quality individually. Class blocking no longer acts as much as formerly to hold down expenditure standards of the less well paid.

We can confidently predict therefore, that in countries like Holland, without the objectionable laws, we have less super-fecundity of inferiors and a lesser gap between the fecundity of various groups. Studies there paralleling those of the United States Children's Bureau, based on size of families in relation to income, are very desirable.

The advocates of Birth Control will not be satisfied with a negative step such as the removal of suppressive laws with reference to contraceptives. They wish to see that Birth Control is wisely distributed. Birth Control is not birth repression, but truly wise control—that is more births from superior and less from inferior.

When the suppressive laws are removed then our task has only begun. We must see to it that the knowledge of means of control are made class and world wide. The Aryan stock is today the most given to Birth Control and it must see that it does not suffer internationally by the relative ignorance of inferior stocks. The medical missionary should be thoroughly equipped and not hampered from spreading Birth Control because his country outlaws it.

In conclusion, the laws suppressing information and means of Birth Control should be removed because by so doing we can to some extent prevent the outbreeding of superiors by inferiors now going on.

## ORDER OF BIRTH AND THE SEX RATIO

*By C. C. Little*

*Carnegie Institution, Washington, D. C.*

**I**N ANY biological problem dealing with population, the ratio of males to females at birth is a matter of considerable interest. Many statistical investigations of this question have been made and it will not, at this time, be profitable to attempt to discuss most of them. I shall try to bring out



only three points. Data unless otherwise stated, are from the Sloane Maternity Hospital Records, and I am glad to acknowledge at this time, my indebtedness to the officers of that institution.

1. When both parents are of the same nationality the ratio of males to 100 females at birth is 104.54 plus 0.97 (6,000 individuals). When one parent is of one nationality and the other from another, the sex ratio is 122.86 plus 2.14. The difference is significant, and when thousands of cases are summed up would be economically of interest. For reference the first category may be called "pure," and the second "hybrid." It will be noted that the latter gives a higher proportion of males.

2. The above ratios result when *all* births are massed, but when first births are considered separately and are contrasted in each group with subsequent births an interesting fact is brought out.

In the "pure" matings, the sex ratio of first births is 115.5 plus 1.5 and of subsequent births is 97.3 plus 1.2. The difference is significant. In the "hybrid" matings, however, no such difference exists.

It appears that in any selected population where a higher number of one child families exists than in a normal population, a greater *excess of males* should be born than in a population where the "subsequent" children are a higher proportion of the total number. The economic application of this question is obvious.

3. The work of King with white rats shows that the sex ratio of first litters differs clearly from that of subsequent litters. The case is closely parallel to that in man and the difference is qualitatively similar to that given above.

This brings us to the all-important conclusion that experimental studies with laboratory mammals are the most rapid and economical means by which a body of evidence can be built up to provide adequate information concerning matters of the greatest interest and importance to man.

One has but to read the recent work on Population by Pearl of Johns Hopkins to see how well evidence obtained from the



fruit-fly *Drosophila* has been applied to the problems of human increase. In a similar way today we are attacking the cancer problem from a new angle that offers great opportunity. In no less a degree may we expect that investigation of the effects of Birth Control on rats, rabbits, and other laboratory mammals, might do much to determine the merits or demerits of a somewhat similar situation in man.

The biologist has come to demand this experimental method in his own problems and his support to any viewpoint or issue is more readily obtained after these methods have been critically and extensively applied to the problems under consideration.

### PROBLEM OF THE DELINQUENT WOMAN

*By Virginia C. Young*

I AM HERE this afternoon to speak for those who cannot speak for themselves. You who are gathered for this Conference are the "illuminati" of this movement; while all around you, outside these walls, lies the great world of everyday men and women who are to furnish the field for your adventure and research. But there is a strata of Society lying still lower and underneath, which has also its importance and significance to you, and of which I would speak.

The problem of the Delinquent Woman—I had almost said of Primitive Woman—Woman in the making. The great resistless, onflowing tide of advancing civilization has what might be called its beaches—our great cities—where the flotsam and jetsam of human progress heaps up highest, and where we find, swept up from the deep sea of life, two crude and significant remnants of an unfinished world,—the City Negro and the City Prostitute.

It has often been pointed out to us that the long ages of shelter and seclusion of women in the harem and the home, have bred a good half of the human race singularly unfitted for the struggle of the outside world. Many have noted and stressed the importance of the fact that too often, when women are forced out of the home, they have succumbed, and the

dove of the home-nest has become the vulture of the street. This is one of the conditions which have become lamentably noticeable in a world which seems now to have lost itself for a time, to have let go of those lofty ideals which, beautiful in themselves, yet, based on the quagmire of war, had no enduring foundation, and have been so rudely shaken.

Last summer I stood on Inspiration Point in the Yellowstone Park, with a group of tourists, who like myself were rendered for the moment dumb by the sumptuous magnificence of that titanic panorama. Some turned away, dazzled by the splendor of the scene and there was a feeling of almost childish relief when the guide pointed out, far below where we stood just high above the river-floor, and safe as Heaven itself, a rude nest filled to overflowing with ugly and squawking young ospreys, with a brooding and anxious mother and a hovering and hard-working father. *There* was something we could all understand and talk about—that little home, full of noisy busy-ness in the very midst of cosmic grandeur. So, the modern man turns from the fierce competition of the market place to the nest, far up perhaps in one of our modern cliff-dwellings which is reached, not by strong wings, but by the apartment house lift, to enter with his latch-key a little kingdom of peace and love, that inner shrine of the Woman and the Child whose worship has fed the heart-hunger of the world. For, as George Eliot has expressed it for us, "In these delicate vessels have been carried down through the Ages the treasures of men's affections."

But it is the other woman of whom I would speak today, she whose behavior and whose destiny form so large and important a part of this problem of the production of the unfit in which she bears so large and terrible a share; for her power of child-bearing is one of the ugly realities which is stronger than subterfuges or veneer, and has a disconcerting way of breaking through and demanding attention in a Conference like this.

Now it happens that I know this other woman, and some of her offspring, not from report or hearsay, but by daily

contact with her in the house where we live together, side by side. I have also had the opportunity of visiting some forty of the State Reformatories and Prisons for Women throughout the country, and have come to know in this way several hundreds of young American women of the so-called delinquent class, all of them potential mothers, many of them already mothers, and most of them so badly-born themselves that they might often be said to have been "damned into the world."

And everywhere throughout this great West of ours, sometimes on the very farms where these girls are incarcerated, I found the most interesting and successful experiments and results based upon careful scientific methods along the lines of bettering both seed and stock in both agriculture and animal-culture. Everywhere in that teeming and abundant land, one finds offered to farmers, their wives and their children, abundant opportunities for information and instruction as to the raising of better and ever better grades of pigs, pigeons and potatoes—of clover, chickens and cheeses—of butter, bulls and bacon—of Belgian hares and Labrador reindeer. On these ranches mongrels are non-existent and their presence would be considered an evidence of reprehensible carelessness. Out there men do not speak of "Cows," but of Jerseys, Guernseys or Holsteins; not of "chickens," but of Plymouth Rocks or Rhode Island Reds. In Nebraska it is against the law to introduce into the herd any but registered bulls.

Only the most important of all animals, the crown and flower of all life—only MAN is permitted to follow his own wild and wilful way in the matter of reproducing his kind. It is only the young of the human species which are bred by chance or whim, caprice or accident; which may, as it were, saunter carelessly into a world so desperately needing strong and capable hands, clear and logical brains, warm and unselfish hearts. This most-of-all-needed creature, with the supreme endowment of an immortal soul, may come into being as the result of the wedding of unhealthy, imbecile, intem-

perate and lustful men and women. Yes, we must dare to put into words these crude and ugly facts in order to fully realize how monstrous it all is.

We often hear thoughtful people raise the objection that if the prostitute women of the country were given information which would make it possible to follow their hideous career without "the fear of consequences," that there might be more girls tempted to follow this profession. It is necessary for some of us who do not know such ugly facts, to be told that the women of the street are the very first to know all there is to be known as to self-protection. And in addition might it not be urged, degrading and unwomanly as is such a career, at least a woman who deliberately chooses to befoul herself should not be allowed or encouraged to pass on the taint of soul and body to innocent children, unwanted and unfit. Of two serious evils, which is the worse—some increase in the number of existing degenerates, (and we are told that the average life of the prostitute is three years—when disease or death puts an end to her wretched career) or the passing on, for who shall say how many generations, of a heritage of weakness and disease, physical, mental and moral?

Oh the shame of it! That we who frame such drastic laws against the entrance, through our National Ports, of undesirable aliens, must yet bear the heavy burden of this continuous and polluted stream, through what Whitman called "the delicate, beautiful gates of life," of the badly born, crowding out, as they most surely do, the better babies which this world so sorely needs. For let me remind you that it is just now the great and vitally important middle-class who are feeling most the economic pressure of the times, and these are they who most need guidance and help as to their part in re-making a world with "not more of us, but a better brand of us."

We are here, surely, to face facts frankly; and we who are guiding the younger ones in what has been described as "both the science and the art of living," must realize that marriage at the mating age is the only safe and normal way for young



Americans; that it is equally, if only too sadly true, that the average young man cannot support a too rapidly increasing family.

In our American history we have exalted the large family—and rightly, but the large family of which we think, the good old vanishing stocks which furnished the makers of this nation—those sternly-reared but fortunate children—were raised in New England farmhouses, or in small conservative towns in which their parents played a leading part in State House and Church and on School-boards and Town Meetings. Those were the days of plenty of good food, of simple wants, and simple living. Who can visualize such a family group transferred to the twentieth floor of a modern flat-house, and gathering around a steam radiator or even saying its prayers beside a folding-bed, already occupied by younger brothers and sisters? What mother of ten or twelve children in a crowded tenement has time for those gentle ministrations which are the very essence of real Mothering? What modern, hard-pressed father can think of supplying any but the bare physical needs of his brood? What time has either parent to consider the insistent needs of adolescent girls and boys, who find their only mental and spiritual food in the hectic and often unclean movies.

Mr. H. G. Wells was aroused to the point of out-spoken indignation by a caption in an English paper,—“Should Bank Clerks Marry?” “How do we dare,” said he, “to calmly discuss, to weigh and measure the perfectly natural inclinations and behavior of a perfectly normal and natural section of the world in which we live. What have we come to when we say to these young people, ‘not you, but we must decide this.’” But read the article yourselves, dear audience, and ask yourselves whether we are not making marriage practically impossible for many young lovers of our modern world.

I was reminded recently that William James once said that what the world needs most is “a moral equivalent for war”; something equally compelling, equally appealing, demanding equal sacrifices and self-forgetfulness, with banners and ori-



flammas and leaders, with the same sort of appeal to the highest and noblest in men and women,—but with an End in view which shall be not Death but Life—not the extinction of our best and bravest, but a fostering of all that is beautiful and worthy and precious for the strengthening and enriching and glorifying of human life.

James felt that it must be our own United States which must present this program. May we not feel that this Conference proves that it must be rather a joining of the two groups from both sides of the Atlantic, which must unite for this modern Crusade? For this is surely the driving of the silver spike which marks the coming together of the two gangs of workers from England and America who are met here for the simple yet impressive gestures of sympathetic understanding and co-operation.

And I would most humbly leave to the specialists whose labors are a most noble kind of consecration, the difficult and important task of meeting and solving the great question of populations which is one of the real questions of the hour among the many which must be solved by those who are seeking the causes and the cure of war and economic disturbance.

It is for the distinctly spiritual values underlying this movement that I would plead. It is not primarily for the emancipation of woman from the age-long bondage of an undirected mothering of mongrels; it is not even the goal of a race of splendid athletes and Amazons that interests me most. But it is the hope which I find in this movement of the possibility of the gradual coming into being of a race loving beauty and the finer things of life, and demanding and claiming them. The coming of a time which John Galsworthy has pictured in his "Green Hill Far Away," a time when the majority of Mankind shall choose beauty rather than ugliness, the riches of the spirit rather than the piled-up horde in the bank-vault; when men and women shall love each other not less, but more; when they shall be unafraid of love because nobly sure of a life together thought out with wise and tender wisdom for the bearing and rearing of only wanted and planned-for chil-

dren; when Celibacy shall be no longer exalted and laid as the supreme gift on our churches altars, but when the Fine Art of Parenthood shall be laid there instead and every child shall be, like the Child Samuel, an offering unto the Lord; when every child shall come through those noble gates of life bearing in his hand rich gifts for Life itself.

Does this offer a Moral Equivalent for War? Let the Unborn speak,—

“From the Unseen I come to you tonight,  
 The hope and expectation of your world.  
 I am Omniscience that seeks of you  
 A tongue to utter the eternal thought.  
 I am Omnipotence that claims of you  
 The tools whereby my power may profit Earth.  
 All Love am I, that seeks to spend itself  
 Embodied in a human sacrament.

What welcome will you give to me, O World?  
 What is the home you have prepared for me?  
 O man and woman who have fashioned it  
 Together, is it fine and clean and strong?  
 Made in such reverence of holy joy,  
 Of such unsullied substance, that your hearts  
 Leap with glad awe to see it clothing me?

Thus will I call till all mankind shall heed  
 And know me, who today am one with God  
 And whom tomorrow shall behold, your Child.”

## BIRTH CONTROL AND RURAL SOCIAL PROGRESS

*By E. C. Lindeman*

*Professor of Sociology, North Carolina College for Women;  
 Field Secretary, American Country Life Association*

**I**F I were asked to propose a statesmanlike, scientific, and condensed program for alleviating the present tendencies toward decay in modern civilization, I should include in my recommendation:

1. The cancellation of all war debts on the basis of immediate and complete disarmament.
2. The democratic organization of all nations of the world for the purpose of cooperative, unified progress—and for the purpose of providing a rational method of discussing and solving international disputes.
3. The rapid dissemination of scientific knowledge regarding the limitation and the improvement of the human population of the world.

The first recommendation involves the removal of financial burdens which are destined to keep certain nations on the border of disintegration until these burdens can be lifted. It involves also the establishment of immediate international peace by destroying the tools of war. It would restore financial equilibrium, reduce taxes, and secure temporary peace.

The second recommendation involves the continuation of both international and economic peace by granting equal rights to all nations. Its purpose is to project the temporary peace until it becomes a permanent peace.

The third recommendation deals with the problems of discrepancy between the goods (land, food, et cetera) available to the people of any given time and the consumptive needs of those people. Over-population may or may not be one of the primary causes of war, but it is undoubtedly very frequently the cause of serious economic disturbances which lead to war. This recommendation contains, however, other far-reaching implications of a physiological, sociological and ethical nature. To exercise conscious control over the number of people brought into existence implies that man is not subject to the inexorable forces of natural selection and survival in the same degree as are animals. It implies further that man may become interested in the quality as well as the quantity of his biological projection.

I have come to be sufficiently disillusioned during the past decade to recognize the fact that the first two recommendations will not be acted upon in a statesmanlike and scientific manner until our civilization is nearer decay than it is at present; it

may then, of course, be too late to apply these remedies. But, I am hopeful of the success of the third suggestion because its propagation need not await the slow conversion of professional politicians; the dissemination of scientific knowledge regarding Birth Control awaits only the courageous words of honest, superstition-freed, and intelligent persons.

If I were asked further to state which portion of the world's present population needed the advantages of the third suggestion, I should unhesitatingly answer in terms of those who live in the open country, villages, and small towns. My reasons for this assertion, it is hoped, will hereinafter be made plain.

### *Some Rural Facts and Their Significance*

#### I.

The theme of this essay is the relationship between Birth Control and rural social progress. It will be necessary to review certain facts regarding the rural aspects of the modern world before assuming to state conclusions.

In spite of the unprecedented growth and development of cities during the last seventy-five years, there are still more people living in the country than in the city. What is of greater importance is the fact that those who now live in cities are increasingly dependent upon those who live in the rural areas. As the proportionate rural population decreases, so will the acuteness of the rural problem increase. A brief analysis of the populations of a few representative nations should convince us of the significance of our rural dwellers:

The population of Russia is 80 per cent rural.

The population of India is 90 per cent rural.

The population of China is 90 per cent rural.

The population of France is 50 per cent rural.

The population of England is 22 per cent rural.

The above may be taken as a representation of the present population of Europe and Asia. The North American continent is, as a whole, still dominated by its rural group; while the United States is gradually becoming an industrialized or urbanized nation, more than one-third of its people still reside



outside cities. The total population of the world is undoubtedly divided approximately on the basis of 75 per cent rural and 25 per cent urban. If Birth Control is ever to become a part of the consciously-contrived statesmanship of the world, its message will, perforce, need to be brought to the rural populations.

## II.

The significance of the rural population is further increased by a consideration of the birth-rate. Statistical evidence need not be assimilated to support what is common knowledge, namely, that the size of rural families is greater than that of the city families. The families of the working classes in cities tend to decrease slowly; the families of the middle classes (commercial and professional) and the so-called upper classes tend to decrease rapidly. It is one of the features of city life to bring into being a constantly increasing middle class forced to subsist upon an income which is, within narrow limits, fixed. This class *cannot* produce large families. The so-called upper classes have already reduced the size of their families, not according to financial inhibitions, but in accordance with selfish motives. The food supply of the farm is more flexible than that of the middle classes in cities; consequently, the farmer is not obliged to limit the size of his family by reason of economic pressure.

A few years ago, when the population of this country was divided in such manner as to place 60 per cent of the total in cities and 40 per cent in the country, the school census indicated that these figures would need exact inversion in order to depict the respective child populations. In other words, while the city contained 60 per cent of the total population, the country contained 60 per cent of the school population, and the cities only 40 per cent.

Cities grow by accretions from three sources. Roughly speaking, 2 per cent of the city's increase comes through immigration from foreign lands. (In analyzing the size of city families, one must take into consideration that the families of immigrants are likely to be largely rural; at any rate, the first

and second generations are likely to maintain a larger sized family ratio than will be true of the succeeding generations. This fact tends to make the size of the city family appear larger than its norm should be). Nineteen per cent of the increase represents the natural increase of births over deaths. From 10 to 15 per cent of the city's growth can be accounted for only on the grounds that it is drawn from the surrounding rural areas. This means that the country must not only maintain a sufficient supply of births for the repopulation of its own areas, but it must, in addition, furnish one-half of the city's increase. Some observers have concluded that the city receives its rural quotas only during unusual periods of industrial advancement. A longer view of the problem seems to indicate that this phenomenon has always existed, namely, that cities tend to decrease the size of the family and that rural areas make up the deficiency.

All of the above means that the majority of the children of the nation are born in rural communities and probably will continue to be thus born for some time to come. It means further that if Birth Control is to be one of the means of providing children with a better birth, a better childhood environment, and better parents, its mission will need to extend to the rural areas where most of the children are brought into existence.

### III.

The third series of facts regarding rural life which needs emphasis has to do with the problems of health. The country doctor, of poetic fame and heroic proportions, is a rapidly disappearing entity. In towns of over 2,500 population, there is one doctor for every 500 people; in rural areas there is one doctor for approximately each 1,000 people. In some places it has been found necessary and expedient to subsidize the country doctor through private or public funds.

The rural nurse, who is the health propagandist of the countryside, is coming to fill the gap left by the vanishing doctor. Of the 10,000 public health nurses in the United States, about four-fifths are located in cities. The remainder must spread

their services to meet the needs of 40,000,000 people who live in the country. But, the public health nurse is not a physician.

Under conditions of modern life, child-birth is a physiological function which demands scientific interpretation. The modern social structure is so tensely inter-related that we can no longer allow children to be born in ignorance. This is not because we are driven to assume a higher regard for the new-born child itself, but because that child's birth affects other lives in a most intimate manner. The mid-wife of the countryside, the superstitions, and the quackery related to child-birth, must be supplanted by plain facts and simple truths. The city mother has the privileges of medical attention and advice which may be secured quickly. Leaving out of consideration the distance and time element, the city mother may have a physician at her home with one-half of the difficulty encountered by the country mother. She has about seven to the country woman's one likelihood of having the services of a nurse, and the possibilities of the country woman's hospital care are far less favorable.

The country mother, under existing circumstances, is obliged to bear the burden of bringing forth the largest number of children; she has to perform this function under handicaps which render her opportunities of success far less than those of city mothers.

#### IV.

As the division of labor in economic production increases, so will the opportunities of the working classes to lift themselves out of their classes diminish. Most of our present leaders have either a first or a second generation rural background. They succeed in the struggle towards what we call success, not because the country has provided them with a better education, but rather because there is a certain kind of education in farm life, itself, which produces hardihood, skill in meeting emergencies, persistence and other qualities which enable them to survive. The country boy who succeeds in the city is a subject of romance. If we were more realistic, the country boys and girls who fail in our cities would constitute

a basis for tragedy. But, we adhere to romanticism; it is pleasanter to think of those who rise from farm boys to bank presidents. The plain truth of the matter is that children born in the country are not securing the sort of education essential to progressive living in the modern world. Of the 22,000,000 children attending our public schools in the United States, 11,000,000 are enrolled in one-teacher schools. Eight millions more attend two and three-room schools in rural communities, towns and villages. In 1912 the cost of educating a city child was \$32.00, while the amount spent on the education of the country child was \$13.00. The shorter term and the poor school attendance cause the country child to receive six years of elementary training while the city child receives eight. The health of country school children is unwarrantedly inferior to that of city children. Recent examinations have revealed whole school enrollments with physical defects. The country teachers have inferior preparation, receive lower salaries, and remain at their posts from one to two years. The sum of all of these educational defects means simply that the country child has a far smaller opportunity of securing an education than has the city child. We ought not to be unduly shocked when we learn, consequently, that illiteracy is twice as great in rural areas as in urban areas.

Rural education is improving, but the rate of progress is too slow in comparison with other social changes. It is not enough to lay the blame at the feet of the farmer-taxpayer. The farmer's income from his labor is extremely low. When the interest on his investment and the products consumed by his family are deducted, the average labor income of the farmers of the United States is less than \$1,000.00 per year. (Exceptions must be made, of course, for unusual periods such as the War years of 1915-17.)

All serious students of the country life problem are aware of the fact that the country needs quality in its population rather than quantity. The application of machines to farm labor may still be greatly extended; it may be possible to maintain production at a sufficient level with a reduced popula-



tion. But, it will not be possible to produce a rural population, with those qualities and native capacities which make the country the seed-bed of our population, unless the people who are born in the country and remain there as farm folks ascend the scale of human improvement. The answer seems plain enough: a reduced birth-rate accompanied by the other factors of social improvement should make it possible for the farmer to accelerate his speed of progress—at least in the field of formal education.

The foregoing paragraphs merely hint at the significance of certain aspects of rural social progress and the relationship of these to rationalized parenthood. Rural social progress, like all progress, cannot be measured by the length of the graph representing any one phase of life. Social progress implies a progressive movement "all along the line." Different emphases must, of course, be made at various times. It is my opinion that the emphasis which needs now to be made is that which impinges upon the life of the country woman. Either life in the country is to be made more than tolerable for her—lift her into the sphere of cultural, political, recreational significance—or farming will need to be industrialized and what we now know as "country life" will become a thing of the past. No one who appreciates the revolution which is now taking place in the intellectual life of women on the farms can escape the above conclusion.

The minimum requisite for the new role which woman is to play in country life is that she shall be freed from the unnecessary burdens of irrational childbearing, and that her sex life shall be so ordered and interpreted as to give assurance of the reproduction of the right number of children reared in the atmosphere of wholesome and optimistic progress. The old fears, the old prejudices, the old hypocrisies, and the untold mental and physical sufferings of the long-patient country mothers are abnormal and unethical and must pass away. The pathway toward this deliverance is at hand. A new joy and a new hope and a new promise will spread its light over the countryside when the shrouds of superstition, mysticism, and

bigotry are lifted and the child-bearing of the country woman becomes what it ought to be—a rational, scientific, orderly, and frank facing of one of the beautiful realities of life.

### THE GREATER FREEDOM BY BIRTH CONTROL

*By Harriette M. Dilla*

*Smith College, Northampton, Mass.*

**T**HERE have been so many excellent papers presented at this Conference, that it seems there is little left for anyone to say, especially from the Sociological point of view because Sociology is, as you know, a composite of other sciences, though it can scarce be called a science, itself.

There are two preliminary postulates which we shall wish to remember, and make clear in the minds of others. In the first place, it is a fact that no movement by itself is self-sufficient, and as members of the movement for Birth Control I am sure that we do not claim that it alone is adequate to the tremendous needs of society. We must be largely dependent upon, and certainly co-operate with, all the splendid agencies that are working at present.

The advocates of Birth Control are deeply indebted to many agencies for their sources of information and their arguments. Their foundations are facts that have already been presented. It remains only to point out the relationships so tardily discovered.

Among the most valuable sources are the United States Census; the publications of the United States Children's Bureau, especially the Studies of Infant Mortality in Johnstown, Pa., Manchester, N. H., Waterbury, Conn., Brockton, Mass., Saginaw, Mich., New Bedford, Mass., and Akron, Ohio; the Studies of Infant and Maternal Mortality in Rural States; the Study of Maternal Mortality in the United States by Dr. Grace L. Meigs; and the Statistical Report of Infant Mortality for 1920 in 519 cities of the United States published by the American Child Hygiene Association, formerly the American Association for the Study and Prevention of Infant Mortality. Of special

value are the data presented at the hearing before the Committee on Public Health and National Quarantine, United States Senate, 2nd Session, 66th Congress, 1920, on Senate Bill 3259, for the Protection of Maternity and Infancy. The evidence of Dr. Anna E. Rude is extremely valuable.

First among the sources is the recent volume of Mortality Statistics of the Census Bureau, which shows the extent of Infant Mortality by causes, based upon the international detailed disease list. The arrangement in five columns follows the plan of the United States Children's Bureau in its presentation of causes of Infant Mortality. Some of these facts have been pictured by a series of charts. You will be impressed with the fact that the first column,—the tallest column in every one of the twelve large cities but Chicago,—represents the groups of natal and prenatal causes. Does this mean that there are pathological conditions among mothers before conception, as well as before birth, which are producing death? If so, how can a woman, in the state of marriage, who possesses these defects, postpone motherhood until these fatal conditions are overcome?

Is a Maternity Clinic with its excellent prenatal advice adequate when it prescribes for a woman after pregnancy is entered upon? Or is it true that pregnancy ought to be deferred until the condition is favorable for maternity?

A recent statement by a notable authority throws some light upon this question. Mr. Louis I. Dublin of the Metropolitan Life Insurance writes as follows in an article in the Statistical Bulletin for July 1921:

“The city of New York, for example, gives 85 infant deaths for 1,000 births in 1920, as compared with 81 in 1919. These are discouraging facts, because in this city serious efforts have been made for a number of years to cut the infant mortality rate through extensive prenatal care of mothers.”

The dilemma is presented clearly here. Does it seem that prenatal care must be supplemented by something even more fundamental? Something that will discern and take

cognizance of the pathological condition of the mother before pregnancy is entered upon?

The long-neglected subjects of Infant and Maternal mortality furnish the most compelling evidence of social wastage under our present limitations. But there are other channels of social wastage,—child dependency and delinquency.

How many dependent children are there in your state and why are they dependent? So far as the State of New York is concerned, the Secretary of the Children's Division of the State Board of Charities tells us in his last report that there are a large number who have one or both parents living. Then why are they dependent? He enumerates these among the conditions prevailing : (1) father or mother, or both, at work, or seeking employment; (2) insufficient earnings; (3) unemployment; (4) large family.

With these facts in mind do you feel that there is any relationship between the dependency of large numbers of children with one or both parents living, and the power of voluntary parenthood?

How many delinquent children are there in your state, who have passed through the courts and have left the records of their misfortune? One chart in the recent Exhibit of the International Congress of Eugenics showed that almost half of the children brought before the psychopathic clinics of five of our leading juvenile courts had an unbroken home environment. Then why are they delinquent? Researches in juvenile delinquency answer this question by pointing out the demoralization of home conditions through poverty and the tragic results of poverty. And still is it not true that families which are incapable of rearing children are permitted to continue to bear them. Society denies to them the greatest power of all,—that of self-help,—and later society pays the price.

Therefore the Birth Control Movement is not inharmonious, but entirely compatible with the eugenic measures of sterilization and permanent custodial care of the mental defective and congenital criminal. At times I find a tendency to confound Birth Control with sterilization and custodial care.



Birth Control is a measure requiring intelligent understanding of reproduction by the responsible classes in society. The reproduction of the irresponsible classes must be regulated by society, itself, and among the methods that have been favored are sterilization and permanent custodial care.

In the second place, when a new problem is presented to us, it must be considered from an entirely unprejudiced point of view. It is a great injustice to ourselves, I think to impose upon our reason the limitation of prejudice. We are not going to do it nor encourage it upon the part of others. We have then two preliminary postulates, first there is need for co-operation with every present agency doing genuine work in society; and second, each new movement deserves fair consideration by a free mind. We know that fear and scientific freedom are incompatible.

A discussion of Birth Control from the Sociological point of view would be incomplete if its relation to Eugenics were not emphasized. For the sake of brevity and clarity, may we observe the somewhat dogmatic division into Positive and Negative Eugenics?

Under Positive Eugenics, we shall consider racially fit individuals, with high standards of life, high valuation of family relationships, and an appreciation of the economic obstacles to realizing them.

1. Have we ascertained the proportion of such individuals who remain celibate because economic conditions do not justify assumption of family responsibilities based upon an uncontrolled parenthood? Theirs apparently is the choice between celibacy and a parenthood which they are not permitted to control. Amidst economic stress and uncertainty they choose the former, and can we censure them?

2. If there are such, would the power of self-determined parenthood help to remove the barrier to marriage and eventual parenthood? If individuals of this class were permitted to exercise their judgment in this, as in infinitely lesser realms, would a considerable number be happy to assume parenthood?

3. If so, would this fact tend to increase the number of

family units among the racially desirable, and bring greater numbers within the sphere of potential parenthood?

4. If so, does it seem that the power of control of parenthood is of interest to Eugenists as one promising possible solution of this problem?

Under Negative Eugenics we shall include, among the racially less desirable, only those who possess sufficient intellect and control to render them responsible individuals. The irresponsible, it is obvious, must be excluded from our consideration, and their reproduction subjected to social control.

Is it not true that Eugenists have hoped to preclude disgenic parenthood by directing their interdict against marriage? Have they not, in this way, identified parenthood with marriage, and attempted to prevent the former by enjoining the latter? I refer to the racial conscience which they hope to build up among responsible individuals. Now we may ask ourselves this question:

What proportion of the racially disgenic individuals conform to this racial standard, and what are the results of conformity and non-conformity?

First, there are those who conform and do not enter upon marriage. The men of this group decide to live celibate, and it is only fair to them to suppose that they intend to live continent. But they find the world as lonely as it is populous, and as many disappointments as there are expectations. The monotony of gray life in drab furnished rooms becomes unbearable. Stress of effort, strain of disappointment and resistance to the great drive in human nature are sometimes too much, and the hope to live continent fails of realization.

If this is true, does it seem that a possible aftermath of conformity to our standard may be promiscuity of sex-relationship? And may this be true also of the unmarried class whom we considered under positive Eugenics? Can race and promiscuity profit at the same time, especially that factor of promiscuity which we term prostitution?

And if we pass to the further problem of illegitimacy, re-

sulting from promiscuity, shall we be compelled to confess that at times we suffer additional defeat? Parenthood through marriage was discouraged, and to some extent—we do not know how great the extent—parenthood independent of marriage has arisen to defeat what looked at first like victory. And to the disaster of disgenic heredity, which we sought to prevent, is added the tragedy of illegitimacy.

Second, there are those who enter upon marriage, notwithstanding our hope that racial conscience would prevail. The disgenic factor may be tuberculosis, psychopathic or neuropathic instability, some higher and less obvious form of mental deficiency, venereal infection, or one of many other unfortunate defects. How can this family be prevented from becoming a racial menace?

(1) Shall it be dissolved? Perhaps it is a union founded upon rare fineness of interest, where there is present every element for the better association of two responsible individuals. Society would hesitate, indeed, to disrupt such a family, and is it not possible that society would have much to lose by such disruption?

(2) Shall absolute continence be imposed, if so, how and with what results?

(3) Shall parenthood be risked by chance that amounts to negative compulsion or

(4) Shall there be made possible to the members of this union immunity from disgenic parenthood, through control of conception by information which we know exists today?

These are the phases of the problem of Birth Control as it relates to the individual family. How overwhelming the problem in the field of social relationships at large! From the well-known Studies of the Children's Bureau, the Report and Evidence of the National Birth-rate Commission of Great Britain, the statistical publications of organizations conversant with nation and state-wide problems of social pathology, and the case records of countless social service agencies, we see something of the panorama of tragedy in society at large.

Is it true we have defective children doomed to defect from

the moment of conception? Dependent and delinquent children and adults strongly predisposed to pathologic careers, not by environment alone, but by congenital defect, effective both by heredity and other channels of transmission? Children conceived of parents suffering from tuberculosis, psychopathic and neuropathic instability or venereal infection, when we are more certain than uncertain that these defects, or that predisposition to them is transmissible in many cases? Is it not true that children continue to be born against the judgment and will of parents, to augment the problem of relief and to increase the number of persons already destined to the humiliation of dependency upon others? And is it not true that many of these children will pay for their intrusion the penalty of early labor?

Is it true that women, many times mothers in the midst of squalor, are seeking the knowledge by which they may cease to burden themselves and society and impair the race? That these mothers upon being refused this knowledge by those professions to whom they look for advice in other vital matters, resort to such modes of self-help as only frenzied minds can conjure up? Is it true that entire neighborhoods of mothers succumb to horrible remedy because prevention is denied them? And all this in an age of the glorification of motherhood, and the existence,—we may be permitted to assume,—of knowledge sufficiently ethical, æsthetic and physically non-injurious to receive the approval of the most exacting classes of our society today!

Can it be that the menace of extending information is greater than the menace of withholding it? Is it physically possible that the danger from abuse of knowledge can exceed the danger from abuse of ignorance?

Are these not the conditions among enlightened peoples after race-long attempts at relief and decades of modern preventive effort for social welfare? Excellent, searching and systematic as our social work has become, does it sometimes seem to us (especially those among us who are in the midst of it), that our progress lies not so much in the solution of



our problems, as in the elaboration of more magnificent machinery for their perpetuation upon an ever-increasing scale? And still is it not true that the human nature with which we deal today with such imperfect understanding is essentially the same that it has always been, for after all, has it not remained remarkably unchanging?

*Where lies the inadequacy, if not failure, of our past effort? Is it possible that we have omitted from our plan of action some vitally important factor of solution? If we seem to possess too much reason to be purely instinctive, and too much instinct to be purely rational, can we not harmonize these endowments, and do so openly, honestly and healthfully. Have we made available to mankind every power at his command for self-rehabilitation? Is it possible that the power to regulate parenthood by control of conception is one great resource upon which we have not yet drawn in our general programs for social welfare?*

“What is the social and racial value of Birth Control?” We ask this question in a scientific and impartial spirit. To whom may we turn for a scientific and impartial answer?

First, shall we turn to the profession of Medicine? Or is it true that by force of circumstances this has become an eminently conservative body? Perhaps this is due to the suppression which it has experienced from the days of the seventeenth century, when it was compelled to conform to the censorship of church and state. And just as it accepted three centuries ago the limitations imposed upon it by the dogma of a distorted Aristotle, does it not consent today, with remarkable loyalty, to the legal restrictions initiated by a somewhat less notable authority, who did not have the distinction of possessing all the knowledge of his time? When our federal and state laws confer upon the Medical Profession the necessary freedom to develop the vital subjects of sex science and obstetrical practice, may we not confidently trust it to measure up to the excellent progress it has made in other fields where it has been free from legal limitations?

Second, shall we turn to the profession of Social Service?

Or is it also by force of circumstances an unfree body? Is it true that public charities are sometimes dominated directly by partisan motives and considerations of tenure that render scientific initiative hazardous and unwelcome? And ultimately, by an electorate whose chief recommendation is not its social wisdom? And is it also true that private charities depend for their very life upon approval of subscribers, and that all plans of action must proceed with utmost circumspection?

Does it seem, then, that the two great professions most intimately serving human nature are among the most unfree in helping it to answer a fundamental question? And does it seem that, in comparison with these professions science is relatively free from the barriers of tradition and the menace of partisan and personal prejudice? And with this rare freedom, what more magnificent work lies before you of scientific training and interests for scientific development and impartial conclusion?

If there are any among us who discover in ourselves, from any motive whatever, a cringing timid circumspection which commends itself to us by any name of less contempt, let us eradicate it at once, or cease to impede and discredit the work of scientific endeavor. Fear and the scientific spirit cannot exist together. Servility and honor are incompatible.

May I close with the entreaty that we may all consider it our responsibility and privilege to carry forward as rapidly as possible such researches as may enlighten present thought upon this burning present problem; if the spirit of the race could speak as the spirit of many an individual has spoken, would it ask for charity, or would it ask for justice?

### THE POPULATION QUESTION AS ILLUSTRATED BY ASIA

*By J. O. P. Bland*

**I** MUST ask your indulgence for not having prepared a paper such as those to which you have listened. I must ask you to excuse me for not having done so, on the ground

that I am only here a few days and am leaving for England tomorrow, and such few remarks as I can put before you are necessarily brief and not at all closely reasoned.

The whole question of Birth Control, it seems to me, and looking at this meeting today I am more convinced, is the great question of the immediate future. I think in ten years time it is absolutely certain that a great many of the economists and the religious bodies of the world will realize that the only means to prevent poverty and prostitution and crime and war, is by the conscientious application of collective wisdom and intelligence of human beings to make their population in some way consistent with the food supply of their country. I look forward and see a tree of human wisdom whose fruit shall make for the peace of the world and the happiness of mankind.

At the same time, I think it is quite obvious that we have to pierce the darkness in high places. I remember a few years ago the Bishop of London deplored the declining birth rate of Great Britain, and wished for the glorious fertility of the East. Last night I received a statement from a friend in London, which contains a curious fact in connection with the remark of the Bishop of London, and that is, that the lowest birth rate in Great Britain today is: first, of the school teacher; second, of the doctor; and third, of the non-conformist and other religious clergymen.

I think it is a matter for very serious consideration. It is, I think, a very serious thing for us to consider, how it comes about that those views can be expressed today; and another thing, that a Conference such as meets in Washington today can ignore the fundamental fact, the war's cause.

How are we going to explain this curious fact, which for instance they explain in a manner which does not explain in England. They assume there is a blind spot. How is it that the human intelligence which has dominated its environment so splendidly in other directions, cannot master this? I believe that collective intelligence will rise superior to this and I regard this meeting as a proof of it.

But to return to "the glorious fertility" of the East. It has been my lot to live for thirty years where I saw it working out. When as a young man I first went to the city of Canton, I used to row around on the river, and I saw the fertility of the east floating around near me in the shape of little corpses. The social system which produced that has also produced a very splendid civilization which is China today. It is China which today offers you a spectacle of a race which has solved the problem of population. It is solved by the doctrine or creed of passive resistance. The Chinese tell us when they have reared a population which they cannot feed, they do not look over their frontiers and see where they can seize on the means of supporting themselves. They have accepted the destinies of man and they recognize that suffering is the lot of every human being. And therefore the Chinese decrease in population has been through disease and famine and internal strife. Look over the history of the great people of China. Take the history of the last thousand years, and one fact stands out. The population reaches to about 350 to 400 millions. When it reaches that point, invariably there occurs one of those three things which check the population. Either there is internal strife, or a famine breaks out which kills millions of them, or lastly there is disease. The religion of the Chinese makes it incumbent upon the Chinese to marry young and leave behind him as many little descendants as possible. It is his duty and he fulfills it to the utmost. There are four generations born in China while three are born in Europe. You get conditions such as Europe has not dreamed of and such as America cannot imagine. Such conditions produce a terrible death rate. There are no vital statistics in China, but in Hong Kong we have kept them. We know the death rate varies with the harvest and disease. It is 70 to 80 per thousand.

I will ask you to consider another fact. We Christians are pleased to regard ourselves in our material and industrial civilization as the last word in progress, and we send missionaries to this country, and among the duties of these



missionaries is the highly meritorious work of the medical missionary. But it has always been inconceivable to me that those missionaries can go to China to relieve suffering and leave untouched the fundamental cause of the suffering.

Three years ago there was a mission sent out from the United States, which spent, I think, a million and a half dollars, and they went to China and proclaimed, in the papers of this country and over there, their intention of their so decreasing the mortality that they would in a few years increase the population by over a million. It seems to me that if we inspect the fact that the social system of the Chinese has lasted for so long, has produced such excellent results, a superior economic man, and a kind, gentle philosopher, we have got to see that we do nothing to upset that culture, and we should only try to remove those causes of misery which are so obvious to us and a disgrace to human intelligence. That our missionaries should go to China and relieve suffering is splendid, but at the same time it should be brought home to the Chinese not to bring into this world a child who is foredoomed to misery. We know the main facts about China. We know that people suffer patiently. We pay instinctive reverence to what has been brought about by suffering. It is a great problem, we know, seeing Nature fulfilling itself through the many centuries in this way, and suffering and producing a nation like the Chinese, it is a problem whether we have the right to interfere with Nature. But I think that those of us who look forward with hope and belief in the future of the human race are not prepared to accept it, and even advise our older brother to change his habits and even change his ancient beliefs in a matter that affects the whole of humanity.

#### DISCUSSION

MRS. DONALD R. HOOKER in the chair

MR. MERCHANT (of New York): I was impressed with what Dr. Johnson said. I was not here this morning, but seven years ago I became a foreman in a candy box factory. Before that

time I had believed that nearly everybody was equal, or people were practically all equal. I don't believe that all men or all women are created free and equal, and in that factory that was impressed on me very forcibly. Thousands and thousands of men and women are employed there. They have three crews, you might say—one coming, and one working and one going. Of those people I don't believe that there is one person in a thousand that is really fit. We speak about being mentally fit. What is worse with the working class, or I might say, with the lower class, or I expect even with the upper class, what is worse is that people are not physically fit. They have not a physical education. The working class not only have not a mental education, they have not a physical education, and I don't believe it is possible to give them a physical education, not to speak of mental education. I believe that a physical education is more essential than a mental education.

I watch children in the street and I see there is a potentiality for something great in the child, in the little fellow, but by the time the child is fifteen years old, he has lost nearly all of his essential usefulness. Why is it? I don't know. I think that it is natural for him to lose it. I believe most of mankind are naturally unfit, and under the best of circumstances cannot rise even though they have the best environment. I don't believe they can possibly rise, and in our population it is the lowest people, the people that are the least fit, that are giving us our great flood of humanity, and the people who are really fit in the world are those that are having no children. And if you are interested in mankind—I have been so depressed myself that I am no longer interested in mankind. I am interested more in myself, because I feel that humanity is lost, utterly lost. The most of mankind are not good even for slaves. It is a terrible thing to think of men and women, but with all that I believe in Birth Control, and I believe the chairman said that she believed in making it scientific and respectable and forcible. Well, I believe in the last, making it forcible. I don't care whether it is scientific or respectable.

DR. SACHS: I believe such discussion should be taking place

at local meetings. When we come here big subjects should be talked about. The previous speaker said something about intelligence and the country children, and the intelligence of the city children. He said the country children are far inferior to the city children. I have a little family of my own, and we discuss the political situation and the vote, and they said "You take a boy in the country, he knows all about the country." I said "Your boys come back from work, what are they talking about? There is a fight there, or in the summer they talk about baseball and so on." Absolutely no sense to that. No brain matter. Now of course you take the children in the country. The country children have more time to study. Probably it is the trend of modern education. The boys meet and the street corner and discuss sports and so on. It is not the fault of education. It is the fault of the system of education. I believe myself that the country boys are smarter, and they take their country's welfare more to heart than the city boys.

DR. KONIKOW: Speaking about the fit and unfit, I was quite surprised to hear that because a man is working in the ditches he is not fit. I think the question of success in our capitalistic world, whether a man or a woman makes a success, does not prove that he or she is particularly fit from the sense of the ideal. For conditions are such that not always the fit succeeds.

I want to point out that I am here representing people that are usually considered to be not fit, that is, some of the people of the working class. It is the Mother's League of Boston that sent me here, and the members of that League are women of the working class and of the Boston west end—the Boston west end is the east side. These women are very deeply interested in Birth Control, and I would like to confess that if they would listen to the speeches of today they probably would have objected for the simple reason they would say it is old stuff, we know it all. All these things have been said to us so many times over and over again. We don't need any proofs that Birth Control is needed. We women of the working class have heard it again and again. Don't come to us and tell us

Birth Control is needed. Tell us how to do it. That is what we want. That is what I say. In all those speeches today I suppose no one of us learned very much of what is new, because we all realize all the different points why Birth Control is important. The only really refreshing point to me was the promise of the biologist that if there were a strong demand, that the biologists should study the question, there would be a response. But I would tell this biologist it only shows what little relationship there is between science at the present time and real life. Why, isn't it surprising that for the last ten or fifteen years the question of Birth Control has been continuously discussed everywhere, and only now our scientists are awakening to the question that perhaps it would be useful to study it. You should have done it long ago. Long ago they should have taken up the question and really succeeded in doing something in that line. I think they would have deserved the gratitude of mankind. But that is the great question for us. How in the world will we succeed to provide real means of Birth Control if we haven't got the help of the scientists, and the scientists and the colleges refuse to give us their help.

I would like to say this. Something is going on among the students. I would like to tell you about it now. Some of the Harvard students told me in Boston that they are going to demand from their professors some information about Birth Control. They say they are sick and tired to find out, when they graduate and go out into the world and a woman comes to them for information, they cannot give it to her because they don't know anything about it.

One of the physicians this morning accused the medical profession about taking no interest in this. I would defend them. I would say they really have no information. They really don't know anything about it. A good many of them would be very willing to give information. And as to the law which prevents a physician—I am physician myself and give this information. Why, the law is obsolete. No one pays any attention to it. This law would not prevent a physician from



giving information if the physician really knew. You know, you colleagues of mine who are physicians, you who have real information you would give it to the patient if you really knew that you had some real good information; there is no doubt about it. There is no real information therefore the evening session will be a real interesting one.

One point that is interesting to me came up, that even with Birth Control people, we have to go on different ways. I came here merely interested in Birth Control. But I have to declare that I feel like a stranger among you all, because with Birth Control you bring in again certain political moves that are entirely of no interest to me. You are sending a telegram to Washington. All that is going on in Washington is nothing else than a comedy, something of no importance at all. I think that Washington will never solve the question of disarmament. I want to express that neither will Birth Control nor what is going on in Washington settle the question of poverty, war and all these other great problems. As long as there is imperialism and capitalism we will never solve the question of poverty or the question of stopping war. I want to tell you that there is a bourgeois movement and a working class movement of Birth Control. The working class movement of Birth Control would not send a telegram to Washington. But as far as the movement of Birth Control is concerned, I am with you. I am interested in a scientific investigation of the subject.

DR. FLANAGAN: I simply want to congratulate the management of this organization and this meeting upon the high class of the papers which have been read here this afternoon. Every one of them has been of extremely high scientific order. There is one thing that has impressed me in hearing these papers read, and that is, that we have not yet sufficient statistical information upon which to base our conclusions. Now, I am a statistician and I became so because of my interest in studying sociological problems, particularly the race question, and I am interested in assisting anyone who desires the compilation of just such facts. Now, I will say, that we are not yet getting

those statistics from the United States Bureau of Census. They have only recently begun the registration of births and the studying of the question.

In 1917 the first statistics were published for the New England states, New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania, and one or two other western states. Since then two or three southern states have gotten on. Virginia was the first to get on and Kentucky, South Carolina and North Carolina, and several others, are coming on.

There is where a very important problem is presented. The question has not been studied thoroughly from a statistical standpoint. I want to offer you my assistance in this matter. If you want to learn any question with reference to legitimacy, the size of the family, and questions of that sort, I shall be glad to be of service to you. Next week I will be here to attend the American Public Health Association conference, the vital statistics section, and it is possible for that question to be presented and to be handled more thoroughly throughout the country than it is now.

I want to refer to the classical paper that was read by Miss Young on delinquency; especially to the question of legitimacy. That is one that has not been studied thoroughly. The question of Birth Control of those who are professional courtesans, I don't think that enters, because we know that they soon become infected with venereal diseases. The question settles itself. They don't have children, whether they try to prevent it or not. We have this in Virginia. In Virginia we had last year about 3,300 illegitimate births. That is, of unmarried women, and most between the ages of 15 to 20, around there. The first children. And of course a very large per cent. are colored.

That is the problem. How are we going to stop that? And any means that you can devise at all to solve that question will be one of the most interesting things that you can undertake, and as I said this morning, I came here to learn.

THE CHAIRMAN: I am going to call upon Mrs. Sanger to sum up our day's work.

MRS. SANGER: Madam Chairman, and friends. It seems to

me in listening to the papers, that I thoroughly agree with the last speaker, Dr. Flanagan from Virginia, that the papers have been excellent, in a very splendid key. It seems to me that they have been of sufficient variety to bring in and to show all of us today how wide the subject of Birth Control is, and how important it is to include it into practically every program that we have for racial betterment and for national health.

There is one thing that I feel has perhaps not been understood. One of the speakers in one of the very able papers spoke of the emotional, and told us to take principles out from the emotional, and I just want to call attention, whenever anybody says "emotional" in Birth Control, I know they mean me. I want to say this. That when you realize that six or ten years back the same conditions were there as are here today, the same kinds of people, the same abortions, the same working conditions, the same overcrowding conditions, and yet it would have been impossible to have gathered together a group such as is here today to discuss this subject. Everywhere you looked people said "Yes, that is important. But don't talk about it." And it was necessary for some one to come out and waken an inert people. You could not do it at that time by reasoned or logical discussion. I always said that when the house is on fire you don't criticize the voice that calls your attention to it. It may not be ladylike, and just the tone and quality of voice we would like to hear, nevertheless we are glad that that voice has aroused our attention to the fact that the house is on fire. Now, in planning to awaken an inert people to the importance of Birth Control, I felt that it was first necessary to agitate and to awaken their interest in the question. There had to be various means and methods. The first thing was the challenging of these laws that have been for more than one hundred years upon our statute books. We hold the law as a rather sacred thing, and the only way you can awaken people to the question that was here before us, was to challenge that thing which all of us held sacred. That arouses attention, and when this is done, then we come to plan the means of giving the message and of educating. So the process goes, agitate, educate,

organize and legislate. We are now up to our third stage, of organization.

Now, all of us know, as I do, having been a nurse for many years among all kinds of people, that while some people had knowledge to prevent conception, thousands of others did not have it, that the reason was not only the ignorance of the people themselves, but also the lack of attention or the lack of knowledge of the medical profession. I found that most physicians who were honest with me said "Well, there is very little that I know about it." So we had to arouse their interest as well, and I think that the victory of this agitation, of this education, is in the meeting that we are holding tonight, I suppose it is the first meeting of the kind that has been held in the United States, where we are to discuss the ways and means to prevent conception. We have been overwhelmed with requests for these tickets. I assure you it is most pleasing. We have also had a great many requests from the nurses and social workers to attend that session, and we regret to say that we are unable to accommodate them tonight because so many physicians have applied for admission. Now out of this conference tonight I believe we will begin to get somewhere, and if, as Dr. Konikow stated, there has been nothing new at this meeting, she must speak for herself, because I think there are many of us who have found new suggestions, new ideas. And even if they have not been new, we have been convinced once more of the strength of our own ideas. So I feel that all of us must feel today a strengthening of our conviction that Birth Control is absolutely an essential part of the program from every angle and from every platform that we have to put into operation to make this a better country and a better race.

THE CHAIRMAN (Mrs. Hooker): Mrs. Sanger has again, I think, given us a keynote, that after all while we sit here and discuss in some academic manner this matter of Birth Control, what it really sums up to is this, that we realize that from this meeting tonight we may get information, we may get organization, which may work towards the perfection of human life, which may save much needless suffering. We must realize that



whether we ourselves have gained much or not, we at least have contributed much.

Secondly, what has been brought out over and above all today is that there is no question but that sex hereafter in this after country is to be considered in a rational way. From sex arises our very life. From sex may come the greatest happiness, the greatest nobility that life can ever create. It is nonsense and it is altogether out of date for people to put a taboo on the discussion of sex subjects. I think we have at last grown up and it is one of the reasons that we can meet together in conferences of this sort and gain so much for our own and our country's welfare.

[*Adjournment*]

### SESSION III.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 1921, 9:30 A. M.

Mrs. EDITH HOUGHTON HOOKER, *Chairman*

THE CHAIRMAN: We left for this morning the consideration of a telegram which was to be sent to Washington, and we will inaugurate the session with reading of the telegram as prepared by the committee:

“To the distinguished statesmen of the Washington armament conference. We, assembled at the First American Birth Control Conference, send greetings and suggest a thorough consideration of the adjustment of the world’s population to the means of subsistence as a fundamental solution of the world’s peace and a necessary basis for national growth and international progress.”

Motion to send telegram carried.

### POPULATION PROBLEMS IN ASIA

*By Lothrop Stoddard*

OF ALL earth’s regions cursed by the blight of over-population, Asia stands forth as the “horrible example.” For ages the teeming populations of the East have been proverbial. Today Asia contains not less than 900,000,000 people, while China and India are the two greatest human hives the world has ever known. These Asiatic societies display the melancholy corollaries of over-population: congestion, low living-standards, and the prevalence of cruel “natural” checks on increase like famine and disease.

However, these stern lessons of Mother Nature seem thus far to have taught the Asiatic nothing. Generation after generation he has gone on blindly breeding beyond the limits of available subsistence. Save for a very few and very recent pioneer efforts (to be discussed later) Asia has even not con-

sidered the idea of Birth Control. In fact, the whole social and religious atmosphere of the Orient favors reckless procreation and is hostile to the concept of voluntary limitation of births. It would be a mistake to ascribe Oriental fecundity solely to climate or strong sexual appetites. These, of course, play their part; but they are powerfully re-enforced by economic reasons like the harsh exploitation of women and children, by social reasons like female subjection, and perhaps most of all by religious doctrines enjoining early marriage and the begetting of numerous sons. The upshot has been, as already stated, chronic over-population.

In the past, to be sure, Asia's over-population was more or less a local issue, its evil consequences, however painful, being confined to the Asiatic peoples themselves. Indeed, these evils never went beyond a certain intensity, because population-pressure was continually and automatically lightened by factors like war, misgovernment, pestilence, and famine, which constantly swept off such multitudes of people that, despite high birth rates, population remained substantially at a fixed level.

During the past century, however, the situation has radically altered. Most of Asia has fallen under European political control, and Western colonial government has meant the putting down of internal war, the diminution of governmental abuses, the decrease of disease, and the lessening of the blight of famine. In other words, those "natural" checks which previously kept down Asiatic populations have been diminished or abolished, and in response to the life-saving activities of the West, the enormous death-rate which in the past has kept Oriental populations from excessive multiplication is falling to proportions comparable with the low death-rate of Western nations. But to lower the Orient's prodigious birth-rate is quite another matter. As a matter of fact, that birth-rate keeps up with undiminishing vigor, and the consequence has been a portentous increase of population in nearly every portion of the Orient under Western political control. In fact, even those Oriental countries which have maintained their independence

have more or less adopted Western life-conserving methods, and have experienced in greater or less degree an accelerated increase of population. This is notably true of Japan.

Japan and India are, in fact the two countries where Asia's problem of increasing congestion are best exemplified. China, the greatest human ganglion of them all, is still so much affected by natural checks (famine, pestilence, misgovernment, etc.) that her teeming population, estimated at from 325,000,000 to 450,000,000, seems to keep at about a stationary level. That China's population would, however, shoot upward by leaps and bounds if those natural checks were removed cannot be doubted. For example; one of China's provinces was almost depopulated during the great Taiping Rebellion of half a century ago. Yet within twenty years the gaps had been practically filled, and in the recent famine this province was so over-populated that it was one of the worst sufferers.

The story of Japan's recent growth in population is most significant. During the long centuries of her isolation from the outer world, Japan's population remained at a virtually constant level. The limits of subsistence under the then existing conditions having been reached, further increase was prevented by natural checks such as internecine war, the prevalence of epidemics, and, in certain sections, by the practice of infanticide. When Japan emerged from her isolation about the middle of the last century, her population was about 27,000,000—only 900,000 in excess of what it had been a century and a half before. But no sooner had modern ideas like sanitation and efficient government been introduced than a momentous increase of population ensued. By 1872, the population had risen to 33,000,000; in 1898 it had risen to 44,000,000; while the census of 1920 gave approximately 56,000,000. Thus, in about half a century, Japan's population had more than doubled, while an analysis of the various censuses shows that this increase has been cumulative, the birth-rate rising steadily, the death-rate falling rapidly, and the net increase showing no signs of decline.

The result has been, of course, acute congestion. Japan



is a poor country. Her total area is less than that of the state of California, while most of her territory is mountainous and unfit for cultivation. So great is the congestion in the relatively small productive areas that therein the density of population has been recently estimated at 2,688 per square mile—more than four times the density of Belgium, the most densely populated country of Europe.

As for India, the story is strikingly similar. At the beginning of the Nineteenth century, the population of India is roughly estimated to have been 100,000,000. Even at that time the country was considered to have been over-populated. Yet the result of a century of British rule has been a further increase (in 1911) to 315,000,000. In other words, the Indian people have employed the material benefits of British rule, not to raise their living standards, but to breed right up to new margin of subsistence until they are as badly off as before (perhaps worse off). And the most discouraging feature of the situation is that Indian public opinion shows virtually no recognition of the matter, ascribing their misfortunes almost exclusively to political factors, especially European political control. In fact, the only case that I know of where an Indian thinker has bodily faced the problem and has courageously advocated Birth Control is in the book published five years ago by P. K. Wattal, a native official of the Indian Finance Department, entitled *The Population Problem in India*. This pioneer volume is written with such ability and is of such apparent significance as an indication of the awakening of at least a few Indians to a more rational attitude, that it merits special attention.

Mr. Wattal begins his book by a plea to his fellow countrymen to look at the problem rationally and without prejudice. "This essay," he says, "should not be construed into an attack on the spiritual civilization of our country, or even indirectly into a glorification of the materialism of the West. The object in view is that we should take a somewhat more matter-of-fact view of the main problem of life, viz., how to live in this world. We are a poor people; the fact is indisputable. Our poverty,

is, perhaps, due to a great many causes. But I put it to every one of us whether he has not at some of the most momentous periods of his life been handicapped by having to support a large family, and whether this encumbrance has not seriously affected the chances of advancement warranted by early promise and exceptional endowment. This question should be viewed by itself. It is a physical fact, and has nothing to do with political environment or religious obligation. If we have suffered from the consequences of that mistake, is it not a duty that we owe ourselves and to our progeny that its evil effects shall be mitigated as far as possible? There is no greater curse than poverty—I say this with due respect to our spiritualism.”

After this appeal to reason in his readers, Mr. Wattal develops his thesis. The first prime cause of over-population in India, he asserts, is early marriage. Contrary to Western lands, where population is kept down by prudential marriages and by Birth Control, “for the Hindus marriage is a sacrament which must be performed, regardless of the fitness of the parties to bear the responsibilities of a mated existence. A Hindu male must marry and beget children—sons if you please—to perform his funeral rites lest his spirit wander uneasily in the waste places of the earth. The very name of son “putra,” means one who saves his father’s soul from the hell called Puta. A Hindu maiden unmarried at puberty is a source of social obloquy to her family and of damnation to her ancestors. Among the Mohammedans, who are not handicapped by such penalties, the married state is equally common, partly owing to Hindu example and partly to the general conditions of primitive society, where a wife is almost a necessity both as a domestic drudge and as a helpmate in field work.” The worst of the matter is that, despite the efforts of social reformers, child-marriage seems to be increasing. The census of 1911 showed that during the decade 1901-10 the numbers of married females per 1,000 of ages 0-5 years rose from 13 to 14; of ages 5-10 years from 102 to 105; of 10-15 years from 423 to 430; and of 15-20 years from 770 to 800. In other

words, in the year 1911, out of every 1,000 Indian girls, over one-tenth were married before they were 10 years old, nearly one-half before they were 15, and four-fifths before they were 20.

The result of all this is a tremendous birth-rate, but is "no matter for congratulation. We have heard so often of our high death-rate and the means for combating it, but can it be seriously believed that with a birth-rate of 30 per 1,000 it is possible to go on with the death-rate brought down to the level of England or Scotland? Is there room enough in the country for the population to increase as fast as 20 per 1,000 every year? We are paying the inevitable penalty of bringing into this world more persons than can be properly cared for, and therefore if we wish fewer deaths to occur in this country the births must be reduced to the level of the countries where the death-rate is low. It is, therefore, our high birth-rate that is the social danger; the high death-rate, however regrettable, is merely an incident of our high birth-rate."

Mr. Wattal then describes the cruel items in India's death-rate: the tremendous female mortality due largely to too early childbirth, and the equally terrible infant mortality, nearly 50 per cent. of infant deaths being due to premature birth or debility at birth. These are the inevitable penalties of early and universal marriage. For, in India, "everybody marries, fit or unfit, and is a parent at the earliest possible age permitted by nature." This process is highly disgenic; it is plainly lowering the quality and sapping the vigor of the race. It is the lower elements of the population, the negroid aboriginal tribes and the pariahs or outcasts, who are gaining the fastest. Also the vitality of the whole population seems to be lowering. The census figures show that the number of elderly persons is decreasing, and that the average statistical expectation of life is falling. And unless Indian public opinion speedily awakens to the situation, the evils just described will go on with ever increasing intensity.

Such is the warning thesis of Mr. Wattal's book. It should be remarked that he does note a few dim fore-shadowings of Birth Control in India. For example, he quotes from the

census report for 1911 this official explanation of a slight drop in the birth-rate of Bengal: "The deliberate avoidance of child-bearing must be partly responsible . . . It is a matter of common belief that among the tea-garden coolies of Assam means are frequently taken to prevent conception, or to procure abortion." And the report of the Sanitary Commissioner of Assam for 1913 states: "An important factor in producing the defective birth-rate appears to be due to voluntary limitation of births."

However, these beginnings of Birth Control are too local and partial to afford any immediate relief to India's growing over-population, and Mr. Wattal himself is not very hopeful of a rapid breaking down of the traditional factors favoring reckless procreation.

In Japan, as in India, the beginnings of a Birth Control movement have appeared. In fact, the Japanese Government is investigating the problem, and within the past year a number of representatives of the Ministry of the Interior have been travelling through America and Europe, studying conditions and formulating reports on how Birth Control may be applied to Japan. In Japan, however, the Birth Control movement is bitterly opposed by the militarist and imperialist elements who still sway Japan's political life. To them increasing congestion is the best argument for their policies. A vast human surplus is the ideal material for rapid colonization, for a desperate nationalism ready for risky ventures, and for abundant cannon-fodder in the wars which aggressive foreign policies may bring about.

Thus throughout the vast continent of Asia, there is occurring a race between procreation and Birth Control: a race momentous, not merely for Asia, but for the whole world, since upon its outcome world-peace or world-ruin may depend. And let us face facts bravely—the omens for world peace are not bright. It is true that a conscious Birth Control movement has started in Asia's most advanced portions—India and Japan,—and that we may hope for its rapid spread in the near future. It is true that the rapid rise in living costs and living standards



throughout the East must involve conscious or unconscious checks on the growth of population. Lastly, the industrialization of many parts of the Orient will afford a livelihood to many millions of persons.

But these limiting factors, however potent they may ultimately become, cannot at once counteract the factors making for excessive multiplication. Apparently, for the next generation at least, Asia is going to keep on piling up excess people. And this, in turn, means an increasingly prodigious outward thrust of surplus Asiatics from congested centers toward regions emptier, richer, or with higher standards of living. But will these emigrants be admitted? To the emptier parts of Asia, perhaps. To Western lands like America, Australia and Canada assuredly no.

Here is a problem which only Asia can solve, by raising her living-standards and by rational Birth Control. Asia cannot expect any Western nation to jeopardize its whole social and racial future by becoming a dumping ground for Asia's boundless spawning. Some Asiatics, alive to the realities of the situation, recognize the truth of this. Mr. Wattal, for example, warns his fellow countrymen that they cannot hope to shift their human surplus to other lands; while only a fortnight ago the well-known Japanese liberal, Yukio Ozaki, said in a public address: "Some Japanese insist upon the open door principle in the Pacific generally, including the other side of the ocean, to facilitate the solution of the emigration question. They must be reminded that this policy during twenty years has been advocated in a commercial sense alone. The emigration question is serious, no doubt, but it should not outweigh consideration for other nations' convenience and rights—circumstances which could easily be realized by assuming an influx, for instance, of Indians into this country. Japan ought to be grateful to the Powers for their sympathy in the matter of surplus population, but we should not forget that this requires solution from within. There is nothing to be proud of in causing a nuisance to others through failure to control population."

Some Asiatics thus see things clearly. Theirs is the spirit which, if it prevails, will get Asia peacefully over the critical period, now upon her; the critical period between the advent of a civilized death-rate and a civilized birth-rate; between the laying of drain pipes and the practice of Birth Control.

But will this spirit prevail? Will the voice of liberal understanding persuade hungry myriads or silence the sinister harangues of designing militarists and ignorant demagogues? On the answer to that question hangs peace or war. As Professor Ross well says: "The real enemy of the dove of peace is not the eagle of pride nor the vulture of greed but the stork!"

### BIRTH CONTROL AND INFANT MORTALITY: AN ECONOMIC PROBLEM

*By James Maurer*

*President, Pennsylvania Federation of Labor, Harrisburg, Pa.*

**D**URING the early history of this Republic, it was quite fashionable, in fact, patriotic, to have large families.

The head of the family wanted plenty of children with which to work the farm. Fixing the minority age at twenty-one years, gave parents the right to exploit their offspring until they arrived at their majority. Another incentive for big families was the new world needed people so much that the birth of a child was looked upon, not only as a family asset, but a patriotic contribution to the Nation. The larger the family, in those days, the greater the opportunity for the head of the family to pay off the mortgage and get rich. Indeed, families with only five or six children were not considered big. Nine and ten children were looked upon as the average family. To boast of being the father of a big family, it was necessary to have from twelve to eighteen children and, to accomplish this, it was often necessary to send two or three wives to their graves. Indeed, it is seldom that living mothers of such large families can be found. When one is discovered, it is such a rare exception that it attracts the attention of the scientific world and public officials, as in the case of Mrs. Domenico

Zaccahea, of New York, a living mother of sixteen children, who received a letter of congratulation from President Harding.

Great industrial changes have taken place during the past century. The primitive handicraft methods of production on the farm, gradually, gave way to machine production and agricultural machinery. The farm which formerly required a dozen people to work, can now be worked with three or four. The blacksmith and wheel-wright shops which were once part of the farm equipment have, long ago, evolved into factories, mills and workshops of towns and cities. The same is true of the textile industry. Even butter- and cheese-making is no longer part of the farmer's work. As this work left the farm, it was quite natural that the workers should also leave. There was no longer any economic need for large families but, due to habit and religious dogma, big families continued to be fashionable and, while it is true that the children of the big family were no longer needed, the greater truth is that the farm could no longer support a big family, so the children, naturally, drifted after the jobs in the cities, there to mingle and associate with others who left, not only other farms, but countries, in search of jobs, or the privilege to do the work which once upon a time was done on the farm. There, under a new and strange environment, they hear from certain physicians, corporation-serving politicians, the clergy and the press, much about the honor and glory of raising big families and Birth Control is damned, not only as unpatriotic, but as an unpardonable sin. And of course, the having of big families goes merrily on. Children are poured into the world without the slightest regard for their prospects of maintenance, health or happiness.

When on the farm and exploited by their fathers, the combined family earnings belonged to the family and, in time, through inheritance, each child received its share of the remaining wealth created collectively by the family. Therefore, from a purely monetary point of view, there really was little, or no exploitation. Not so, however, under the new order. The wage-worker of today, whether minor or adult, works not for the family fund which some day may revert to

those who created it, but, on the contrary, every penny, above his, or her, wage, or cost of living and reproduction, goes to the people who own the job and not one cent ever finds its way back to those who created it, unless it is in the form of charity. It is, therefore, quite natural for those who live by exploiting their fellow-men, to favor the raising of big families. The greater the number, the easier the picking. Wages are fixed so that fathers cannot afford to support and educate their children. The children must go to work and become self-sustaining. This often brings the children in direct competition with the parents who suffer wage reductions on account of the competition of their own children.

Every effort to place Child Labor legislation on the statute books of our various States, or Nation, is vigorously opposed by the interests who profit either by exploiting minors directly, or who use children as competitive clubs to beat down the wages of men and women. Of course they want their victims to multiply, no matter how mothers may suffer and die, or whether some of the offspring from underfed, weak, overworked, soul-racked mothers are physically, or mentally, defective. "See," cry the parasites, "we are a Christian and charitable people! We care for these unfortunates. We allow them to display their deformities on the public highways and beg. In the bigness of our hearts, we give some of them jobs, even if we don't pay them very much. We maintain an army of police to protect, not only ourselves, but the workers as well, against those suffering, not only from mental defects, but rebellious intellects as well. We erect and maintain penal institutions, hospitals and lunatic asylums at an enormous expense to take care of these unfortunates who happen not to die in infancy." And in one grand chorus, the whole outfit sings, "Suffer little workers, let them come. We need them every hour." And yet, it may seem strange to some people that those who cry the loudest for big families, usually have either no families or very small ones, themselves.

President Harding, who congratulated poor Mrs. Zaccahea because she gave birth to sixteen children, has no children



of his own. In fact our three last presidents, all combined, had only five children, less than two to a family. Senator Penrose doesn't have any, while the Governor of Pennsylvania, I understand, has two. As a matter of fact, wealthy men, best able to raise large families, are either bachelors or fathers of small families. Medical men, statistics tell us, have the smallest birth-rate, while the birth-rate among the clergy is almost as low as it is among the medical profession. Yet there was a time when the clergy boasted of their large families. The merchant and professional classes also have very low birth-rates. We also find small families among the fairly well-paid, skilled mechanics. It is the poor, the unskilled, the poorest of the poor, we find, who have the large families, those who, through no fault of their own, live from hand-to-mouth, in rented shanties or vile, disease-breeding tenements, and who receive a wage scarcely big enough to decently support themselves. Yet, these are the unfortunates who have the largest families. Tens of thousands of these mothers must, besides bearing the children, do all the house-work, cook, wash, sew, nurse the sick and, perhaps, get a job to help her husband earn a few dollars extra to buy bread for the hungry little mouths at home. May I ask, "Can such a mother give birth to a vigorous, healthy, normal child?" Ordinary common sense says, "No." Yet these are the mothers to whom present-day society looks for the perpetuation of the race while the well-to-do, the wealthy, leisure class, with no cares, comfortable homes and assured incomes, refuse to bear children and, in many cases, for no other reason than that to do so might interfere with their life of play and social ambitions.

On the other hand, we find a great many of the professional and skilled mechanics raising families within their means. The average among this class of workers are desirous of giving their children every advantage in the struggle for existence possible, education, plenty of good, wholesome food and comfortable homes. And this is only possible where the size of the family is kept within the income of the parents and the health of the mother is carefully guarded.

Although a Federal law prohibits the transportation of any information as to preventing conception and the laws of eighteen states, still more drastic, forbid the giving of information, by any means whatever, verbally or even indirectly, in all other states, except four, they have laws of one kind, or another, prohibiting birth-regulation. But all these laws seem to be "dead letters" in so far as the rich, or middle class, is concerned. The size of their families proves that these more fortunate members of society can, and do, get the information and, most likely, from their family physicians which, of course, is the proper place to get it. But the poor, without influence or money, who need the information most, cannot get it and, as a result, may resort to abortion, amateurish, dangerous, bungling operations.

Almost every young married couple, no matter how poor they may be, dream of a cozy home and children of their own. The stork's first visit brings joy and the bond of matrimony is welded tighter when the baby that is wanted, comes. How proud the parents are and what dreams both have of the future possibilities of their child! Before baby can walk, or talk, the stork comes again, this time, not with a baby that is really wanted, but with one that is welcome just the same. And so, a third, fourth and fifth, in rapid succession, come. While the parents love them all, the last arrivals were not wanted. The happy, plump, rosy-cheeked bride of a few years ago is now a thin, pale and haggard-looking woman. There was not enough rest for the mother between each birth. As a matter of fact, her responsibilities, household duties and labors increased as her body was drained and her vitality decreased.

In the meantime, the father finds the struggle to care for his family is becoming more difficult. His wages do not increase when his family does. Enforced idleness, sickness, increased cost of living, high rents, etc., come. His wages are not enough to meet the family expenses, so the growing family, through force of necessity, moves into a smaller, cheaper and less-desirable place. Unconsciously, perhaps, they also economize on the food and, amidst their struggle to live, comes the

mysterious hand of Death. The baby, born from a weak, overworked, underfed mother, dies. Surely now, with one less in the family for which to care, the mother will soon regain her health. But a miscarriage blasts their hopes. Poverty does not permit engaging a nurse so, while the father is at work, ten-year-old Bobbie and eight-year-old Mary try to take care of Mother and baby brother and sister. True, Mrs. McGinnis, a kind-hearted neighbor and mother of eight children herself, drops in now and then to give a helping hand.

So, time passes on, more children, not wanted, come. The father, growing older, finds that the pace demanded to hold his job is getting beyond him. The plant has been Taylorized and speed is what counts. The wife, a mere frame of her former self, sickly and disheartened, collectors everlastingly demanding payment, eviction threatened, another baby dies. Father and husband out of work, or working short time and, amidst all this hell, the stork threatens to come again. "Oh, God," says the mother, "why another one? We can't take care of those we do have and that's why they die, so why send us babies only to die as babies?" And many of these mothers, in sheer desperation, resort to abortion, sometimes without success, with the result that often deformed creatures are ushered into existence. And, if the father, different from many others, does not weaken and, like a coward, desert his family to escape the tortures of misery and poverty, and the mother does not die or go crazy, they may raise, to manhood and womanhood, some of their children, only to see their sons, some day perhaps, taken from them to be used for "cannon-fodder" to feed a war inspired by men of small families or no families at all.

There may be some who think that this picture is overdrawn, but I assure you that it is not overdrawn. There are millions of such families in the United States and, in some of them, the conditions are far worse than those I just described.

It is obvious, therefore, that the poor cannot afford large families. But, laying aside the question of bread and butter,

or the hardships of parents, is it wise for a nation to depend upon weakened, neglected, underfed, overworked, soul-racked mothers for the perpetuation of the race? Is it wise to pauperize a family so that the mother may bring forth children, many of them to die in infancy, others to live as mental defectives to reproduce their kind? Is it wise? Is it just? I dare say, is it human to give to the world the free and unrestricted knowledge of how to breed animals and, at the same time, outlaw the science of human birth-regulation and treat as immoral and indecent the knowledge which surrounds the sacredness of human motherhood?

The home is the place where happiness must dwell and, to be happy, the coming of children must be welcome, but there can be no happiness if the coming of children is at the sacrifice of the wife's health, or life. Neither can there be happiness where the father's wage is insufficient to properly provide for the family.

Government officials define a living-wage for a family of five at thirty-five dollars a week. We know that millions of fathers receive no such wage and it is usually these poorly-paid fathers who have the largest families. In Pennsylvania, a highly-developed industrial State, we find that, during the past four years, out of every thousand babies born, an average of one hundred and nine died before they were a year old. Compare these figures, in "no-birth-control" Pennsylvania, with New Zealand where family regulation is permitted and understood. The baby death-rate there is only fifty per thousand, as against one hundred and nine in Pennsylvania. Astounding and truthful as these figures are, they do, however, not tell the whole truth. We find that, high as the death-rate among babies is, it varies according to the family income. For instance, in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, among the employees of the Cambria Plant of the Midvale Steel, where housing conditions are bad and wages low, we find the death-rate, among the first- and second-born, was, when the survey was taken, one hundred and thirty-eight per thousand, while the death-rate of babies under one year of age and among the



ninth- or later-born, was two hundred and one per thousand. We further find that, as wages decrease, the baby death-rate increases. Infant mortality, where the family income averages five hundred dollars a year, averages one hundred and sixty-five per thousand. Where the income is seven hundred dollars, it drops to one hundred and twenty per thousand. With nine hundred dollars' income, we find the death-rate drops to eighty-five per thousand. At one thousand dollars a year, and over, it drops down to sixty-five per thousand.

In Pittsburgh, the heart of the Steel Trust and the cancer spot of the steel belt, where the steel companies profess to have restored pre-war conditions, the hours worked are, nevertheless, pretty much the same. More men are working twelve-hour shifts now than before the war. The annual earnings of over one-third of all productive iron and steel workers are, and have been for years, below the level set by government experts as the minimum of subsistence for families of five, while the annual earnings of seventy-two per cent of all workers were, and still are, below the level set by government experts as the minimum of comfort for families of five.

Pittsburgh lost more babies in 1920, in proportion to its births, than any other of the large American cities for which reliable records are available. Its wastage of young life, for the year, exceeded that of seventeen cities of more than two hundred and fifty thousand population, in the birth registration area. The measurement of this loss by infant mortality rate: the number of deaths of infants under one year of age, per thousand born alive, shows that, for every one thousand babies born in Pittsburgh in 1920, one hundred and ten failed to survive throughout the year. This means a loss, during infancy, of one life out of every nine.

For the same year, Boston had one infant death to ten births; Philadelphia, one to eleven; New York City, one to twelve and Seattle, one to eighteen. Compare Seattle to Pittsburgh and we find a rate twice as favorable as that for Pittsburgh.

For the past four years, we find the difference still more surprising. Pittsburgh's average for four years was one hun-

dred and twenty-two baby deaths under one year, for every thousand births; Boston, one hundred and three; Philadelphia, one hundred and three; Cincinnati, ninety; New York City, eighty-seven; Portland, Oregon, sixty-eight, and Seattle, fifty-eight. These figures do not tell the whole story, they merely give averages for an entire city.

In Pittsburgh, where the workers live, we find infant mortality is more than a hundred per cent. higher than what it is where the well-to-do people live. The twenty-second ward of Pittsburgh is a working-class ward. Here the death-rate for infants under one year of age, during 1920, was one hundred and fifty-seven per thousand live births while, in the fourteenth ward, Schenley Park District, where the upper class lives, the death-rate, per thousand births, was sixty-four. In the first ward, another working-class ward, the death-rate for infants under one year of age is one hundred and fifty-six per thousand live births, while, in the thirteenth ward, a fine residential section, the rate is seventy per thousand.

It is obvious, therefore, that infant mortality is, in a great measure, an economic problem and must be treated as such.

Babies are precious and a joy to the home and are only a source of strength to the Nation when they are, themselves, healthy and when they do not drain and destroy the mother who bears them. But children, born under the circumstances I have just described, are not a joy to the family, or themselves, and are a liability to the Nation. Of those who live, how few grow to be healthy men and women. The fact that about one out of every four dies from tuberculosis is, in itself, a command for awakening of the social conscience. We must learn to recognize the difference between cause and effect. Today, society is trying to cure effect with charity, insane asylums, poor-houses, jails, clubs and bullets. Why not look for the cause and remedy the evil at its base? Then there will be no effect with which to deal. Let us raise the curtain of false modesty, teach the children sex-hygiene and the mysteries of their own bodies. Let rich and poor alike have free access to the knowledge of Birth Control. Hospitals, clinics and dis-

pensaries must be left free to administer to suffering humanity. To do so means, not race-suicide, but race-preservation.

THE CHAIRMAN: I am going to ask Mrs. Sanger to introduce our next speaker, our distinguished visitor from England.

MRS. SANGER: When we were planning for this conference, we recognized that it was vastly important to bring to this conference some one who would guide our activities for the future. The work that we have been able to do so far in the United States has been to propagate the idea of Birth Control in its relation to health, to individual economics, to woman's freedom, also the historical and the legal aspects of the Birth Control movement. But today, with the great international crisis upon us, it seemed to us necessary to have some one who could tell us how we should conduct our work in relation to the international problem of the work, so I went out to seek the man whom I considered the greatest authority on population, and that is Mr. Harold Cox, whom I take pleasure, and have the honor to introduce.

## WAR AND POPULATION

*By Harold Cox*

*Editor of the Edinburgh Review; former M. P. for Preston; for two years Professor of Mathematics at Alwarh College, India.*

I FEEL MUCH honored at being invited to come across the Atlantic to address the First American Birth Control Conference. You have initiated here a great movement which, starting from small beginnings, is going to be perhaps one of the biggest movements in the world. It is a pleasure as well as an honor for me to be present. I was greatly impressed last night by seeing the way in which this hall was filled with medical men and women, eagerly discussing practical methods of Birth Control. The fact that your League has been able to organize such a densely packed meeting of medical people is itself a proof of the progress you have already made. That progress, as you know even better than I know, has been largely due to one woman, a woman whom I feel proud to be allowed to call my friend.

You have in America at the present time two conferences in progress: one in New York, the other in Washington. The one in Washington is engaged in considering how the nations of the world can get rid of armaments. But what are armaments? They are devices that men adopt to meet what they regard as the necessity of war. Armaments are merely a symptom of man's fear of war, or of man's desire of war, whichever it be.

On the other hand, this Conference in New York is considering how the causes of war can be removed. I will not go so far as to say that over-population is the only cause of war. In the past there have been many causes. In the past we have had dynastic causes, monarchs going to war for a matter of personal pride, or fighting for a tiny scrap of land because some racial or dynastic question was involved. A war of this character is incidentally recorded in Shakespeare's play of Hamlet, and I venture to quote to you Hamlet's comments:

"I see

The imminent death of twenty thousand men  
That for a fantasy and trick of fame  
Go to their graves like beds; fight for a plot  
Whereon the numbers cannot try the cause,  
Which is not tomb enough and continent  
To hide the slain."

Such wars have to a large extent disappeared. Kings no longer hurl their subjects into war. Wars today are people's wars. Some peoples, it is true, fight about religion. But they happily are now in a minority. The one dominating object for which people still fight when the need arises is the room to live. People will always fight for the means of living. A man will sooner kill his neighbor than starve himself. Where the means of subsistence are insufficient for a people demanding to be fed war ensues. People fight to give effect to the demand so crisply expressed in the French saying: "Ote toi de la que je m'y mets"—"Get out of there that I may step in."

This cause of war was emphasized by German writers in



very candid terms before the Great War. A collection of various German opinions was published in Washington in 1918 by the Committee of Public Information. It was entitled "Conquest and Kultur." I will quote a few passages.

Arthur Dix, writing in 1901, says: "Because the German people now increase at the rate of eight hundred thousand inhabitants a year they need both room and nourishment for the surplus."

Albrecht Wirth, writing also in 1901, says: "In order to live and lead a healthy and joyous life we need a vast extent of fresh arable land. This is what imperialism must give us."

Daniel Frymann in 1911, in a work which had an immense circulation, called "Wenn ich der Kaiser wäre," says: "It is no longer proper to say that Germany is satisfied. Our historical development and our economic needs show that we are once more hungry for territory."

Von Bernhardt, in a book entitled "Germany and the Next War," published in 1911, says: "Strong, healthy and flourishing nations increase in numbers. They require a continual expansion of their frontiers. They require new territory for the accommodation of their surplus people. Since almost every part of the globe is inhabited, new territory must as a rule be obtained at the cost of its possessors; that is to say by conquest, which thus becomes a law of necessity."

Germans were here expressing facts with brutal frankness. But exactly the same proposition was laid down 400 years ago by an Englishman, whom nobody would call brutal. Sir Thomas More in his "Utopia" said that the people in his ideal country should keep their numbers down in accordance with the sustenance available. But if they increased beyond the available sustenance they should go to the neighboring country, and if possible by making friends with the people of that country peaceably settle there. And if they were not peaceably welcomed, then they must fight those neighboring people and take their land.

The same cause of war still operates everywhere. As Lord

Northcliffe, speaking in Australia recently, said: "Land hunger is the primary cause of war."

Take the question of the Pacific. Japan has a rapidly growing population. As a necessary result Japan is seeking an outlet for her people and for her manufactures. But the United States has a growing urban population living on urban industries, and urban industries must have foreign markets for their manufactured goods. Therefore the United States wants the Chinese market. Therefore the United States is opposed to Japanese expansion into China. Thus the expanding American population comes into conflict across the Pacific with the expanding Japanese population.

It is conceivable that the Conference at Washington may reach some formula—politicians and diplomats are very good at devising formulas—which will hide the ugly facts, but the ugly facts will remain and sooner or later burst forth once more.

Moreover, and this is a point I wish to impress upon your attention, the problem of population is becoming progressively more serious. That is a fact that is constantly ignored by the average man and woman. The tendency of almost everyone who discusses the problem of Birth Control, or the world problem of population, is to limit their attention to the birth rate, forgetting that a low rate on a large number may give a higher return than a high rate on a small number.

Most people would prefer to have one per cent. on a capital of a million than ten per cent. on a capital of a thousand. As the volume of population grows, even a reduced birth rate may give a much larger volume of increase.

Let me give you a practical illustration. Before the war a great many people in England, observing the birth rate was declining, began to cry out, saying "We are losing our population. Race extinction is foreshadowed." What were the real facts? Between the years 1901 and 1911, while the birth rate was declining, our population increased more than in any previous decade in the whole history of England. It increased more in those ten years than in the whole of the eighteenth

century. Why? Because though we had a low birth rate we had a large population, and on a large population a low rate gives a large increase.

Between 1851 to 1911 we doubled our population. If that rate of growth had continued, in the course of 360 years England would have had a population considerably larger than the whole present population of the globe. Three hundred and sixty years is not a very big figure in the history of the world, nor in the history of many nations. In England it only bridges the gap between King Edward VI and King Edward VII.

Let me now come to your own country. You are increasing more rapidly than we are. You may say you have more room. For the present, yes. But between 1880 and 1920 you considerably more than doubled your population. The actual increase was something over 110 per cent. If you continue that rate of increase, in two hundred years the population of the United States will be 4,313,000,000. I repeat: If the present rate of increase of the American population continues you will in less than two hundred years have over four thousand million people in the United States, or more than double the whole present population of the world.

Similar calculations apply to Japan or to Germany or to any other country. If any country were to maintain its present rate of increase it alone could fill the whole globe in a very brief period. This fact was pointed out by an American, one of the most distinguished of all Americans that ever lived—Benjamin Franklin—over 150 years ago. He said the globe could be filled with a single plant like fennel, or with a single race, for example, Englishmen.

There is a school of critics that says that any control of births is necessarily immoral. Many of these critics are themselves as it happens celibates. They try to back up their contention by saying that there is still room on the earth. There may be for a time, but only for a time. These opponents of Birth Control further back their doctrine with a phrase often quoted—"God never sends mouths but he sends food." How about Chinese famines? There are millions of mouths in

China craving for food. Every twenty years or so, often more frequently, you have a hideous famine in China. Parents then can do nothing with their children but drown them or let them die. You would have equally hideous famines in India but for the British Government which makes provision in advance. It is an absurdity to say that God sends food for the mouths of all the children that people choose to bring into the world.

The figures I have given to you show clearly that a period must come when even the most dogmatic of theologians, even the most obtuse of thinkers, will see that there is no more room on the earth. What then will be said by these people who now denounce Birth Control? When they see the world obviously over-filled, will they still tell the masses to go on producing children to die within a few months, or alternatively will they tell them to produce children to kill other people's children? In effect that is what is being done to-day. You have quite a considerable number of people in France telling French mothers to breed more children to kill the children of German mothers; and you have some people in America who are pleading that American mothers must breed more children to kill the children of Japanese mothers. Is that the culmination of Christian morality—to breed children to kill the children of other nations?

I contend that the most urgent duty of thoughtful people is to strive to change the public conscience of all nations with regard to the problem of population. At present governments and churches are on the side of ever-increasing populations. Governments subsidize the large families of the poor, and on this point I should like to express my disagreement with a previous speaker when he asked why the government should not do more to help these large families. It would be most mischievous. The responsibility of bringing a child into the world rests upon its father and mother and they alone are responsible for its maintenance.

The churches also preach the duty of unlimited procreation. Why I do not know. Happily of late years there are signs of



a change, especially in England. Among those who have come forward strongly in favor of Birth Control is the Dean of St. Paul's, Dean Inge. Another prominent English Churchman who has declared himself in favor of Birth Control is the Bishop of Birmingham. Quite recently a very significant episode occurred in England. On October 11th last Lord Dawson, who is one of the most highly distinguished members of the medical profession in England, and is the King's physician, read a paper at the Church Congress on the subject of Birth Control. The keynote of his paper was, in his own words, "Birth Control is here to stay." He went on in the very plainest language to attack the theological view—which I may say has no basis whatever in biblical authority—that sex love is only permissible for the sake of producing offspring. He said that this was an utterly untenable and utterly inhuman view, and he used a beautiful sentence which I will quote to you. "Life without the love of man and woman would be like the world without sunshine." Then he ended by telling the assembled clergy of the Church of England that it was their duty to approach this question in the light of modern knowledge and the needs of a new world.

The upper and middle classes throughout Europe and throughout the United States are practising Birth Control. They are limiting their families. They have the knowledge; they see the necessity. The well-to-do artisans are doing the same thing. The rural laborers also, who are on the whole more intelligent than the poorer classes in the towns because they are brought daily in contact with the facts of nature, are also limiting their families. In our English villages families have become relatively small. It is in the slums that Birth Control is not practised. In those crowded areas of our large towns, where sunshine and fresh air hardly ever penetrate, the worst types are being daily brought into the world. It is these types that are multiplying; it is these types that are forcing modern nations to seek new outlets for their manufactures. It is these types that force fresh wars upon the world.

Happily in some countries public opinion has already recog-

nized that we can only stop the evil by popularizing the knowledge and the methods of Birth Control, so that the "masses" may do what the "classes" already have done. That is recognized in England, where there are no laws against propagating this knowledge and where there is a growing volume of opinion in favor of it.

Unfortunately the United States still has—if you will allow me to say it—foolish laws to forbid dissemination of essential knowledge—laws based upon a false standard of prudery and upon ignorance of the real facts of population. The figures I gave you just now show clearly that today the United States is increasing its population at a rate which in a comparatively brief period must produce an impossible situation. You cannot have four thousand million people in the United States. The present rate of increase must be reduced. You can only reduce the rate of increase by reducing the birth rate or by increasing the death rate. Which is it to be? For the sake of false ideals of prudery are children to be brought into the world to die in infancy, or are they to be brought into the world to kill the children of other nations?

At present, unfortunately, the official attitude in almost every country is against Birth Control. Some countries have even gone back on their previous policy. France, for example, in terror of Germany, has since the war passed new laws making it a crime even to advocate Birth Control. Why has France done this? Because England and America refused (I think unwisely and unjustly) to agree to protect France against Germany. In view of the failure of the proposed Anglo-American Alliance, the French say: "We must be strong enough to defend ourselves against the Germans, and therefore we must increase our population." They even post up in the streets placards "Faites des enfants" (Produce children). The idea seems plausible, but is really absurd. The population of France is about forty millions. The population of Germany is about sixty millions—50 per cent. more. You will see at once that, supposing the French had a high birth rate and the Germans had an equally high birth rate, the

Germans would produce 50 per cent. more children each year. And that would go on from year to year, the balance getting more and more in favor of Germany. In other words, if France wants to go into a cradle competition with Germany she is bound to be beaten. So that remedy will not serve. Moreover if the policy which the French have adopted to protect themselves from a fresh war were to be followed by every other country, fresh wars would be inevitable because there would not be room for everybody.

How then is this madness to be ended? I contend that it can only be ended by a change in the mental attitude of all nations. And I say: Let the strongest nations lead the way. Let them set the example. If necessary, let the nations who have the wisdom to adopt a low birth rate for the sake of the prosperity of their children, for the sake of peace of the world, band themselves together and agree to defend one another against those races that will not reduce their birth rate. I hold that a League of Low Birth Rate Nations would be much more useful to the world than a League of Nations.

In conclusion, may I sum up my argument in a few words. I contend that the ideal of peace on earth and goodwill among men is unattainable as long as we are too thick on the ground. Progress is impossible without room to live and leisure to think. This is no new doctrine. It has been endorsed by all economists of weight ever since Malthus first insisted upon its essential truth; it has been demonstrated by every type of living thing. Everywhere the lower races, whether plant or insect or animal, are the most prolific; everywhere the unchecked multiplication of rival species leads to mutual destruction. If we wish to attain universal peace, if we wish to secure the progress of mankind, we must persuade all the peoples of the earth to limit their numbers.

#### DISCUSSION

MISS HELEN TODD: I would like to ask Mr. Cox this. The statistics of both England and America show that the average wage on which a man and wife can afford to have children is

about \$1,500. a year, that is the minimum, or \$2,000. Now according to our economic condition now, most of the millions of people could not afford to have any children. They might afford one miserable child, to live in the gloom that he pictures. But would you have to seal up the womb of the woman and leave her childless, or else even with one child? And what I would like to ask is this. Should not this doctrine of Birth Control, which has been so marvelously shown to us, should not the teaching go hand in hand with that other economic teaching that resources and wealth should be taken out of the hands of the few and put into some cooperative organization, so that a woman could afford to have children, one, two, or three children? Must not our Birth Control movement give economic teaching that the present system, which almost precludes the women of the working class having even one child, is wrong and should be absolutely changed.

MR. COX: I think the system would readjust itself. At present the multiplication of the children leads to the reduction of the rate of wages. That is what happened in England at the beginning of the 19th century when steam industry was introduced. The manufacturers wanted cheap child labor, and some of them actually gave bonuses to parents to produce children so they might get cheap labor. Large families mean cheap labor, and one great argument for smaller families is that you get a higher standard of living.

MISS TODD: Under the statistics that were taken, the rate at which working men and women could have any family, the figures which I remember were approximately \$1,500 a year, for a man and wife and two children. And these were government statistics. They went on to show that the average workman made about \$800 a year, counting the times of unemployment. According to the unemployment in England, and our statistics here, the people could have no children whatever, because with our present economic system they could not even afford one child. So it would mean that woman would be simply an instrument of sex pleasure. She could not even have one child under our present system.



MR. COX: I think I would answer to that, that I haven't much faith in government statistics. I will tell you of my first experience with government statistics. When I was in India I was quoting to some judge some government statistics. He said to me very gravely, "When you have been in India a little longer, and have grown a little older, you won't quote government statistics. Our government, like all governments, has a passion for statistics. It tabulates them and raises them to the nth power, but you must not rely on them. Every one of those figures goes back to the village official and he puts down whatever he pleases."

MRS. SANGER: I would say in answer to Miss Todd, and I appreciate her question, that she would like to have every woman have the expression of motherhood and be allowed to have it, and that today the economic conditions make it impossible for a great many women to have that expression. It seems to me that our problem of Birth Control, and where we have to differ in making our first step from all the other ideals that we would like to bring about is, that our first step in this work is to stop the propagation of the unfit and the diseased and those who are carrying on the race. What will evolve out of this movement when children have become scarcer, when motherhood has been more dignified, is another problem that we will reach later. I think that is a question not of the present but of the future, and it seems to me that Birth Control today is not confronted with that problem as much as it is with the many millions of mothers who already have too many children.

MR. JONES: The method of approach to this problem is not that of seeking more government by the passage of additional legislation. It is more important for us to have removed from the statute books the legislation that exists. We are suffering already from too much government. If the restrictions now existing were removed, so that intelligent information would be wisely spread, people could see the problem themselves, and they will work it out for themselves, rather than through organ-

ization of more government, and it is that way that we will reach the ideal that we are so interested in.

DR. DE VILBISS: May I say just one word to Miss Todd's question. I think that our approach to Birth Control will make this economic situation a little more easy of solution when the time comes. If perhaps through the limitation of families we are able to remove from the father not only that economic grind which is ordinarily expressed "keeping his nose to the grindstone," but, in addition to that, the psychic drag on the father, which was brought out by our psychiatrists last night, and if we remove from the mother the depletion of her physical condition and allow her more leisure and more time to devote to educating her children; I am in hopes that through that increased intelligence and leisure we will work out a satisfactory solution of our economic problem.

DR. HUSSEY: I would like to call attention to the fact that while nations are trying to grab more territory and take it away from others by force, vast territories in all countries are held out of use by speculators, and we ought to pay a little attention to that.

## SESSION IV.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 1921, 2:30 P. M.

MRS. HOOKER: We thought it would be most appropriate for the President of the American Birth Control League to preside for this final session of the conference.

MRS. SANGER (*presiding*): We have a few papers that are going to be read this afternoon—papers that have taken a great deal of study and a great deal of thought, and they are from authorities on this subject. First we will ask Dr. Johnson to read the paper by Dr. C. V. Drysdale, of London.

Dr. Drysdale who is advocating the Malthusian theory, is himself a scientist, and his mother and father and he himself, have been working to bring out this idea of Malthus for a long time. They take quite a different attitude in England on this question, and a much more scholarly attitude than we do here, and it is mainly owing to the work of Mr. Drysdale.

### BIRTH CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT

*By C. V. Drysdale, O. B. E., D. Sc. (London), F. R. S. E.,*

*President of the Malthusian League, London*

**A**MONG the larger questions which agitate the minds of all civilized people today, few transcend in importance that of the avoidance of war and the reduction of the burden of huge armaments. The hideous conflict from which the world has recently emerged bleeding, exhausted, and impoverished, and which has had its awful sequel in the strikes and labor unrest consequent upon the dislocation of industry, has united all thinking people in a detestation of war, and in a determination to prevent its recurrence.

Out of this praiseworthy zeal, the League of Nations and the proposals for limitation of armaments have been born. With both of these developments all earnest humanitarians must be heartily in sympathy, but we must not let our en-

thusiasm blind us to practical realities, and prevent us from giving consideration to every difficulty which may stand in the way of success.

One thing is of good omen. The late war has justified to the hilt the contention of Mr. Norman Angell that the idea that nations may profit by conquest in war is a "Great Illusion." There is not a nation in the world which has not suffered grievously by the war; and although certain individuals may have profited financially by it, the terrible unrest caused by the increase in the cost of living and growth of anarchy must seriously militate against their enjoyment of their gains.

Why then, should we fear the possibility of further wars? Surely the object lesson now before us should be sufficient to convince the statesmen of the whole world of the folly, as well as the barbarity of rushing into suicidal conflict. Why should we not beat our swords into ploughshares and settle down into peaceful industry, secure in the belief that no nation will again commit the criminal folly of letting loose the dogs of war?

But I doubt if anyone, except a few blind idealists, will be ready to take this view; and certainly present events do not encourage us so to do. Greece and Turkey, Spain and Morocco, and some of the newly-created countries have broken out into conflict, in spite of the object lesson and of the strenuous efforts of other nations to prevent them. The embers of wrath are smouldering so fiercely in Europe, that the whole continent is in a state of constant watchfulness and military preparation. Few who are in touch with the situation would be bold enough to assert that there is no possibility of another great war breaking out within a few years, even between the nations who have suffered most heavily by the last one. The League of Nations has been formed and is working strenuously, but even its greatest well-wishers would hesitate to confide the fate of their own countries to its protective efforts. There seems indeed to be some Great Fact which Mr. Norman Angell has overlooked in his "Great Illusion," and of which people are vaguely, if not definitely, conscious, that drives nations into



war, in spite of all assertions and proofs that they cannot expect to gain by it.

Now is there such a compelling agency, and if so, what is it? Yes, there is, and it is the pressure of population. It is surely unnecessary to labor this point in view of the utterances which came to light in the course of the late war. The greatest statesmen and military geniuses of the ages—to cite only Aristotle, Bacon, Napoleon, General Brialmont, and the ex-Kaiser—have recognized this fact, and the “biological necessity” for war was the slogan and justification of German militarism. The rapid growth of the German population and the consequent need for expansion were put forward by the militarist writers like General Bernhardt, as a justification for war, and it was accepted as an article of faith by the German people. It was a logical deduction from the Darwinian theory of the struggle for existence and the survival of the fittest, to which all educated people had paid lip service, without the courage to face its great consequence—Birth Control or war. The great crime of Germany was that after clearly recognizing this conclusion she deliberately chose the brutal course of glorifying and intensifying the struggle and its inevitable result; but the whole of the remainder of the world, or at least the conventional portion of it, must stand convicted of being accessory to the crime by also deliberately refusing to face the alternative, and by glorifying the “increase and multiply” policy which led to it.

Although the general proposition that a high birth rate leads to militarism and war is generally admitted by thinkers at the present day, especially by those who have compared the birth rates of European nations, few have given any attention to the mechanism by which it operates. It will be well, therefore, to give a little consideration to this point, as it helps to clear our minds of many misconceptions. The fundamental doctrine of Malthus, which stands as the unshakeable foundation of all rational sociology, teaches that unrestrained population always tends to press upon the means of subsistence, and that in all long settled communities it constantly does so. Today,

in every country in Europe (with the possible exception of Holland) and in the United States of America, the birth rate is still too high, in spite of its rapid decline in the last few decades, to permit of adequate provision for all the newcomers; and consequently the death-rates are higher than they should be if all the people were sufficiently well-fed. In the Eastern nations such as India and China, as well as Russia, with their enormous birth-rates, the death-rates are terribly high, betokening a constant state of semi-starvation in the great mass of the people; and although an immense improvement has taken place in Western nations with the fall of the birth-rate, there is still a greater or less proportion of the population in nearly every country in a state of chronic destitution. It is to the credit of American economists that they have kept this great fundamental truth alive in their writings, while the economic writers of the land which gave birth to Adam Smith, Malthus, Mill, Darwin, and Spencer, have allowed conventional prejudice and socialistic fallacies to dominate, or silence, their consciences.

Now, the effect of this over-population on a community depends on its temperament. Where the mass of the people are apathetic, either by nature or by religious resignation, to misery, they die off without protest or struggle, and do not menace surrounding nations. But in proportion as the people are high-spirited and are rebelling against their evil conditions, they exert a pressure against other countries, which leads to international rivalry and sooner or later to war. Almost every nation may be likened to a boiler in which steam is being generated and the pressure is continually rising. As every student of physics knows, the pressure is due to agitation of the molecules of the steam which may be likened to the individuals forming the community and their impact against each other and the walls of the boiler, the fire which produces the fresh molecules of steam being comparable to the reproductive force of humanity which produces fresh individuals. If the boiler were of easily yielding material so as to be like a balloon, the production of steam could go on practically un-

checked for a considerable time, and this would be equivalent to a new community in a large, practically unpeopled, country affording room for very rapid expansion, which was nearly the case with the United States in the early part of last century.

But a time must come sooner or later when the available space is practically occupied and the pressure begins to rise. It can, however, be kept to a fairly low value if the boiler is leaky. The leaks for population which may prevent the pressure rising to the bursting point are all those agencies which cause premature death—starvation, pestilence, disease, infanticide, crime, drunkenness, and noxious drugs, etc. If people are willing tamely to submit to this leakage without effective protest, as in China and to a less degree in India, they will not exert a pressure on their frontiers and neighbors, and will not be aggressive. Emigration is another leak which may help to keep down the pressure. But in scientific progressive nations the leaks are being continually stopped up. Medical science and sanitation made the start by rapidly reducing the pestilence and disease leaks, and during the last few decades the masses of all civilized countries have awakened from their submission to the starvation check by making stronger and stronger demands upon the economic resources of their countries. Emigration has also been checked, both by the increase of pressure in other countries, which has made it less advantageous, and by the embargo which one nation after another has recently been putting on the emigration of pauper aliens. In consequence, the pressure of population has tended to rise; and had it not been for the counteracting effect of Birth Control which has to some extent mitigated this tendency, it is safe to say that militarism would have been more rampant and wars more frequent than they have been. Justification for this view may be offered at this point by calling attention to the fact that the lowest birth-rate nations—France, Holland, Belgium, Scandinavia, the United Kingdom, Switzerland, etc., have been remarkably pacific in their recent tendencies as compared with the higher birth-rate nations—Germany, Russia, the Balkans, etc.



The process which leads to war can thus be clearly seen. Even in primitive society, where lawlessness, ignorance and superstition make for a high death-rate, the expansive force of reproduction is so great that famine is of periodical occurrence and intertribal warfare results. As civilization advances, diplomacy and international agreements step in, tending to preserve peace; but at the same time medical science, sanitation, and humanitarian legislation stop up the leaks and intensify the pressure, even in the face of a falling birth-rate. The internal resources of most long-settled countries being insufficient to provide food for their inhabitants, a commercial struggle ensues in which each country tries to produce goods to exchange for the food of other less crowded countries. For this purpose it is necessary to capture the most important markets and to produce goods at the lowest possible cost in order to hold them against competitors. The capturing of markets leads to international jealousy and friction, and the process is intensified by the continual efforts of the wage-earners through strikes and agitation to get higher wages and thus increase the cost of production. Just as in the case of our steam boiler, any pressure in one part is diffused through the mass and tends to strain it to the bursting point. The rivalry and friction grow in spite of the efforts of the diplomatists to allay them, until the explosion comes and the world is plunged into war.

The importance of this aspect of the question is that it puts a totally different face on the origin of war to that which is popularly imagined. The popular idea is that war is caused by the ambition of rulers, or the machinations of greedy capitalists, and that the well-meaning masses who desire to live at peace with their neighbors are hounded into war for the vanity or avarice of these evil workers. However plausible this may appear on the surface, it is an absolutely false view of the situation. We are all responsible for war, and we must realize our responsibility if we wish to prevent its recurrence. I do not mean that we are all equally responsible in fact or intention; but no pacifist or socialist can stand aside and say that because he has a horror of war and has written in denun-



ciation of it he is absolved from responsibility for it. On the contrary, all those who have spent their time in preaching vain ideas instead of in increasing production, and all those who have attempted to wrest a greater share of the produce of the community through labor agitation or demand for humanitarian legislation, have assisted in increasing the competitive struggle between nations in order to supply their needs or demands and have contributed largely to the forcing on of war. The medical profession in its constant conflict with death, and in its succor of unfit types, has been a most powerful war maker. It is true that when the pressure is high there are certain rulers and individuals who see a prospect of advantage to themselves in a war, and may cause a somewhat premature explosion; but the pressure and rivalry arise from the mass of people, and the machinations of emperors and capitalists would be of no avail if the pressure were not there.

This is the meaning of the German "biological necessity for war" which is remorselessly true, unless the birth-rate of each country is restricted to the level which enables its inhabitants to live on its own resources or on the amount of foreign trade which arises from an actual desire on the part of other countries to obtain their manufactures. Unless this is recognized as a fundamental principle by the League of Nations its efforts will be of very little value and no sane patriotic people will be willing to disarm and entrust the security of their country to its imaginary protection.

But now that Birth Control is available and that the great majority of people are eager to avail themselves of it, the whole outlook is changed. If the knowledge of hygienic methods of Birth Control were made available to all adult people, as the most elementary principle of liberty demands that it should be, all young people could marry early and only have as many children as they could bring up comfortably by their own unaided efforts, the competitive pressure of each family against its neighbors would be removed, and the pressure of the whole nation against its frontiers or neighbors would disappear with it. If this happy state of affairs comes to pass in a few years,

as it appears likely to do in some of the great European nations at least, the shadow of militarism will recede, the League of Nations will gain real power, and progressive disarmament can be undertaken without fear.

There are many who will admit the justice of this view, but maintain their opposition to Birth Control on the ground that it is unsafe for one nation to diminish its birth-rate in advance of other nations. This is the most serious difficulty in the situation, and it needs vigorous handling by the advocates of Birth Control.

What I specially want to make clear is that *Birth Control, while diminishing the aggressiveness of a country, actually increases its defensive powers.* Just as the same wind may cool a hot body and warm a cold one, so Birth Control will diminish militarism and increase military strength, and there is no greater paradox in the one statement than in the other. Surely it is patent by this time that large populations enfeebled by want are not a source of military strength. China, Russia, and India have the largest populations in the world, but no one seriously regards them as great military powers. Any danger which exists in the East does not arise from them, but from the Asiatic country which has the smallest population and the lowest birth-rate—Japan.

But now comes the point when the true meaning of the population question appears, and which shows why birth-controllers ought to give the greatest possible attention to the fundamental Malthusian doctrine.

*Birth Control, especially when eugenically applied, does not lessen the numbers and even causes them to increase more rapidly.*

This is the most important matter from the national standpoint which we can possibly deal with. It is perfectly simple, but it seems very difficult for most people to understand it.

Imagine a family living alone on a small islet, and therefore composing a small state in itself, with just enough food to support the husband and wife and four children. If the parents have four children all will be well, and they can bring them

up to vigorous maturity. But suppose they have 12 children. The eight additional mouths to be fed will mean a reduction of rations all around; and unless the parents deliberately make a selection of the four which are to survive and let the others perish quickly, the attempt to preserve all will lead to such a serious weakening of the whole family that the whole of the children may die, or at most only one or two survive. In other words, the arrival of each child beyond the maximum actually diminishes the amount of survival, besides seriously impairing the vigour of those who do survive. Consequently, if by Birth Control the parents are able to restrict their family to the number they can feed properly, they will actually gain a greater and more efficient increase than if they have an unlimited family.

A nation is simply a congeries of such families, and what is true for the family is true for the nation as a whole. When we observe the individual families of a nation, the rule does not appear to hold, as we find many instances of families of ten or a dozen children in which the bulk have survived. But this is generally because such families have received assistance either from the State or from other individuals, which means that they have received supplementary rations from the common stock. The result is that through taxation or high prices others are either prevented from marrying or (if they have Birth Control knowledge) limit their families to a greater extent than they would otherwise have done. Celibacy and very small families are common among the educated, prudent, and public-spirited classes, because of the increasing burden laid upon them by the large families of the poor and ignorant. Although, therefore, it may appear to the superficial observer that large families are the great source of increase of population, this is certainly untrue when the whole of the phenomena are taken into account.

Today, owing to the ignorance of Birth Control methods, we have the degrading spectacle of a large section of poor women condemned to the torture of bringing forth an unlimited number of weakly underfed children, partially supported by the

efforts of the educated classes, whose women are denied marriage or maternity in consequence. I have shown, and the experience of France confirms it, that if all women married and had an average of three children, the increase of population of any European country would be as high as it is now, as this would mean a 50% increase in under 30 years, or a doubling of population in about 50 years. Any attempt to increase faster than this has the same results for the nation as for the isolated family—a high death rate and an actual reduction of the rate of increase owing to the useless consumption of abbreviated lives, and a reduction of efficiency from under-nutrition. Birth Control for the nation, as for the family, actually enables the population to increase faster by eliminating useless consumption of food. And, further, if it is selectively applied, so that the poorest, diseased and least efficient types reproduce less, as natural inclination would lead them to do, the efficiency of the race and its productive power would be increased, and a more rapid increase of population could be sustained.

“Pure theory,” it will be objected. But the fact confirms it. In the majority of European countries the birth-rate has been steadily declining during the past four decades at least, the starting point of the decline being in many cases the Bradlaugh and Besant trial of 1876, which was the means of spreading contraceptive information all over the world. But in every case the death-rate has fallen with the birth-rate, and in some instances at an even greater rate, so that the rate of natural increase of population is actually greater now than before the decline of the birth-rate set in, just as our theory indicated. Even in France, which has so often been held up as a terrible example of a “dying nation,” and in which the birth-rate fell from 38.9 per 1000 before the Revolution to 20.6 per 1000 in the decade 1901-1910 (see Fig. 2), the death-rate fell from 37 to 19.4 per 1000, so that she was still slowly increasing in numbers at the rate of 1.2 per 1000 per annum, and almost as fast as when her birth-rate was nearly double the pre-war figure. The low average increase of France is explainable not



by her low birth-rate but by the fact that her food resources can only be increased very slowly, as her agriculture was developed to a very high degree even before the Revolution, and she has had very few mineral resources to enable her to be a successful manufacturing nation. As Ontario, in Canada, with a similar birth-rate, had a death-rate of only 10 per 1000, or a 9 per 1000 increase, it is obvious that France could greatly increase its acceleration of population by decreasing its death-rate if its food supply permitted, and that appeals for an increase of its birth-rate are worse than futile.

Germany has witnessed an extraordinary fall in its birth-rate since 1876 (see Fig. 3), but its rate of increase up to the beginning of the war remained practically as high as ever. In fact the rate of increase of Western Europe (Fig. 4) has shown a steady acceleration since the decline of the birth rate set in, in 1876.

Holland, however, shows the most remarkable verification of this theory. As is now fairly generally known, the Neo-Malthusian movement in Holland, which started in 1881, was able to work almost from its inception with greater freedom than in any other country, and to give Birth Control information freely to the poor. Thus Holland is the only country in which Birth Control has had an opportunity of being exercised on eugenic lines. The result has been exactly what Neo-Malthusians predicted (see Fig. 5). The birth-rate has fallen from 37 per 1000 in 1876 to 28 in 1912, but the death-rate has fallen from about 23 per 1000 to 12.3. So the rate of natural increase has actually risen from 14 to 15.7 during the period, and before the war it was about the highest in Europe. The infantile mortality has also fallen rapidly and regularly; and the general death-rate in Amsterdam and the Hague, the two great centres of the propaganda, was only 11.2 and 10.9 respectively in 1912, the lowest for any large towns in Europe, and nearly as low as the record death-rate (about 9.5) for New Zealand.

And the effect on the national physique, as evidenced by the Army returns, is no less marked. Since 1865 the proportion

of young men of over 5' 7" in height has risen from 24.5 to 47.5% while that of those under 5' 2½" has fallen from 25 to under 8%. Indeed, Dr. Soren Hansen at the first Eugenics Congress actually asserted that the average stature of the Dutch people had increased by 4 inches within 50 years.

Whether this is due to Birth Control, as we Neo-Malthusians contend, or not, these facts prove beyond the possibility of dispute that a considerable reduction of the birth-rate may take place with an actual acceleration of numbers and an immense improvement in military efficiency, which is exactly what we have contended. But in spite of this rapid increase of strength, Holland has certainly not shown the least sign of military ambition or aggressiveness. She is able now to live on her agriculture and industry without undue stress, and she asks nothing more than to live at peace with the world. We never even hear of her in connection with the international complications and disputes, although the intense patriotism of the Dutch people needs no proof.

It cannot therefore be gainsaid that the only country in which Neo-Malthusian propaganda has been given fairly free play, and in which the mass of the people are able to regulate their families in accordance with their own desires, has completely vindicated our contention that a universal knowledge of Birth Control strengthens a country for defence while removing all cause for offence. If the example of Holland were followed by the whole civilized world, each country would become so strong and at the same time so pacific that the risk of war would rapidly disappear and the League of Nations would be able steadily to gain such support and strength that its protective power could be relied upon, and disarmament could be undertaken by all Powers simultaneously without danger. Until this happy state of affairs exists, however, the only rational step is to aim for a *federation of all the low birth-rate nations*. Scandinavia, Holland, Belgium, Great Britain, France, Switzerland, United States, Australasia, Canada, and now even perhaps Germany and Austria, have already lowered their birth-rates well below the 30 per 1000 mark, and should be

ready to bind themselves into a Federation which will not only keep the peace in Europe, but form an impregnable protection against any possible attack from the East. But if the opponents of Birth Control keep up their senseless and suicidal repression, and keep the poor in misery and ignorance, nothing can prevent constant labor unrest with its injurious effect upon industry, over-population, and international rivalry for markets, with the friction it engenders and the need for huge armaments to back up this rivalry; while on the other hand the class hatred and suspicion born of evil economic conditions will inevitably tend to ever greater national insecurity. The opponents of Birth Control are the greatest enemies of peace and prosperity, and it matters not how loudly they proclaim the ideal of international brotherhood so long as they maintain this opposition.

Another most serious factor in the situation nowadays is that if the mass of the people are discontented and at war with society they may form a most formidable menace to the power of their country in time of war by strikes and the holding up of the production of munitions, etc. Nearly every nation was seriously weakened by this difficulty in the late war, and there can be no doubt that this difficulty will be more grave in the future unless economic conditions are improved by Birth Control.

The Neo-Malthusian formula for attaining lasting peace and removing the need for armaments is therefore as follows:

(1) Birth Control information should be made freely accessible to all adult married persons so that people may marry early and regulate their families in accordance with their health and economic position, without seeking help from others.

(2) The fall of the birth-rate should be encouraged so long as it produces a nearly corresponding decrease of the death-rate, and each country should strive to secure that its death-rate does not exceed the 9 or 10 per 1000 of New Zealand.

(3) While encouraging Birth Control in their own countries, all true patriots should join in assisting missionary Birth

Control propaganda in all high birth-rate countries, and especially in Russia and the East.

(4) While not putting at present too great faith in international efforts, such as the League of Nations, every nation ought to assist them by all means in its power in order that they may become effective as the birth-rate falls in all countries. But they should also insist that the League of Nations should recognize the population difficulty and regulate its policy and decisions in relation to it.

(5) While waiting for and assisting the reduction of the birth-rate in all backward nations, a Federation of Low Birth-Rate Nations should be formed for mutual support and protection, to which other nations should be admitted as their birth-rates fall, say to below 30 per 1000. These nations can agree among themselves upon a certain limitation of armament consistent with presenting an impregnable united defence to outside aggression.

(8) The Federation, as the nations successively reduce their birth-rates to the point of being admitted to it, will grow in power until the point is reached when it can dictate limitation of armaments to all other nations and constitute itself into an international authority holding sufficient power to enforce its decisions without needing more than a moderate force to back it. From that time onwards all international questions will be regulated by the international law laid down by the Federation and war will be definitely eliminated.

There is nothing Utopian about this programme. It is based on a full recognition of the causes and past necessity for war and not on any vain appeal to high sentiment. It does not call for any immediate sacrifice on the part of any nation for a risky experiment, but gives a procedure whereby the path of pacifism may be steadily followed, however gradually, until the goal is reached.

It is hoped that the above statement will prove clear and convincing, and that it will lead to the adoption of the following resolution, which has been drawn up in conformity with these views:



“This meeting desires to call the attention of all those who are desirous of maintaining international peace and securing the limitation of armaments to the supreme importance of the population question. We maintain that the pressure of population caused by too high birth-rates inevitable causes an economic rivalry between nations which forces them into war, even against their inclination, and in spite of all efforts of pacifists, or realization of the horrors and economic evils of war. While, therefore, we cordially endorse the aims of the League of Nations and the desirability of limitation of armaments we would impress upon all supporters of these ideals that they should seek to realize them by the following means:

(a) By assisting the Birth Control movement to disseminate the knowledge of hygienic methods of Birth Control especially among the poor and unfit of all nations, with the object of reducing economic stress and eliminating poverty and unfitness, which forces nations into war, but weakens them in times of crisis. The reduction of the Birth Rate in all nations should be encouraged in its own interests, so long as the death-rate falls *pari passu* with it, and it may be provisionally assumed from the examples of New Zealand, Australia and Holland that a death rate of about 10 per 1000 should be aimed at as marking the termination of economic stress.

(b) By urging on the League of Nations that it should endorse the above policy, and that it should define its attitude to the population question, either by admitting the right of rapidly increasing nations to expansion of territory at the expense of slowly increasing ones, or by laying down the principle that each nation must control its population so as to be able to maintain its inhabitants in comfort within the area assigned to it, and that it shall have no right to demand increase of territory or to force other nations to receive its emigrants if it does not exercise this control.

(c) By advocating the formation of a Federation of Low Birth-Rate Nations including all those with birth-rates of 30 per 1000 or less, and commencing with the United States, the United Kingdom, Scandinavia, Holland, Belgium, France,

Switzerland, Australasia and Canada, bound together for mutual defence against aggression."

THE CHAIRMAN: I think we all recognize that the forces of opposition are breaking down gradually, and it may be pertinent to say that a good deal of the success of this movement is going to depend upon you. It is going to depend upon how much support you will give us who are directing and guiding this movement. It is open for your suggestions and it is open for your help.

We intend to direct our movement so that the force of opposition will be lessened. I think that the first thing is that we intend to offset the opposition by our methods of disseminating this information of Birth Control. We are going to put it into the hands of scientists and into the hands of the medical profession. This will safeguard the information from being promiscuously circulated. Our aim is not only to open the doors so that physicians may give information in their regular practice, but also that clinics may be established for the particular purpose of giving such information when women come and request it. I think that this offsets the argument of the opposition that boys and girls are going to have this information, and it is going to be promiscuously passed throughout the country. Under present condition there may be places where printed literature is important. But, nevertheless, the immediate thing is to have individual instruction given to women who need it by people who are informed and who are capable of directing and informing the individual woman concerning her particular problem.

We found last night from the crowded room of physicians, that the whole medical profession was not in agreement as to any one method, and that is what we have always contended, that there is no one magic means of Birth Control, that each woman must be met individually with her particular physiology, and her particular economic problem, and the physician or the person in charge must direct the best possible means for her particular position. That is the first step by which to avoid or break down the opposition.

SOME THOUGHTS ON THE MEDICAL ASPECTS  
OF BIRTH CONTROL

*By Dr. W. F. Robie, Baldwinville, Mass.*

*(Dr. Robie's paper has been published elsewhere and is omitted at his request.)*

## BIRTH CONTROL AND PSYCHOANALYSIS

*By Dr. André Tridon, New York*

I WOULD like to examine this afternoon the problem of Birth Control, not from a theoretical but from a perfectly practical point of view.

I am not interested at all in knowing whether Birth Control is moral or immoral. That does not interest me at all for one very good reason. Every one on earth excepting the very stupid and very ignorant is practising Birth Control. It is not a question of trying to influence the masses and make them consider the thing as moral or immoral. We have to deal with one tremendous fact. The masses are practising it, with the exception, as I said before, of the stupid and the ignorant and the so-called lower races. But as you know very well, every new step toward comfort means a new step toward more complete Birth Control.

And I cannot say that I am very interested in knowing whether Birth Control is legal or illegal. Legislation as a rule is about a hundred years late in expressing public opinion. And if we wait for legislation to make it legal, we will have to enlighten first those packs of yokel editors, small village lawyers, and former bar tenders who make up the parliaments of almost every nation. But it will take too long and in the meantime women will be dying. We cannot wait for those enlightened parliaments of the world to make something legal. There are many legal reasons for which an abortion can be performed. You might just as well call things by their names, since we are met for the purpose of discussion. A woman who is suffering from tuberculosis, a woman who has kidney or heart trouble, or suffering from a hemorrhage, can call upon a physician to have an abortion performed legally. The day

when our physicians and our less stupid representatives in parliament realize the meaning of fear, they will probably add fear of pregnancy to the new causes for which an abortion can be legally performed.

When I speak of fear of pregnancy I mean that fear as accepted especially among the class of women who would be likely to consult me professionally, among neurotics, who otherwise are called nervous or hysterical women.

I have seen cases which are extremely tragic. I do not agree with Freud that every mental disturbance should be traced to some slight sexual abnormality. There are thousands of other things which may vex a mind. At the same time we cannot deny, no one can deny the tremendous and terrifying influence of the sex phenomena in our modern life. We so lie, we are so hypocritical about it, we pretend so much, that we have created a terrifying mystery of sex and of the various consequences of the sex life. And whenever there is a disturbance of the mental process known as neurosis or insanity, we find that wherever there is a sexual difficulty it is amplified beyond measure by the neurotic. In about a dozen cases which have come to my observation I have seen that fear of consequences and fear of abortion were really at the bottom of at least fifty per cent of the trouble as it was exhibited in my office.

In a neurotic there is a decided refusal—and this is after all the most modern definition of the neurosis especially of a neurotic woman—there is an absolute refusal to fulfill one's biological duties. By duties I mean, of course, duties in the scientific and biological sense. There is a refusal based very often on some fear which is based in its turn on a certain feeling of inferiority. Study a neurotic woman and she will some time or other express a fear, which is not a fake, which is genuine, that should she give birth to children they will probably be insane or neurotic or inferior, as she imagines that she is. Now, then, with our present legislation when we force a nervous woman to have children, what are the results? Either she bears them or she does not. If she does, she bears children who are not wanted, who are not welcome. I do not believe in



more than ten per cent there is the so-called influence of heredity. I don't believe at all in prenatal influence, because you know that the child in the mother's body is completely isolated from the mother's body and has no nervous connection with the mother's body at all. But I believe that as soon as the child is born it begins at once to feel automatically through its nervous system that it is not wanted, that it is an intruder. I believe that if a neurotic did not want the child, the child will every moment of its life feel that it is inferior, that it is not like other children. And finally, by allowing the neurotic to have children, it will cause another generation of neurotics, not I believe because that neurosis is transmitted by any way of heredity, but because I know that imitation is one of the most tremendous factors in real life, and that the child of a neurotic will probably imitate his father or mother, whichever one is neurotic. Hence, as far as the results of our present legislation are concerned, I see two tragedies for two generations. The neurotic woman will be compelled to bear children which she does not want to bear. One generation will be tortured by that; and the next generation, probably as neurotic as the first, will also be a victim of the law. In other words, I see two victims of two generations of that marvelous law of ours. Or, in spite of the law, the neurotic woman who becomes pregnant will have an abortion performed.

First of all, before she becomes pregnant, all her sex life will be simply tortured by the fear of possible pregnancy. Investigate all those cases of psychic incidents of the rigidity of women. Investigate all those cases of curious pains, curious so-called female trouble; investigate many of those unlocated pains which have caused the removal of so many normal, healthy ovaries; investigate so many medical cases which my medical confreres probably have discussed with you, and always at the bottom of those troubles, if you investigate far enough, if your cross examination is ruthless enough, you will always find the fear of the consequences, terribly magnified, and the fear that if some means of contraception go wrong, there will be a pregnancy; and even with the possibility of

finding a physician willing to perform an abortion, there is the fear of something going wrong and poisoning setting in. And those of you familiar with the operation necessary to abort a fœtus know that what kills the woman from that operation is not septic poisoning, but septic poisoning induced by fear of that operation. The fear of operation has killed more people than the operation itself. Those of you familiar with the chemical changes which take place in the blood know that fear may cause almost anything, from poisoning to melancholy, to death itself.

Our legislation prevents abortion just about as much as the Volstead law prevents getting drunk. The problem for the average man in New York City is not to find alcohol, but to dodge bootleggers. That has been my experience. The only difference in our situation since the Volstead law is that instead of getting excellent beer cheap, or good wines, we can only buy wood alcohol, slightly modified, colored or perfumed.

The same thing happens in the field of preventing abortions. We have quacks, only quacks at present, who dare openly be known as performing abortions, although I suppose that 99 physicians out of a hundred will do it if you will pay the price and if you know them very well. That law transforms us into liars, transforms us into hypocrites, and the results are deplorable.

I would like to give you very briefly one or two cases, although I think a brief outline of those cases won't sound very real to you. There was a woman who had four children, and after the fourth one decided not to have a fifth one. And after consulting with a few friends of hers she was referred to a midwife. She had no confidence at all in that woman—there was no one else who was willing to perform the operation. Going to that operating table in that splendid frame of mind, we can imagine what the results were. There was septic poisoning and for about three months she was between life and death, wondering whether she would die or live, when a physician performed a curettage and she survived. After that, conscience, which, roughly speaking, means the fear of ex-

posure and the law, began to hurt her. I am not speaking theoretically, I want to be practical and just pass information exactly as it was, regardless of what it sounds like. I never care what my things sound like. Truth never sounds very nice. Truth, as you know, could not appear on Fifth Avenue because she goes about naked. The police would take liberties with her on that account. They always do. So that woman then recovered, and after that, as she was naturally neurotically inclined, and should never have had children, began to build up a beautiful fancy that she was one of the greatest murderesses on earth. She felt extremely sinful. She began to develop a neurotic fancy that she had destroyed a human life, hence a sinner and murderess, and began logically to decide that as long as she was a sinner, a murderess, a degenerate, her children, according to the beautiful laws of heredity, would also be sinners, degenerates, murderers, and therefore it would be better if she had never brought them into the world. At any rate, it would be better if they died, and when she was brought to my office, she had tried twice to kill her four children. That is one of the results.

In another case there was a woman who began to detest and hate her husband with an absolutely maniacal, furious hatred, because after having three children he suggested that if there was a fourth pregnancy the foetus be removed. She began to build up all kinds of images that he was a murderer, had made her a murderess, hence would again create murderers and murderesses and degenerates and so on in the shape of children, and there was about the same process—she tried to kill him.

In one case there was a neurotic woman who had an abortion the very first time she was pregnant. The abortion was performed in her home, and relatives living in the same house, of course, suspected something, and were nosing around, trying to find out. People with an empty mind pretending to be scientifically curious, want to know what we had for breakfast this morning. She felt that exposure would come. That one of them would talk about it. And she began to hate those people, moved from house to house to avoid them, and finally

managed to be turned into an asylum, from which she escaped. She came to consult me, and I managed to get a confession about those people, and then she felt freer.

I don't know how many of these examples I could quote to-night if I had the time.

What is the conclusion? Let us come to a practical conclusion. Are we going to wait for parliament? I told you just what I thought of parliament. We must not wait. Hence what shall we do? Then again, let us state our facts without being ashamed of them. We should not be ashamed of anything biological anyway. The facts are that everybody who knows is practicing contraception or abortion. The facts are that information of the most unscientific, of the most unreliable, of the most romantic kind is being given to anxious, hysterical women by other women who are quite as hysterical and quite as scared. It is exactly like the famous question asked me so many times, should we enlighten children about sex. Well, they do get enlightened by dirty little playmates of the same age who know nothing about it. Between the age of seven and the age of fourteen we learn about sex everything which is to be known which is not so. We learn the dirty romance of sex at the very early age. The question which is asked me all the time is this, Should our doctor and family physician impart clean knowledge about sex? Or should we keep our children pure by letting the gutter enlighten them? This is the choice. Most of us when we reach sexual majority, are enlightened about sex and the prevention of birth this way. We are learning from whispered conversations. Whispered advice of the most conflicting kind. It may come from people who know nothing about it. The family physician was not supposed to impart any of that information to us. Scientists are not supposed to do it unless they want to spend five years as boarders of Uncle Sam and maybe pay five thousand dollars after that, one or the other or both.

In other words, what should be done? As I said before, I do not believe in waiting for parliament to make it legal. I believe in forming in every city, town and village, study circles



at which every one of us shall receive absolutely accurate instruction from physicians, preferably gynecologists and physiologists in good standing, absolutely accurate information as to the physiology of sex and motherhood. After which some of us may not have to ask any other questions but can come to the conclusions immediately as to what manner of Birth Control and contraceptive means are the best for us.

I also believe one thing, that the meaning of the perfectly insignificant operation called abortion should be made clear to all women who have been mothers several times, and who are planning to have no more children. As I said before, the operation is extremely insignificant, much less dangerous than having your nails manicured, or having your face shaved in a more or less antiseptic barber shop. As I say, very few women are killed by the operation of abortion as such, and those who die from it do so because of the fear that has been instilled into them, which has made them absolutely unfit to submit to any surgical operation without a vital disturbance to their blood stream, which generally lays some part of their body open in infection.

You may tell me, of course, that we will be breaking the law by doing so. Well, there was a famous man who said that in many cases the law was an ass. And when we discover that the law can bring a great deal of unhappiness to two generations, and no happiness to any one, then in that case we might also say that that law is an ass. And if there is another psycho-analyst in the room, I would remind him that if he is afraid of breaking the law, the first psycho-analyst in the history of the science, old Doctor Socrates, also broke the laws of Athens, and was put to death. And I might tell the minister that Jesus once broke the law of the Cæsars, and was put to death also. I might remind them that Galileo once broke the law of his native land and went to jail. And yet we are rather thankful to those three law breakers, and we have quite idealized one of them. Hence breaking the law should not be the subject of too many fears. When you are feeling that you are breaking the law not to further your own personal private

selfish happiness, but the happiness of the community, then breaking the law is not a crime, but a public duty.

MRS. MITCHELL: I would just like to say that I feel we should obey the law. Real patriotic Americans legislate and continue to legislate until we change things.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think the question of legality is quite settled in the principles and aims of the league as far as we are concerned. We know that we have to change the laws. There is no question of that. The law in the state of New York will allow physicians to give information to women or to men for the cure or prevention of disease. That is as far as we can go in the State of New York. And we are going to repeal the law. We are going to arouse the people so that they won't tolerate the law, so that normal, healthy women may have the information and keep themselves well.

MRS. MITCHELL: I believe in Birth Control and do everything I can for it. I would like to say that in the middle western cities, these articles of prevention are sold and displayed in all the drugstore windows. In Detroit, in Chicago, even in the little villages. I remember as a little girl seeing them, and there is an explanatory article in the window concerning them. I never even thought about it.

MR. GIBBONS: I am a lawyer and am a good deal interested in the subject. The difficulty with changing legislation is that the average legislator is a great coward. He is willing to introduce any number of bills and even to work for them in the legislature and vote for legislation he does not know anything about, or care anything about but when it comes to taking anything off the statute books, it is a different matter. That is why the statute law in each state constantly increases and why American jurisprudence is coming to be the laughing stock of the world. Then we have the case law which is made necessary by the interpretation of all those various statutes by the judges, so that, even if it is rare for a lawyer to say it, people are justified in breaking laws that become practically dead letters. The speaker here was referring to a law which is a dead letter in all parts of the country. We here on the Atlantic seaboard

are tinctured with a remnant of puritanism and we are so puritanical about certain things. This is one of the things that fusses us, and there is a great deal that goes on under cover about which we don't know very much at all. In other parts of the country where they are franker, in the middle west, these laws are openly violated and nobody says anything about it.

DR. GOLDSTEIN: May I say in the first place, that I think that in dealing with the subject of Birth Control, we ought to recognize that we are discussing a subject that is exceedingly delicate, and to most of us sacred. The birth of a child, the conception of a child, is a sacred, mysterious, miraculous thing, and you and I ought to discuss it in that way. I think it is a dangerous thing to drag down the subject of Birth Control to a low level. We want to raise it to the highest possible level, to the level where men and women will feel that we are allowing our pious sentiments to control us in the discussion and furtherance of a great social movement. In no other way, men and women, will you be able to win the support of the leaders of public opinion, those who are endeavoring to further social welfare. That is a very important point, it seems to me, to keep in mind.

In the second place, we must not be discouraged because the laws at the present time prohibit us from doing certain things. Laws do change. Any one who has made a study of social legislation knows that laws do change, and that legislatures do pass new laws, and that even courts occasionally reverse themselves. And courts are prepared to reverse themselves on a number of questions. I recall very well when Mrs. Sanger was indicted, and I know exactly what has happened, and I know that Mrs. Sanger is today serving as chairman of the American Birth Control Conference. This is evidence of the fact that we are making progress in our legislation, and that judges are coming to understand what should be done in the interest of social welfare. I know that the judges in New York City at least recognize in Mrs. Sanger a great protagonist for social progress, and look upon her as an advocate of wider, and

higher, and nobler womanhood. That is the change that has taken place in this city within the last ten or fifteen years.

May I urge also upon you the necessity of trying to win as far as you can the support of those who are really striving to lead the masses of mankind. Of course, I mean those who are standing in the pulpits of our country. After all, it is not a question of whether we shall or shall not have Birth Control. It seems to me that the principal thing we must do is this: to bring men and women who today are practicing the Birth Control principle to the point where they will be willing to express themselves frankly in public, and where they will be prepared to say "That which we know and that which we are doing shall be given to and shall be done by the masses of men and women who today are suffering because of their ignorance." In other words, the whole question is simply this. Not, shall we have Birth Control, but shall you and I give to the great masses of the people in New York City the knowledge which we have in order that they may save themselves as we are doing, and in order that through saving themselves they may be able to save the future. That is the whole problem of Birth Control.

#### DUTCH OPINION

*By Professor Herman M. Bernelot Moens*

*Anthropologist, Holland*

WE SAY in the Dutch language . . . I am not so familiar with the English language as with the other language, so I have difficulty in translating it. But the significance is, to begin directly with the real thing. In Holland we have no Statue of Liberty, but we have a Birth Control clinic. That clinic was founded already in 1875. To see what you can do here, I think you have to find out, if you have not already done that, what are the real enemies, and why can't you do here as we do there. What are the enemies? I think, generally, ignorance, and more directly the church and the government. The government is not what it should be, and the church is not as it should be. I think if they were as they should be, you could have clinics here too. What are you going to do about



it? It is all right to talk about it, and say it is wonderful. But don't talk about things. Do them. What can be done? I found here that there was that section 211 of the Federal Penal Code that can be used for nearly everything. For things that are obscene and for things that are not obscene. How do I know about it, as a Hollander who comes to this country not having studied law?

I came to this country to study races and mixed races, as an anthropologist, which I have been doing for years. So I did not know much about these things, and of course when I came in I saw your Statue of Liberty, and I heard always about the land of the free—liberty, equality, fraternity, democracy, justice, and all the rest, and nobody informed me of any law. It happened I had been studying mixed races, of course I studied the colored races too, white, black and all kinds of beings. It happened I came over before the war, introduced by my government, of course, and my legation, and thinking that I was well known. The idea came that here is a white man who studies negroes and does not make any money. He must be paid by the German Emperor, and the Holland people were called Dutch people, and so of course a kind of German. So having been sought out, and there was nothing to find out, they came to my home to look my things over, without any search warrant. There was nothing to find, as I thought, when they stole things during the investigation by representatives of the United States department of Justice, and what did they take? I had a whole photographic collection of these mixed races, of course. They were all made by government officials and government institutions in this country. Some of them were nudes. Two of those nudes have been stolen. These nudes have now already been published, some with a black band, and some without. They have been described by some prominent American Anthropologists as very fine photographs and as artistically, faithfully done. For those two I have been indicted for having exhibited obscene pictures; those pictures, taken by those men who came to look in my home for a spy.

Now the question is to penetrate people with what is obscene

and what is not. In Holland we consider it moral to have children when we want them, and we can take care of them. And we consider it immoral to have children when we don't want them and cannot take care of them. So I think that is the right point of view.

Now, a thing that may help your movement here, is to consider what was the result of the persecution or prosecution, just as you will call it, that I had. After it there was a lecture here in the Sunrise Club about science and prudery. All the presidents of the different Netherland Societies were there, and many prominent people, and we formed the "Science and Arts Protective Society" and I think that society is very necessary and may do a tremendous deal of good working together with the Birth Control movement. The Science and Arts Protective Society means—I will read it to you "To secure such amendments of the present laws relating to alleged obscene literature." We want to define specifically what constitutes obscenity. You know probably that Postmaster Will Hays will bring in Congress a change from that vicious Comstock law so that there will be defined exactly what is obscene. How can you protect yourself when you don't know it? I saw the photographs made. I did not know that they could attack me for them. It is ridiculous, of course. But they do it. So now I know it, and won't make any more photographs as long as I am in this country, and as long as it is not right.

The second point in the Science and Arts Society is to work for the education of the public in matters of sex and to overcome the unwholesome prudery which creates deplorable results.

The third and last point, to defend persons unjustly accused under the laws while they remain in the present objectionable condition.

I think this is our hope, all those who are in it, and who do it for the love of it, and not for pay, that we will work together with the Birth Control movement. And we hope that the result will be that you will have beside your Statue of Liberty a Birth Control clinic, or many of them, in this country.

## Miss Mary Winsor

**I**F I were to take the subject assigned to me on the program, "Birth Control Movement in Europe" it would be so vast that like Lord Bacon I should take all knowledge for my province. In the limited time that has been assigned to me, I purpose to restrict myself to Birth Control in one part of Europe, and that is Austria, German-Austria. For two reasons. In the first place, we have been so long out of touch with what our colleagues are doing in that part of the world, that it is important for us to get into touch with them again. The Birth Control movement is an international movement, and is not properly conducted unless we know what has been done all over the world. And, in the second place, I had the opportunity of being six weeks in Austria, principally in the city of Vienna, and made quite a thorough study of it.

No one can understand what they are doing in Austria who has not some idea of the terrible conditions there. I propose very briefly to give you a little background of what is going on there.

As the train from Paris crossed the Austrian border, we were standing on a siding. We saw a third class train full of peasants standing there also. We were sitting in the restaurant car eating breakfast. These people were looking in through the window, glaring steadily, looking at the food we were eating in the restaurant car.

I went all through Vienna, through the working class districts. You saw faces there that did not look human. They did not look as if they were now living. These people had a fixed look, with eyes staring and an expression as if they were coming out of a bad dream, as if they had died and were buried and came back again. They did not look sane.

We went through the hospitals. We saw little children, hundreds of them, unable to lift themselves up, with little arms and legs like tooth picks. We saw one little boy with his legs braced up with heavy leathern braces, supporting himself on crutches, a child with his little twisted body that would not grow up. The doctor said, "If you strike this boy on his arms

like that, his bones would snap." The children that are being born are being born in that condition.

I have some leaflets of the Austrian Birth Control League. They call attention to the fact that in Vienna where the worst conditions prevail, the majority of the children are kept alive through the help that is sent in from foreign countries.

An investigation undertaken among the 284,000 children found only 66 of them that were even normally nourished; 75% of them are tubercular; 22% had died in the first year of their life. The hospitals were filled with children in this bone condition. New born children are being wrapped up in newspapers, because there is nothing else to wrap them up in. They have no baby linen, they have no warm water to wash them in. They have no clothes.

When you speak to the Austrian people about their future, their faces settle into heavy lines of discouragement, because the conditions are so terrible, the rate of exchange is so low that they cannot even escape from their miserable country and go somewhere else.

That probably explains the lengths to which the Austrians are going in their demands for Birth Control. I do not offer this as propaganda. I am simply giving information about what their condition is. They are preparing to give out information, legally, about prevention of conception. There is nothing to prevent them except an obsolete press law that forbids such advertisements being put into the papers. Otherwise they are at liberty to establish clinics for the prevention of conception, but they want to go further than this. They want to be protected legally to perform abortions during the first three months of pregnancy, if such operations are performed by a physician. That is what they are struggling for. The conditions in Vienna I think produced this demand. They simply feel that it is unsafe for women to bring children into the world. The birth rate has fallen off terribly in Austria.

The Austrian Birth Control League undertook some investigations among midwives. One midwife of many years practice told them that ten years ago she had every month an



average of about thirty-one confinement cases. At present she has only from one to two confinement cases a month. The women who come to her come only to ask for advice as to how to prevent births and conception. Indeed, they are not even asking that, because, as another midwife in the rural districts said, the peasant wives knew all about such methods anyhow and were practising them.

We have heard a great deal about what happens here among the working classes. In Austria it has swept through every class, the poverty and the misery, with the exception of a very few profiteers.

We were taken to see Martha Hainisch, one of the leaders of the Women's Rights Movement. She showed us a little room in her house where she slept, dressed, did her work and received her visitors, because that is the only room in the house that she can afford to have heated during the winter months, and she said, "This is where the mother of the president of the Austrian Republic lives." So you can imagine how widespread the misery is. They are simply afraid to have children, to increase the population.

The Birth Control movement is being conducted by some of the leading physicians in Vienna, prominent citizens. I had the privilege of having a long talk with Johan Fersch, who is president of the Birth Control movement. He is a working man, born of a working class family of eleven children, and an active member of the Socialist Party, which is important, as the Socialist Party is very powerful in Austria and Germany. There are two aspects of Birth Control. One is what Mr. Maurer dwelt on, the economic aspect, and the other is the freedom of women, and although Johan Fersch is a working man and a socialist, he told me that important as the economic aspects are, he considered the freedom of the women more important still. That is the spirit in which this is being conducted. He is an apostle and a light to the women of Austria.

They were able to get Birth Control bills introduced into the Parliaments both of Austria and Germany. They were pushed by the Social-Democratic Party, not as a party, but by

members of the Social-Democratic Party. They were introduced in Austria by Adelle A. Poff. I think that it is most important for the propaganda here that we women realize that we are voters. We shall have to conduct this movement slowly and in an educational way, and if you want to educate people the best way to educate them is through politics and in political parties. I think it would be advisable when we get our Birth Control League started to find out which of our members are active in politics and make it their business, both men and women, to work for Birth Control within their respective parties, to bring those issues to the attention of the party leaders. They won't thank us for it, but we will force their attention to it to the end that they will officially indorse it, and then, in the next presidential election, we can conduct a tremendous campaign all over the country, with the advantage of having this come to the forefront of political questions and also of making the stupid party platforms of the Republican and Democratic parties have a little human interest and take up one of the great, fundamental questions.

Johan Fersch told me "Wherever we go, we take the largest hall or the largest theatre and that is not enough. It is crammed with the people, especially the women who are interested in this." It is very significant that they should have so much success in the provinces. In Vienna, though the Catholic element is strong, there are a great many Jews who are more open-minded to this question than the Catholic Church. I had to touch on the Catholic question because those questions are so in evidence in Austria. The provinces are Catholic, strongly Catholic, yet Johan Fersch told me they had such tremendous success in those provinces, which shows how thoroughly the women are roused up to this subject.

I followed the papers very closely, as I do whenever I am in a foreign country, and you could not pick up an Austrian paper without perhaps three times a week seeing reports of those terrible birth control cases, women who in desperation had performed abortions and were brought into court. The present law which they are trying to alter is very severe. If a

woman undertakes such an operation and it is not successful, she can be given from six months to a year in jail. If the operation is successful, she can be given from one year to five years at hard labor. I saw the case in the paper of a young unmarried girl. She and the midwife were brought into court for having performed an operation. She was absolutely destitute. She had no place in which to live, and she said that she thought before the poor bird came that a nest should be prepared for it, and that is why she had attempted to do away with that unborn child because she had absolutely no place in which to lay her head. That, however, did not deter the judge from giving her a prison sentence.

Johan Fersch told me that the accusation that is brought against his movement just as it is here, is that they want to help disreputable girls, that they want to help prostitutes and that sort of thing. He is conducting some of these court cases. One was the case of a mother of nineteen children, who in desperation had attempted to perform an abortion as she felt she could not endure a twentieth child. The woman was in such condition that they had to take her to court in a carriage. She could not walk. Johan Fersch was conducting her case. He turned to the judge and said, "You accuse us of helping disreputable girls. Look at this mother of nineteen children. Stand up." The woman struggled to her feet. She was as white as a sheet and shaking. She could scarcely stand. "This is one of the disreputable girls we are trying to help." He did move the judge so that he only gave her a few months in prison instead of five years.

I have some of the pamphlets that are published by the Austrian League. I will read you one or two little sentences from them. Johan Fersch himself is the author of a dozen novels dealing with the Birth Control question. One is called "The Crucifixion of Love," describing the adventures of a young married couple. The other is called "The Romance of a Childless Couple." And he and his wife, a most charming and beautiful wife, have taken up the position that they will have no children until this curse of unlimited families is re-

moved from the rest of the country. They are denying themselves children so that they can give themselves up to this work. And he brings out this point: that under the old regime in Austria, Birth Control was combatted in the interests of imperialism and militarism. He goes on to say, "Compulsory maternity is a form which is really a conscription of motherhood." That, I thought, was a very striking and good point. Then he says, "It is ridiculous in a state to take such pains to protect the embryo, but not to protect the complete life. The embryo is protected, but when the child is brought into life, the state gives it no care and no protection." "We are accused of being unnatural, but," he says, "it is the government that is unnatural, because the government is inconsistent. The state commands the creation of life, and does nothing to protect that life when it is brought into the world." "It is unnatural to fertilize a churchyard," "It is unnatural to add those we love to starvation, to misery and to early death." He says "It is ridiculous to preach this sanctity of human life, when blood has been shed in torrents on the battlefields of Europe." He says "The people who are preaching the sanctity of life are the very imperialistic and monarchistic and clerical influences who were most eager to send human beings to shed their blood during the war. It is they now who preach the sanctity of life." He takes up the question of its being immoral, and he says very truly "Conceptions of morality change from age to age and from country to country. We should consider moral what is necessary and expedient for us in our daily existence." "The birth of a child that is born into the world into suffering, that is immoral." "Morality should not have to be enforced by such laws." He speaks also of the interest of the state, the point that Mr. Maurer pointed out, that the state has no interest in, no value for beggars, for sick persons, and for criminals, and it is to the interest of the state that we should supply it with healthy children. As for the increase of prostitution, that these laws forbidding the spread of knowledge prevent many girls from early marriages, and drive many into prostitution, and therefore these laws against Birth Control increase



prostitution. Then he goes on to plead for the right of abortion in the first three months. He says that the germ is not life, but it is murder to deliberately destine your children to misery, to hunger, to suffering and starvation, and to a hurried and miserable death.

MISS ROWE: This morning we sent a telegram to the armament conference in Washington. In order to explain our position more fully, it was decided to send on to that conference an open letter, as follows:

To the Conference on Limitation of Armaments,  
Washington, D. C.

This Conference desires to draw attention to the vital importance of the population question from the point of view of national security and world peace.

If ever recurring wars are to be prevented the people in each country must be able to live in reasonable comfort within their own borders. This can only be secured by a well balanced control of the birth rate. In most countries such a control is already being practiced by a minority; but the masses are still continuing to multiply their numbers regardless of their children's prospects in life, regardless of the hideous suffering that must ensue when rival races are driven to fight with one another for room to live.

We therefore urge that all nations should publicly recognize the supreme importance of well distributed Birth Control among all classes as a means of raising the standard of human life and of guaranteeing the peace of the world.

Motion carried to send open letter.

MISS ROWE: There is also a petition to be sent to the Surgeon General of Public Health Service at Washington.

To the Surgeon General Public Health Service,  
Washington, D. C.

*We, the First American Birth Control Conference* do petition the Surgeon General of the United States Public Health Service to undertake medical research into contraceptive methods for the control of disease and publish such reports for dissemination through constituted health authorities; and

*We further petition* the Congress of the United States of America to make an appropriation in sufficient amount to undertake such studies and to publish such reports.

Motion to send petition carried.

MISS ROWE: There is another petition to be sent to Governor Miller and the governors of each state, as follows:

To His Excellency Nathan Miller,

Governor of the State of New York, Albany, N. Y.

We, the First American Birth Control Conference do petition that:

You will recommend to the next session of the General Assembly of the State of New York that a Commission be appointed to investigate the decline of the birth rate.

Motion to send petition carried.

MISS ROWE: There is another resolution to be put before the conference as follows:

While desiring a decrease of the world birth rate in general, this Conference is well aware that this should take place on the part of individuals whose progeny would less contribute to a better race and that indeed on the part of many persons of unusual racial value that their birth rate is now too low.

*Therefore, be it Resolved*, that we advocate a larger racial contribution from those who are of unusual racial value.

DR. JOHNSON: I should like to say one word about this motion. If this prevails it seems to me it would be a very great step forward. It makes the work of this conference acceptable to eugenists. I drafted that resolution from a eugenic point of view. Some eugenists have felt rather alienated from the Birth Control movement for fear that the Birth Control people would not be willing to pass such a resolution. It seems to me that the passage of such a resolution would be of great significance.

MR. LEWIS: I believe that to advocate the increase of the number of children of those people who do not want any is not bringing us forward. I think we are advocating Birth Control only for those who want it. I think that is an individual matter. I do not believe that the resolution would be of any benefit to the Birth Control movement.

DR. ROBIE: I do not wish to advocate more children for those who do not want them, but those who heard my contribution to the discussion this morning will remember that I advocated that the fit be so impressed with these matters that they would want children. That is a part, I think, a distinct part of the Birth Control movement. Not only scientific application of chemical or mechanical contraception, but the psychological removal of the inhibitions that lead to the diminution of progeny among the more fit of the community.

Motion carried.

DR. ROBIE: I wish to present the following resolution: "Whereas the proposition has been laid before Postmaster General Hays by the Voluntary Parenthood League that he recommend to Congress the revision of the postal laws, Resolved, that this American Conference for Birth Control, urges Postmaster General Hays to act favorably on this proposition as a matter of postal progress and as a service to modern science, welfare and justice."

THE CHAIRMAN: I think that is to be considered by the resolutions committee. If it has not been brought up by the committee there must be some reason for it. We have not taken up the federal law. We think that this organization believes that it is first essential for us to go into the states, state by state, and educate the people by having direct personal information from their doctors, before we begin to make a dissemination of printed and written matter circulated through the mails. That is the position our league has taken. We are going to take up the federal law, but as a secondary matter, and for the present we are out to get the information in a private way, in a more personal and direct way, to the women of the country.

MRS. HOOKER: My feeling is that in order that our object should be attained we should work along one line. If at the moment it would be possible to repeal the federal law, I am not at all sure it were wise for us to do it. We would have an almost infinite amount of quack literature sent through the mails. We would have all sorts of specialists who would de-

vote their time to advertising their specific remedies which might in many cases be misrepresented and utterly ineffective. We might duplicate the situation we now have with regard to the use of venereal prophylactics. My feeling is that our movement should devote itself to working from state to state until we find it advisable to approach the federal statute. I think when we have a post in each community, when we have made our propaganda understandable, when our position has become defined, that it will then be possible to repeal the federal law without danger, but I think it would be much better to keep our objective perfectly simple, perfectly single, and to direct personal work as a preliminary and as a basis for more widespread work which will possibly follow after. I say that in view of the fact that for instance, in our suffrage work when the division of opinion arose there was always room for two opinions and while we have the Voluntary Parenthood League working for one objective, the repealing of the federal law and the Birth Control League working for another objective, I think we better keep to our objective.

MR. LEWIS: I think it is regrettable that the last resolution was offered after the meeting had been called to an end, because I think it is too serious a matter to be discussed in a heated moment, and I honestly and firmly believe that this conference is of more importance to the people of the United States than the conference in Washington on the armament question. And I do not think that we ought for a single moment to take under consideration a resolution that will possibly cause the slightest hitch in carrying out the purposes of this conference. As much as I am in favor of having the federal law repealed regarding the dissemination of information on contraceptive methods through the mail, and as I was ready and willing to second the resolution, I say now that we dismiss this resolution and adjourn this meeting before there is any harm done to the glorious beginning which has been so wonderfully and admirably started by Margaret Sanger.

MRS. BENNETT: Madam Chairman. There is one impression that I have gotten from this conference, and that is this. That



there is little information about methods of contraception by members of the medical profession. It seems to me that the important thing for us to do is to get after this thing, or its root, in a scientific way, and concentrate our work upon getting public opinion back of scientific information in methods of contraception. The way to do this is not in my opinion by federal action. I am in favor of any group that is starting any kind of work for Birth Control. I entirely support Mrs. Sanger in her contention that we should keep on a steady and well-defined path, and not allow this organization to go off in resolutions indorsing the action of any other organization working for presumably the same thing that we are working for. One thing I am sure of and that is, that we have not yet definite scientific information. We cannot get that information until the medical profession is aroused to make a scientific investigation, and the way to get that done is not by liberating all over the country quack literature through the repeal of federal laws, but by getting public opinion worked up through individual work in individual states to back up the medical profession and give them more backbone than they ever had before. When we get scientific information it will be time enough to repeal the federal laws, then we can confront with scientific information the information dealt out by quacks.

MR. JENNINGS: In answer to the point which Mrs. Sanger made that the aim of this newly formed league was to bring this information, the scientific contraceptive information as quickly as possible to the people, I wish to say that it is the announced policy of the Voluntary Parenthood League, and has been for a long long time, that we stand exactly for that. We stand both for federal and for state legislation but we put the federal legislation first because the passage of the federal law will not only free transportation of contraceptive information but it will clear this whole subject in twenty-four states where there is a population of forty-six million people, and will open the way for an immediate establishment of contraceptive clinics in those states where the physicians can give that

personal physician-to-patient service which Mrs. Sanger emphasizes.

Another point which should come to your attention in relation to the matter now before Postmaster General Hays, that proposition laid before him provides as follows: That no printed information or methods of preventing conception, and no ingredients, compounds, or implements for preventing conception, shall be transportable through the mails of the United States, except such as bear the indorsement of a duly licensed physician or public health authorities. If he carries out that proposition and thereafter does his best and gets Congress to do its best to pass it to protect the health of the people by having nothing legal except what does bear medical indorsement, then if the medical profession of this country will rise to the occasion as they have in England, then Dr. Stokes' "Wise Parenthood," which is a textbook on Birth Control in England, will be sent all over the country and enlighten the people of this country.

MRS. MORGAN: As I understand it, the federal law forbids only the literature from going through the mail. If that were so, and the federal law would be passed before the state law, we would be in a position of some quack or nurse in New Jersey writing to some woman in New York, but still she could not have her own physician's oral information in her state, neither could you have clinics which would be open.

MRS. TUTTLE: I move to lay the resolution on the table.

Motion to lay on the table carried.

[Adjournment]

THE PUBLIC MEETING  
"IS BIRTH CONTROL MORAL?"

Park Theatre, Friday Evening, November 11, 1921

ON THE Programme of the First American Birth Control Conference, it was announced that a public meeting would be held on the evening of Sunday, November 13, at which Dr. Karl Reiland, Rector of St. George's Church would preside and the speakers would be Mrs. Margaret Sanger and Mr. Harold Cox. At the appointed time a large audience assembled, but a police captain, instructed by a dignitary of the Roman Catholic Church, took upon himself to close the meeting and prohibit the speeches. Because they attempted to make some explanation of this unexpected interference, Mrs. Sanger and Miss Mary Winsor were arrested, but were discharged immediately on their appearance before the court, as having been guilty of no legal offense. Very hurriedly, arrangements were made for a postponed meeting on the following Friday, November 18, when a large audience again assembled. This time there was no police interference and speeches planned for the earlier meeting were delivered. Mrs. Juliet Barrett Rublee welcomed the audience, and was followed by Dr. Lydia de Vilbiss, who introduced the Chairman, Dr. Reiland. After his introductory remarks he presented Mr. Robert Marsh, the attorney for the Conference, who made a clear statement of the legality of the proceedings and denounced "the outrageous violation of American liberties" which had occurred when the police had interfered with the holding of the meeting on the previous Sunday.

It may be added here that Commissioner Hirshfield—for the Mayor of New York—undertook an investigation of the action of the police in breaking up the meeting and making the arrests. Up to the end of September 1922, no report had been made and no disciplinary action taken.

The subject of discussion at the public meeting was "Is Birth Control Moral?" and the chief speakers were Harold Cox and Margaret Sanger.

### Harold Cox

(Editor "*The Edinburgh Review*")

I PROPOSE, first of all, tonight to make to you exactly the same speech which I had prepared to make last Sunday night, and then I propose to say a word or two about another and even broader subject.

The question I submit to you tonight is this: Is Birth Control Moral? Now, when any problem of morality is put to you or whether any particular action is right or wrong, the first question you have to ask yourselves is, What is the purpose of that action? For, if the purpose be wrong, the thing itself must be wrong. What, then, are the purposes of Birth Control?

The first purpose of Birth Control is to preserve the health of the mother. If a woman has children as repeatedly as Nature permits, her health cannot be preserved. I have heard of women in our slums in London, married women, who say, "Our lives are one long disease." Is it desirable that that should continue indefinitely? Is it desirable that thousands, even millions, of married women in the poorer quarters of all our town should not know for 10, 15, 20 years what it is to have a whole year of real health? That, then, is the first purpose, to preserve the health of the mother.

The second purpose is even more important. It is to promote the health of the child, for here you have the new generation involved. The children that are born today make up the new generation. If children are born so rapidly in succession to one another that the mother cannot give proper care to each, it is impossible that they should be brought up healthy children. Attempts are made in many countries to escape from that difficulty by establishing public institutions to assist in the nurture of the children; but I contend that no public institution is an adequate substitute for a mother's



care. I contend, further, that you can find no higher moral purpose in life than the rearing of healthy children to be the men and women of the next generation, the fathers and mothers of generations to come.

Those are two purposes which I think you will agree with me are moral purposes.

The third purpose of Birth Control is to raise the general standard of life throughout the whole community. Now, that is impossible as long as the families of the poor continue so large. In the poorer districts in all countries the children are brought up in poverty, without sufficient food, without sufficient training, without sufficient opportunities of play; they are turned out at an early age to earn money, and the absurdity of the thing is that though they go out to earn money in order to assist the family income, their competition in the labor market actually lowers the wages of their own parents.

Again, many people try to escape from this evil of the multiplication of poor children by all sorts of State subsidies, free meals for school children, for example. Again I say that you are doing a thing which produces worse results than you anticipate, for you are destroying the link between parent and child. Only a little while before I left England a friend told me that she had heard some of the women down in the East End of London—that is our poor quarter there, as here—saying, “Well, our kiddies aren’t our own any longer; they belong to the County Council now.” I contend that you break the most fundamental of human relations if you substitute the charity of the State for the duty of the parent.

What, then, do the advocates of Birth Control propose in order that we may have a higher standard of life throughout the whole community? They propose that exactly similar measures should be taken to improve the standard of the human race that a skillful gardener takes to improve the quality of the flowers that he grows. He sows his seed widely and thinly,—he leaves plenty of space for each seedling to grow, takes care of each plant as it appears above the ground, and

the result is the production of a fine flower. But is not the production of fine human beings an even higher moral purpose than the production of fine flowers?

And the fourth purpose of Birth Control is from some points of view—especially in view of the present condition of the earth—even more important. The fourth purpose of Birth Control is the prevention of war.

The surface of the earth is limited and by no magic can we increase that surface; but the power of multiplying human beings is unlimited,—you can go on multiplying them indefinitely as you can multiply any plant or any race of animals—and if you continue to do so, if you continue to multiply the human race, disarmament agreements will count for nothing, because as the different races continue to multiply they will be brought up against the hard fact that there is not room enough on the earth for all of them and then they will fight for space to live. You may take it as certain that the majority of men would sooner kill one another than starve themselves. And what the opponents of Birth Control, in effect, say is that it is the duty of women to go on breeding the men to kill one another.

Well, that danger of war, I say, is perhaps the most serious of all the questions before us because it is getting progressively more imperative, more dangerous progressively, because the earth is so full that a small rate of increase in any country will give you a large annual increase of population. That is a very simple proposition which a great many people fail at first sight to realize. You can see it in a moment if I put it to you this way: that one per cent. on a million yields a larger income than ten per cent. on a thousand. If you have got a small population, you can have a large birth rate; if you have got a large population, you cannot have a large birth rate because you will have so many millions of children produced that there won't be room enough for them all. You must reduce the birth rate as the population grows.

How are you to do it? There are only two ways: You can either have fewer marriages—that is what Malthus suggested

many years ago, suggested that marriage should be postponed—or you can have fewer children to each marriage,—ask people to marry early and live happy lives together but not to have so many children.

I contend that fewer marriages mean, in practise, more prostitution; and fewer children per marriage mean more happy homes.

These, then, are the four purposes of Birth Control: the preservation of the health of the mother, the promotion of the health of the children, the establishment of a higher standard of life for the whole community, and finally, the prevention of war. I venture to say that no one will deny that all these are moral purposes of highest order.

Some people, however, declare that though the purposes are moral the methods proposed are immoral, and they begin by saying that Birth Control is an interference with the processes of Nature. Well, I confess I find it a little difficult to be politely tolerant when that argument is used, for what is the whole of human progress but an interference with the processes of Nature? It is not natural to wear clothes; it is not natural to live in houses; it is not natural to apply science to cure disease; marriage itself is unnatural. The truly natural man, the savage in Central Africa, waits for the woman he wants, stuns her with his club, and carries her off to his cave; that is real Nature. And if these idealists of what they call “the processes of Nature” were true to their own convictions, they would get up and advocate that we should all go back to our primitive nudity and to our primitive savagery—and then there perhaps would be a case for the police to interfere.

Well, not content with that argument about Nature, they proceed to quote the Bible, and they quote a particular text from the Book of Genesis which enjoins persons to whom the command was given to be “fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth,” and they have gone on quoting that for centuries, and very few people have taken the trouble to look up the circumstances under which that command was given. It was given to Noah and his three sons and their four respective

wives immediately after the Flood. Noah, I may remark in passing, was 600 years old at the time and his eldest son was 90. To these eight people of rather extended age the command to be fruitful and multiply was given at a time when all the earth was empty; and yet you have ecclesiastics getting up and quoting that command as if it applied to London and New York today.

Today it is not numbers that we want to increase, but quality that we want to improve; and perhaps it may be worth while to remind you that that elementary proposition was understood a great many centuries ago by some of the people who contributed to the Bible. You will find in the 6th Chapter of the Book of Ecclesiastics these words: "Desire not a multitude of unprofitable children, neither delight in ungodly sons; though they multiply, rejoice not in them, for one that is just is better than a thousand."

But if parents are to have fewer children they must practise Birth Control. I contend that it is impossible to expect healthy young married couples to abstain altogether from the fundamental relation of married life, except at intervals of two or three years, and then to live entirely as celibates after they have had two or three children. The thing is utterly inhuman and impossible and it would break the happiness of millions of married couples. I contend that the love of man and woman is one of the most moving and also the most ennobling of human instincts, and I cannot do better at this point than quote the words of the King's physician, one of the most distinguished physicians in London, Lord Dawson, who, speaking recently at a meeting of the Church Congress, said: "Life without the love of man and woman would be like the world without sunshine."

Therefore, I contend that Birth Control is moral because it renders possible the continuation of that sunshine, because it renders possible the attainment of a higher standard of life for mother and for child and of a higher standard of living for the whole community; and finally, it is moral because it prevents the otherwise inevitable recurrence of devastating wars.



Ladies and gentlemen, that is the speech which I had intended to make on Sunday night last. I was prevented from doing so by an incident to which I wish briefly to refer. I am not a citizen of the United States and I have not the right, nor have I the desire, to comment upon or interfere in your purely domestic matters; but issues are sometimes raised in one country which affect all countries, and among such issues is the issue of freedom of speech. On that issue I feel that I, as an Englishman, am entitled to express my opinion to you as Americans, for we share not only the same language but the same traditions of government and of liberty; we inherit to a large extent the same history. King Henry VIII, who liberated England from the domination of Rome; Queen Elizabeth, in whose glorious reign was first developed that overseas movement of the English race from which your nation sprang; Cromwell, who fought for constitutional liberty; Milton, who defended liberty in words that will live for all time,—all these and countless others whose names may be forgotten but whose works still endure, all these are a part of your history as well as of mine, and in the name of this glorious heritage which we together share, I appeal to you not to permit the great principle of liberty of speech to be trampled under foot in any part of your country.

I hold that there is no liberty so important to the world as liberty of speech, for without freedom of speech progress is impossible; unless men and women are free to criticize institutions and practises which they hold to be wrong and free to advocate changes which they hold to be desirable, there can be no effective movement for reform or progress of any kind. The incident of last Sunday night shows how easily this fundamental liberty may be imperiled, although it is expressly enshrined in your own constitution, and may be imperiled by the very officials whose duty it is to defend the law and the constitution.

I speak to you on this subject because it does not affect America only, because what happened the other night is a warning to all nations. Fifty years ago we in England im-

aged that the battle of liberty had been won for all time. Tennyson wrote, if you remember, of freedom broadened down from precedent to precedent; he may have been right at the time when he wrote, but he was wrong for the future,—he was wrong in assuming that freedom would automatically progress. No progress is automatic. Each advance that the world makes has to be won by fresh effort, by the efforts of those who see ahead, as Mrs. Margaret Sanger has done and who devote their lives, as she has done, to working for the progress of mankind.

And let me give you one further warning: Not only is it impossible to hope that progress will be automatic, but even the maintenance of the freedom you have won is not automatic. As one of the most brilliant English orators said many years ago, "the price of freedom is eternal vigilance," and he was perfectly right, for in all countries there are enemies of freedom; monarchs, politicians and priests, who for one cause or another wish to deprive their fellowmen and women of liberty of action, of liberty of speech, and even of liberty of conscience. There lurks a danger which, if we shut our eyes to it, may destroy the advance achieved by centuries of effort. I repeat, the price of liberty is eternal vigilance.

And therefore, to you, as Americans, I, as an Englishman, appeal; I appeal to you to exercise that eternal vigilance which is the price of liberty; I appeal to you to defend your liberties by whomsoever they are attacked, and I make this appeal to you not for the sake of your own country only, but for the sake of all mankind.

### Margaret Sanger

*President, American Birth Control League*

THE meeting tonight is a postponement of one which was to have taken place at the Town Hall last Sunday evening. It was to be the culmination of a three day conference, two of which were held at the Hotel Plaza, in discussing the Birth Control subject in its various and manifold aspects.

The one issue upon which there seems to be most uncer-

tainty and disagreement exists in the moral side of the subject of Birth Control. It seemed only natural for us to call together scientists, educators, members of the medical profession and the theologians of all denominations to ask their opinion upon this uncertain and important phase of the controversy. Letters were sent to the most eminent men and women in the world. We asked in this letter, the following questions:—

1. Is over-population a menace to the peace of the world?
2. Would the legal dissemination of scientific Birth Control information through the medium of clinics by the medical profession be the most logical method of checking the problem of over-population?
3. Would knowledge of Birth Control change the moral attitude of men and women toward the marriage bond or lower the moral standards of the youth of the country?
4. Do you believe that knowledge which enables parents to limit the families will make for human happiness, and raise the moral, social and intellectual standards of population?

We sent such a letter not only to those who, we thought, might agree with us, but we sent it also to our known opponents. Most of these people answered. Every one who answered did so with sincerity and courtesy, with the exception of one group whose reply to this important question as demonstrated at the Town Hall last Sunday evening was a disgrace to liberty-loving people, and to all traditions we hold dear in the United States. I believed that the discussion of the moral issue was one which did not solely belong to theologians and to scientists, but belonged to the people. And because I believed that the people of this country may and can discuss this subject with dignity and with intelligence I desired to bring them together, and to discuss it in the open.

When one speaks of morals, one refers to human conduct. This implies action of many kinds, which in turn depends upon the mind and the brain. So that in speaking of morals one must remember that there is a direct connection

between morality and brain development. Conduct is said to be action in pursuit of ends, and if this is so, then we must hold that irresponsibility and recklessness in our action is immoral, while responsibility and forethought put into action for the benefit of the individual and the race becomes in the highest sense the finest kind of morality.

We know that every advance that woman has made in the last half century has been made with opposition, all of which has been based upon the grounds of immorality. When women fought for higher education, it was said that this would cause her to become immoral and she would lose her place in the sanctity of the home. When women asked for the franchise it was said that this would lower her standard of morals, that it was not fit that she should meet with and mix with the members of the opposite sex, but we notice that there was no objection to her meeting with the same members of the opposite sex when she went to church. The church has ever opposed the progress of woman on the ground that her freedom would lead to immorality. We ask the church to have more confidence in women. We ask the opponents of this movement to reverse the methods of the church, which aims to keep women moral by keeping them in fear and in ignorance, and to inculcate into them a higher and truer morality based upon knowledge. And ours is the morality of knowledge. If we cannot trust woman with the knowledge of her own body, then I claim that two thousand years of Christian teaching has proved to be a failure.

We stand on the principle that Birth Control should be available to every adult man and woman. We believe that every adult man and woman should be taught the responsibility and the right use of knowledge. We claim that woman should have the right over her own body and to say if she shall or if she shall not be a mother, as she sees fit. We further claim that the first right of a child is to be desired. While the second right is that it should be conceived in love, and the third, that it should have a heritage of sound health.



Upon these principles the Birth Control movement in America stands.

When it comes to discussing the methods of Birth Control, that is far more difficult. There are laws in this country which forbid the imparting of practical information to the mothers of the land. We claim that every mother in this country, either sick or well, has the right to the best, the safest, the most scientific information. This information should be disseminated directly to the mothers through clinics by members of the medical profession, registered nurses and registered midwives.

Our first step is to have the backing of the medical profession so that our laws may be changed, so that motherhood may be the function of dignity and choice, rather than one of ignorance and chance. Conscious control of offspring is now becoming the ideal and the custom in all civilized countries.

Those who oppose it claim that, however desirable it may be on economic or social grounds, it may be abused and the morals of the youth of the country may be lowered. Such people should be reminded that there are two points to be considered. First, that such control is the inevitable advance in civilization. Every civilization involves an increasing forethought for others, even for those yet unborn. The reckless abandonment of the impulse of the moment with the careless regard for the consequences, is not morality. The selfish gratification of temporary desire at the expense of suffering to lives that will come may seem very beautiful to some, but it is not our conception of civilization, nor is it our concept of morality.

In the second place, it is not only inevitable, but it is right to control the size of the family, for by this control and adjustment we can raise the level and the standards of the human race. While Nature's way of reducing her numbers has been by disease, famine and war, primitive man has achieved the same results by infanticide, exposure of infants, the abandonment of children, and by abortion. But such ways of controlling population are no longer possible for us. We have attained high standards of life, and along the lines of science must we conduct such control. We must begin farther

back and control the beginnings of life. We must control conception. This is a better method, it is a more civilized method, for it involves not only greater forethought for others, but finally a higher sanction for the value of life itself.

Society is divided into three groups. Those intelligent and wealthy members of the upper classes who have obtained knowledge of Birth Control and exercise it in regulating the size of their families. They have already benefited by this knowledge, and are today considered the most respectable and moral members of the community. They have only children whom they desire, and all society points to them as types that should perpetuate their kind. The second group is equally intelligent and responsible. They desire to control the size of their families, but are unable to obtain knowledge or to put such available knowledge into practice.

The third are those irresponsible and reckless ones having little regard for the consequence of their acts, or whose religious scruples prevent their exercising control over their numbers. Many of this group are diseased, feeble-minded, and are of the pauper element dependent entirely upon the normal and fit members of society for their support. There is no doubt in the minds of all thinking people that the procreation of this group should be stopped. For if they are not able to support and care for themselves, they should certainly not be allowed to bring offspring into this world for others to look after. We do not believe that filling the earth with misery, poverty and disease is moral. And it is our desire and intention to carry on our crusade until the perpetuation of such conditions has ceased.

We desire to stop at its source the disease, poverty and feeble-mindedness and insanity which exist today, for these lower the standards of civilization and make for race deterioration. We know that the masses of people are growing wiser and are using their own minds to decide their individual conduct. The more people of this kind we have, the less immorality shall exist. For the more responsible people grow, the higher do they and shall they attain real morality.

BIRTH CONTROL: IS IT MORAL?  
A SYMPOSIUM OF REPRESENTATIVE OPINION

*Letters in answer to Questionnaire sent preliminary  
to the Conference.*

IN ORDER to determine exactly the status of true public opinion concerning the morality of Birth Control as a practice and a program, and in order that every shade of thought pro and contra might be represented at the mass-meeting that was planned to conclude the First American Birth Control Conference, the following letter was sent to representative leaders of thought and opinion:

1. *Is not over-population a menace to the peace of the world?*
2. *Would not the legal dissemination of scientific Birth Control information through the medium of clinics by the medical profession be the most logical method of checking the problem of over-population?*
3. *Would knowledge of Birth Control change the moral attitude of men and women toward the marriage bond, or lower the moral standards of the youth of the country?*
4. *Do you believe that knowledge which enables parents to limit their families will make for human happiness and raise the moral, social and intellectual standards of the population?*

*As a vital part of the constructive effort for future work, it seemed that an open discussion on this subject by men and women of international importance would help to guide the American people to a just decision.*

*I would greatly appreciate an expressed opinion, if you have no objections, to be read at the opening meeting, knowing the weight it would have with the intelligent people of this country. I have already received replies from Edward Carpenter, Havelock Ellis, Dean Inge, Dean of St. Paul's Cathedral, and the Bishop of London.*

*May I hope you will seriously consider the importance of this and allow me to express in advance my gratitude for a brief letter covering these points.*

### Edward Carpenter

*English Writer, Educationalist, Thinker and Reformer*

I FEEL no doubt that the Birth Control movement is one of the most important of the present day. If Humanity is ever to rise out of the swamp of unlimited race-propagation in which it wallows at present, it must be by deliberate control of its powers of breeding. This control may reasonably be effected in two ways: (1) by wise abstinence and choice of times and seasons for intercourse, or (2) by artificial (but sanitary) devices to prevent conception.

It may fairly be said that *either* of these methods is better than that of leaving the question of population to chance and the arbitrary decrees of lust. To interfere, even in an artificial way, with an age-long animal habit, is surely less harmful and immoral than to produce unwanted children, destined in most cases to poverty and neglect.

But granted so much as that, there still remain certain questions, indicated in your circular as likely to be discussed in the New York Conference of November 11, 12 and 13, and which I may for a moment consider here:

(1) *Does the spread of Birth Control involve a loss to the youth of the country of a valuable safeguard?* It is clear, I think that Birth Control methods, by guarding against the arrival of unwanted children, may and will in some degree diminish the sense of responsibility attaching to sexual intercourse. At the same time it should be said that either of the above methods brings in and encourages forethought, which is better than a mere casual subjection to chance; and by the first method, the sense of responsibility is decidedly increased.

(2) *Would the knowledge of the methods of Birth Control lead to the reign of promiscuity?* Personally, I do not think that promiscuity would by any means necessarily follow. At the same time, I think that a certain increase of latitude in



sex-relations *would* be likely to follow—but this on the whole (and in view of the evils and falsity of the present system), I regard as not such a very great evil, perhaps in some respects a gain, rather than a loss.

(3) *Would it encourage the husband to impose himself on the wife?* For answer to this, we have to look to the growing power of woman which necessarily will come, and is coming with Birth Control. Under the new order of things, it will daily become more unusual and more inadmissible for the man to impose himself on the woman; and Woman will therefore enter into a state of freedom and self-determination hitherto unknown to and unexperienced by her sex.

Havelock Ellis

*Author, Psychologist and Sexologist*

IT SEEMS to me that Birth Control is now itself becoming a part of our morality, an element in our moral ideal, capable, as has been well said, "of being found with us at each moment of our moral life, concentrated and fully felt in every beat and rhythm of desire and action."

It is, therefore, idle to discuss whether or not it sometimes produces minor evils. No doubt it does. The moral ideal always does. Every line of moral action sometimes produces minor evils. It would be unreasonable to expect that Birth Control should be an exception to this universal rule. No one can look at the matter in a calm, broad and unprejudiced manner, and fail to see that the reckless disregard of Birth Control produces evils that are vastly greater than those produced by its observance.

Only those persons who hold we should always strain at gnats but try to swallow camels, can venture to maintain that Birth Control is immoral.

Very Rev. W. R. Inge

*Dean of St. Paul's Cathedral, London*

YOU are kind enough to ask me to send a message in view of the approaching Birth Control Conference in New York.

There can be no doubt that if the world is to be saved from devastating wars and revolutions, with their accompaniments of pestilence and famine, the natural increase of population must be held in check by prudential restrictions. The old countries are for the most part fully peopled, and any discoveries which may in the future increase food-production, ought to be applied to raising the standard of living, not to augmenting the population.

Already far too large a part of the population lives in large industrial centres, under conditions which are neither natural nor wholesome, and these centres are everywhere foci of anti-social and destructive propaganda.

Emigration is only a palliative, and the new countries will not in the future be willing to admit the overflow of the teeming population of the old world.

The tendency is at present for the better stocks to restrict their numbers, while the half-civilized proletariat, especially in countries like Russia and Ireland, multiply unrestrained. The evil effects of this tendency are nowhere more manifest than in the New England states, formerly the home of a singularly fine and virile stock.

America and Europe are both threatened with progressive barbarisation.

It is useless to preach either celibacy or abstinence in marriage. These counsels will never be acted on by those whose fecundity it is desired to restrain.

The only remedy is to legalize and popularize those methods of control which are medically unobjectionable, and which do not involve the destruction of life which has begun to exist.

Experience shows that abortion is rife precisely in those countries where the prevention is condemned by law or public opinion.

At the same time we have to face the fact that we are threatened with a great outbreak of sexual license, and that acquaintance with means of preventing conception has already increased these irregularities, and is likely to increase them still more in the future. Those who accept the Christian law of

purity must watch with grave anxiety the progress of doctrines which cut at the root of morality, as they understand it.

The advocacy of Birth Control, which I consider to be absolutely necessary, must go hand in hand with increased insistence on the sanctity of the marriage-vow, and on the obligation of continence which Christianity imposes on all unmarried persons.

My hope is that the new knowledge may encourage early marriages, and so diminish the temptation to form irregular connections.

Samuel Hopkins Adams

*Author, Ensenore, N. Y.*

**O**VER-POPULATION is undoubtedly a menace to world peace.

2. Some systematized method under scientific direction, probably medical, of disseminating Birth Control information would be the logical agency for checking over-population.

3. Number three embodies two separate questions. As to the first part, I doubt whether Birth Control knowledge would fundamentally change the attitude of men and women toward the marriage bond. As to the second, I am definitely of the opinion that such knowledge, if it becomes common property, will "lower the moral standards of the youth of the country," at least until such time as society can adjust itself to the new status and perhaps find other safeguards to substitute for the "danger signal" of "results." To assume the contrary is to deny a salient fact of human nature. Say to headlong youth, "You may now adventure in safety," and there will inevitably be a response in the direction of moral laxity. Enthusiasm for the cause should not blind us to this, its chief drawback. That compensating advantages would more than offset it seems to me clearly true. But the fact remains that we must be prepared to accept a measure of harm for the sake of the ultimate and greater measure of good.

To the question of whether knowledge which enables parents to limit their families will make for human happiness and

raise the general standards of the race, I answer with all possible emphasis, "Yes."

Katharine Anthony

*Author*

IT SEEMS very appropriate that the first American Birth Control Conference should begin on the same day as the first International Disarmament Conference. For it is undoubtedly true that over-population contributes to war as directly as competition in armament. Probably the reduction of armament means even less for the peace of the world than reduction of surplus population. A world which really wants peace will take as much interest in the control of the birth-rate as in the reduction of armament.

That poverty as well as war thrives on over-population is hardly disputed in academic circles. Economists from John Stuart Mill to the latest experts on American income statistics have repeatedly told us that. One needs to be indifferent to the plainest lessons of history and economics in order to condemn Birth Control or ignore the question.

If family limitation, then, helps to prevent war and poverty, it can scarcely be tabooed on grounds of immorality. For the best that has ever been said on behalf of war and poverty is that they are necessary evils, not that they are moral assets.

From the point of view of society, Birth Control to this extent has its moral uses. And from the point of view of the individual, a moral attitude which is sustained by ignorance and fear is a feeble thing to depend upon. Young people have a right to expect a better ethical nourishment from those who set up moral standards for their education.

Prof. E. C. Barker

*The University of Texas, School of History*

1. Over-population, undoubtedly, produces poverty and distress, which begets discontent, turbulence violence. This, of course, is a menace to the "peace of the world" in the sense



of tranquil content. I am doubtful whether it is a menace in the sense of bringing on national wars.

2. Yes.

3. (a) I don't think such knowledge would affect attitude toward marriage.

(b) I am inclined to think it might lower moral standards, but the modern youth is a strange animal, and I'm not at all sure the effect would be harmful.

### Bernard I. Bell

*President, St. Stephens College, Annandale-on-Hudson*

**O**VER-POPULATION is indeed a menace to the peace of the world. It is only fair to say, however, that Oriental over-population constitutes the major part of this danger. The limitation of population in America and Europe would mean almost certainly a considerable advantage to the yellow races in their overrunning of the world. This phase of the subject needs careful thought. It may be that Occidental brains could overcome and control Oriental hordes of people. I am not sure.

2. I personally believe in the legal dissemination of scientific Birth Control information through the medium of clinics by the medical profession.

3. I do not believe that men and women are kept moral through fear and therefore I am under the impression that the giving of information mentioned above would not in any sense lower the standards of the youth of this country. Nor do I believe that it would have any bad effect upon the attitude of men and women toward marriage and divorce.

4. I do believe that small families make for human happiness. Too many children reduce the standard of living below that where social and intellectual interests can properly be cared for. On the other hand, childlessness makes for an abnormal and unintelligent attitude toward life and for warped and morbid art.

Edwin W. Bowen

*Randolph-Macon College*

1. I think over-population is a menace to the peace of the world.

2. I believe your suggestion as to the legal dissemination of scientific Birth Control information through the medium of clinics by the medical profession to be the most logical method of attaining the desired.

3. I am unprepared to answer this question as I have not formed an opinion on the points involved.

4. I am inclined to answer this question in the affirmative; viz., that knowledge which enables parents to limit their families will make for human happiness and raise the moral standard, as well as the social and intellectual standards of the population.

Frederick A. Bushee, Ph.D.

*University of Colorado, Boulder, Colo.*

**I**F ULTIMATE rather than immediate influences are considered, I believe that over-population should be ranked as the chief cause of war.

2. It would be one important method of controlling population; but it would not by itself suffice for the ends sought by the Eugenists. Other methods would have to be used to control the reproduction of undesirables.

3. In some cases where moral standards are based on fear, it might lower those standards; but I think the possible danger from this source is not comparable to the benefits to be derived from increased knowledge. I do not believe that the attitude towards marriage would be much affected.

4. My opinion is that it would not, and the evidence from Holland seems to confirm this opinion.

Pierce Butler

*H. Sophie Newcomb Memorial College, Tulane University of Louisiana*

**O**VER-POPULATION is quite obviously a relative term; in itself, it is not a menace to the peace of the world. The real problem is to continue and to perfect man's command

of the resources enabling life upon the earth. The law of life, for the race as well as for the individual, is *life, more life*, not suicide.

2. Dissemination of Birth Control information would unquestionably be the most *logical* means of checking the growth of population. But the danger of the logical machinery is that it is machinery, and that it operates, necessarily, on data or materials supplied by admittedly imperfect human knowledge. In other words, the premises may be, perhaps must be unsound; yet the machine once started goes ahead.

3. The soundest and most persistent race known to history, the Hebrew, was built upon a code largely of social laws regulating the sexual instincts. And the very names applied in science to certain sexual offenses come from Hebrew history—all condemning evasions or perversions of the law of procreation. Self-control, cultivation of the will, which is given to man that he may avoid all acts likely to be harmful to him, is what must be taught as the basis of sexual or any other morality. Responsibility for one's actions is a basic condition of society. The dissemination of any information that claims to relieve the individual of his responsibility is bound to lower the standards of men and women.

4. A sufficient answer to this question is implied in the answer to the third query.

Perhaps I might be permitted to add, in view of my reference to the Jews, that I am not a Jew, that I am quite aware of the many peculiarities of the Jew which are distasteful to me, that I am quite aware of what may be said in regard to the Hebrew codes and the oriental society of a primitive age, and that I am by no means disposed to make a fetish of the Bible. "Morality" is simply an effort to help adjust man to the complex relations with his environment—material, social, spiritual. And, in essentials, there is no "new" morality.

W. B. Cannon

*Department of Physiology, Harvard Medical School*

TO THE first, second and fourth questions put to me in your letter of October 20th, I should give an affirmative

answer. With reference to the third question, it seems to me that we should have to rely on the evidence of experience. It is my belief that such knowledge would not alter moral standards, but I should prefer to have investigated the effects in countries where such knowledge is widely diffused.

### Dr. Will Durant

*Director, Labor Temple School*

**Y**ES, I believe that over-population is the chief cause of war, and that "the legal dissemination of scientific Birth Control knowledge by the medical profession through the medium of clinics" is "the most logical method of checking the problem of over-population."

To prevent such information from facilitating extra-marital relations I would limit it to legally married men and women; to these I think such knowledge should be not only permitted but offered. I am sure that Birth Control would raise social and intellectual standards, if confined to the married. To offset the so-called "yellow peril," it would only be necessary to raise the quality of our own people by better education, and to spread Birth Control knowledge abroad so as to decrease the quantity of people whose unchecked reproduction threatens international peace.

All success to the Birth Control Conference; and congratulations on your many years of courageous and now successful effort to arouse America to the problem and the solution.

### Professor Warner Fite

*Department of Philosophy, Princeton*

**I**T GIVES me great pleasure to reply to the four questions proposed in your letter of October 22nd, as follows:

1. I believe that over-population is the most serious menace to the peace of the world. It furnishes not merely one motive for war, but the motive which, in the end, underlies and sustains all other motives, and the only one which makes war inevitable.

2. I believe that Birth Control based upon scientific inves-



tigation and the dissemination of scientific information, is the only logical and, I should add, the only moral and human method of controlling population. The only other method I can think of is to allow war and starvation to produce their natural results.

3. I believe that common knowledge of easy and certain methods of Birth Control could not fail to work some change in the moral attitude of men and women towards the marriage-bond and some change in the moral ideas of the youth—just because the calculation of consequences and the fear of consequences form so large and so corrupting an ingredient in the composition of present sex-morality. With the fear of consequences removed, there would undoubtedly be some increase in the number of illicit sex-relationships. But I cannot see that this would be a moral loss, or that there is a moral advantage in preserving a spurious chastity. On the other hand, there would be a corresponding—perhaps more than corresponding—increase in the number of early marriages and in the marriages now forbidden by economic conditions. This would be a great and important gain in the direction of wholesomeness of life both personal and social. And in the end I think that the moral effect of Birth Control as an established fact would be to sift out and make clear the motives of personal devotion and loyalty which constitute the true marriage-bond; to emphasize the sanctity of these motives; and thus to make the marriage bond stand for a higher conception of life than it does at present.

4. To me the importance of Birth Control as a condition of any advance in cultural (*i.e.*, moral, social, intellectual) life is simply obvious. Every such advance rests upon the possibility of transforming some part of life from a necessity of nature into a matter of personal choice. It does not follow from this that the choice will be narrow and ignoble. I have no criticism to pass upon those who are voluntarily childless—that is genuinely their own affair,—but I think that few parents really envy them. Yet to make the coming of children worth while, for them, for us, for society generally, we must be able to

control their number. And to say that modern life makes children a burden is only to say that today each child is an object of responsible concern and solicitude as he never was before. It matters not what view we take, personal, family or social. If human life is to be more than a feeding of mouths we must control the number of mouths to be fed; if population is to do more than press upon subsistence, we must control the population.

These replies are at your service, to read at the open meeting or not, as you judge worth while.

### Franklin H. Giddings

*Faculty of Political Science, Columbia University, New York*

**M**Y ANSWERS to the questions propounded in your letter of October 18th, are as follows:

1 and 2. Yes, with a word of explanation.

3. First half of the question, I don't know. Second half of the question, emphatically no. Every vicious use that could be made of such knowledge is made already. It is only the wise use of the knowledge that we lack.

4. Yes.

The word of comment on 1 and 2, and it applies in a measure to 4, is that it is more important to change the quality than limit the quantity of world population. I am strongly in favor of limitation of the families of low-grade intelligence and vitality, and quite as strongly in favor of increasing the birth-rate of the families that are energetic, intelligent and of sound character. You see I am above all things a eugenist.

### Dr. Ernest H. Gruening

*An Editor of The Nation, New York*

**O**NE. Is not over-population a menace to the peace of the world?

(A.) A great menace. There are altogether too many people in the world. Quality, not quantity, should be the desideratum. If men and women are really superior to beasts, it is in their ability not to breed like rabbits or to spawn like jelly

fish and turn their offspring into the ruthless jungle existence of tooth and claw, but to bring wanted, carefully nurtured, love-children into the world endowed with all the strength and fineness and potentiality for a happy existence which the planning and devotion of thinking beings can encompass. The over-population of the world has already borne the bitter fruit of war. Germany's congested multitudes were taught to believe that they were surrounded by enemies, that the open spaces of the world had been preempted, and that Germany had to expand forcibly in order not to perish. However false this assumption, the fact remains that the Germans believed it, and it was a potent factor in producing the catastrophe of 1914-1918. Japan's problems are similar—her overcrowding and inability to overflow into other lands underlies the present tense Far Eastern situation. Over-population is responsible for the fierce economic struggle all over the world. The changed conditions in the United States in the last 20 years, the repressions of the present day, the development of class consciousness and the intensification of the industrial conflict are merely manifestations of the patent fact that our country has at last filled up and has become over-populated. Unemployment, an acute symptom of this condition, means nothing less from an economic standpoint than that there are too many people for our present system to support. A still graver symptom are the famines which regularly afflict sections of the earth, notably China, which we then belatedly and ineffectively try to relieve by feeble palliative measures.

Two. Would not the legal dissemination of scientific Birth Control information through the medium of clinics by the medical profession be the most logical method of checking the problem of over-population?

(A.) It would. It is essentially the duty of the medical profession to accept full responsibility for the therapeutic phases of this problem. The new spirit in medicine demands that diseases be *prevented* wherever possible. The old adage is particularly applicable to matters of health that "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

THREE. Would knowledge of Birth Control change the moral attitude of men and women toward the marriage bond or lower the moral standards of the youth of the country?

(A.) Neither. On the contrary insofar as it would tend to eliminate for all time the crime of abortion, its effect would be distinctly moral.

FOUR. Do you believe that knowledge which enables parents to limit their families will make for human happiness and raise the moral, social and intellectual standards of the population?

(A.) I believe that no single reform capable of such immediate and wide-spread application would so greatly add to the happiness of the human race. There are no panaceas, but Birth Control properly established would go further to eliminate poverty, sickness, insanity, crime, with all that these scourges imply, than any other remedy proposed.

### Cosmo Hamilton

*Author, New York*

OVER-POPULATION is a menace not only to the peace of the world but to the sane conduct of peace, because the health of nations and their standard of intelligence are forever at the mercy of accidental multitudes born into a life in which they are hopelessly superfluous. The question of Birth Control and its legal and scientific information by doctors is, more than ever now, as vitally necessary to the future well-being of the human family as disarmament itself. As every addition to true knowledge is an addition to human power, it follows that the moral standard of youth must be raised and the sense of responsibility strengthened and inspired by the proper teaching of the essential and urgent truth.

### John Haynes Holmes

*Community Church, New York City*

YOUR first two questions bring up the issue of over-population. May I say that I have never been able to feel that the alleged menace of over-population offered the best



approach to the question of Birth Control. There was a time when over-population constituted a real menace, witness for example, the life of Francis Place, who was so greatly concerned with this matter. In our time, however, it seems to me that the menace has largely disappeared, at least from our Western world. Perhaps you know Prof. Patten's book "The New Basis of Civilization," the thesis of which is that our civilization in the last half of the 19th century definitely passed from what he calls the basis of deficit to the basis of surplus. In other words, we have in our hands today the means of providing for a much larger population than is now living on this planet. The argument in this book impressed me as being convincing. Furthermore, my study of war as a modern phenomenon has not brought the over-population issue into much prominence. If we could rid our world of economic imperialism, secret diplomacy, competitive armaments and the whole philosophy and structure of nationalism, we could get rid of war even with a much larger population in Europe and America than actually exists today. I say all this subject to correction, for I have given no prolonged study to the problem of population. I feel fairly confident, however, that the real approach to the Birth Control problem is along other and much more effective lines.

### Fannie Hurst

*Writer of Stories and Scenarios, New York*

**R**EPLYING to your questionnaire:

1. Yes, I do consider over-population a menace to the peace of the world. War can be said, fundamentally, to be the result of overcrowding.

2. Yes, I emphatically do think that the legal dissemination of scientific Birth Control information through the medium of clinics by the medical profession, would be the most logical means of checking the problem of over-population. Much damage is done by careless, ignorant or illegal methods of preventing conception; irreparable damage is done by involuntary motherhood, so from both sides of the question,

scientific Birth Control information, disseminated through clinics would be of greatest social and pathological value.

3. Yes, I believe that knowledge which enables the parents to limit their offspring will make for human happiness and raise the moral, social and intellectual standards of the population. Ignorance of this fundamental knowledge is responsible for much of the human misery in the world.

Mary Johnston

*Novelist*

**M**Y FEELING is that the lasting solution lies in an increasing continence and a sublimation, all along the line, of the sex nature. And I should like to see arise a movement which should directly inculcate this.

But it is likewise my opinion, that pending this slow inner and spontaneous change, there should be available in this and all countries correct instruction in Birth Control.

David Starr Jordan

*Chancellor, Leland Stanford University*

**I**N ANSWER to your questions, let me say I do not regard the possible over-population of the world as a pressing question now or for centuries to come. The real problem is the over-congestion of certain districts, results of weakness, ignorance, indolence and oppression.

The cost of a few dreadnoughts applied to sanitation of the tropics, to education, industrial and other, and to development of new industries would go far towards relieving this. There are even in Japan and Korea, millions of acres of unoccupied land, fitted for rye, oats, hay and grazing, but which cannot be utilized without capital and without governmental efforts towards establishing markets for cheese and butter, now scarcely used in the Far East, where the people subsist mainly on rice, an unwholesome food when unrelieved. In Japan, only the homeless poor will emigrate, those who have even two acres of good land preferring to stay at home, "where our customs fit us like a garment." The "menace" in the Far

East consists not in over-population, but in military coercion with over-population as an excuse. Before the war "over-populated Germany" imported each year from Italy and Poland upwards of a million unskilled laborers to do her heavy work.

Birth Control will not relieve congested districts, for at present, at least, it is likely to reach only those classes which, in general, do not provide for their own continuance. In this connection, however, it must be remembered, that the "upper classes" socially or financially, do not necessarily represent the best race-material, though the slums, as a whole, with individual exceptions, comprise much of the worst.

I do not approve of the paternalism of the laws preventing "dissemination of knowledge of Birth Control." It is probable, however, that lifting the ban would let loose a flood of quack devices and remedies.

I do not believe that genuine knowledge of any sort would lower moral standards of any one who had any. Virtue and vice have deep roots.

I am not convinced that "knowledge which enables parents to limit their families would appreciably make for human happiness and raise the moral, social and intellectual standards of the population." In this I may be mistaken, but to the present, I find affirmative statements unconvincing.

Those classes who suffer most from congestion are the ones such information and arguments do not reach. It is the weakness of the weak, not the strength of the strong, which lies at the root of oppression.

Setting aside the sterility which springs from vice, the reduction in the birth-rate is a result, on the whole beneficial, of the emancipation of woman. A large factor in the change has been the acquisition of separate apartments for the mother of the family.

Judge Ben. B. Lindsey

*Juvenile Court, Denver, Colo.*

**F**IRST: I should say that over-population, as the world is now organized and conducted under our present system

of civilization, with all of its stupidities, would certainly be a menace to the peace of the world.

Second: Legal dissemination of scientific Birth Control information through the medium of clinics by the medical profession, if not the most logical, would certainly be a very logical method of checking the problem of over-population.

Third: There is nothing in this world that I am more convinced of than that knowledge of Birth Control would positively not change the moral attitude of men and women towards the marriage bond, or lower the moral standards of the youth of the country. On the contrary, I am positive it would improve and increase both. Did time permit, from my experience here, I think I could give many reasons for this belief.

Fourth: How any one could doubt that knowledge which enables parents to limit their families could fail to make for human happiness and raise the moral, social and intellectual standards of the population, is more than I can understand. Of course I believe that such knowledge would do all of these things and to my mind it is little short of crime itself that such knowledge is being withheld.

May I say in conclusion that if we squarely faced this issue and had some rules and regulations through which scientific Birth Control information could be disseminated through the proper mediums, it would do much to end the promiscuous and oftentimes misleading information which is positively being circulated quite generally now with reference to Birth Control,—the truth is that no power on earth is going to prevent people from getting knowledge of Birth Control, no matter what one's views may be, but because of a sort of "dog-in-the-manger" attitude of those who oppose Birth Control and because of a very well meaning but I think mistaken attitude of some of our moralists, birth control information—which they are not stopping—is prohibited or adulterated with so much misinformation that we are prevented from getting real, genuine good, such as would come from a proper dissemination.



Owen R. Lovejoy

*General Secretary, National Child Labor Committee*

I DO not regard over-population a menace to the peace of the world. On the contrary, I believe the world capable of sustaining a population ten-fold or perhaps a hundred-fold greater than the present. The peace of the world is menaced rather by the application of the philosophy of imperialism backed by the military profession.

2. I am not interested in the legal dissemination of scientific Birth Control information for the purpose of checking the problem of over-population, for the reason that I do not regard over-population as a problem. Any menace that exists in the matter of population itself is due to the quality produced, rather than to the quantity.

3. Properly taught, a knowledge of Birth Control should raise rather than lower moral standards and strengthen the marriage bond.

4. Yes. Man is supposed to be an intelligent animal, and in the most sacred of all relations in life should be guided by knowledge. The danger is that knowledge "which enables parents to limit their families" will reach only those who are already conversant with family obligations, while the ignorant, vicious and physically unfit will not be retarded by any considerations of social well-being, and the reverse of the end you seek to attain will result.

Finally let me emphasize that any argument for Birth Control based on fear of over-population or on the fear that individual families will be financially unable to support their offspring is vicious because it starts from a false premise. The world is big enough and rich enough to furnish a foothold for all the children that can be born under decent health conditions.

Eden Paul, M.D., and Cedar Paul

*English Authors and Translators*

TO BE quite frank—we regard Birth Control as (at the moment) a side issue. Like alcoholism, venereal disease, and half-a-dozen other matters we might name, it is of great

importance to the welfare and happiness of the human race. But unless another, more urgent, and more vital problem is rightly solved, in the near future, we do not think that what Winwood Reade termed the Martyrdom of Man will end except by man's extinction, or that mankind in the future will have any happiness or welfare worth considering. We allude to this other problem without particularising, only to explain why (while admiring your single-minded devotion to the cause you have at heart) we are not ourselves at present giving much time to Birth Control propaganda.

As to the special points on which you ask our opinion, suffice it to say that in our view anyone who is hostile to Birth Control on what are termed "moral" grounds is obviously living in the "Middle Ages" instead of in the modern world (we do not say "in the Dark Ages," for that period is not yet over for any of us—although there is a glimmer of dawn in the East. Except for that glimmer, we are *all* in the Dark Ages).

When the new day dawns, much of what our contemporaries are accustomed to term "morality" will seem as strange to us, as repugnant to human sentiments as an auto-da-fé or the crucifixion tree of a West African monarch.

When that day dawns, the very question "Does the spread of Birth Control involve the loss of a valuable safeguard (!) to youth?"—"Would knowledge of the methods of Birth Control lead to a reign of promiscuity?"—"Would it encourage the husband to impose himself on the wife without considerations for her feelings?"—will seem positively absurd. But in truth they are already absurd to all who know anything about sex, to all with any tincture of the New Psychology.

Birth Control is an important element in "Man's Control of Nature?" As such it has come to stay—if in other respects man makes good his claim to be the Maker of Things.

## George Foster Peabody

*Banker, New York*

I DO not think over-population a menace to the peace of the world. I think a false economic system and the prevalence of privileged interest under all forms of government so far devised the true menace. I think it will continue a menace if the population should be half what it is, as it was some hundreds of years ago. I believe, however, in democratic-republican government with the initiative, referendum and recall and not at all in the principles of socialism.

2. I think there should be a check to the over-population in the class of Morons, etc. I am not clear that the legal dissemination of the scientific information you advocate would be effective in that direction.

3. I greatly fear that the vigorous advocacy of the principles you stand for would injuriously affect the moral attitude.

4. I do not believe in limiting scientific knowledge and believe the legal prohibition of the dissemination of any well established scientific propositions harmful.

You will see my objection is purely to the very great damage I fear it would do to the general moral attitude. I think the first essential is to work strongly for the single standard of morality and continue to denounce the prevalent acceptance of the double standard. That seems to me the necessary preliminary step.

I am, of course, not only sorry but somewhat disturbed in my convictions by not being in step with so many of my personal friends and associates in various movements, whom I so greatly admire. Nearly half of the names on your conference committee are people with whom I am in strongest sympathy in many directions and some are my close personal friends whom I profoundly admire.

## Charles Edward Pell

*Author of "The Law of Births and Deaths."*

I AM honored by your courteous request that I should lay my views upon the vexed questions of Birth Control be-

fore your forthcoming Conference. Of course you know that my own particular view is that the present decline in the birth-rate is due in the main, not to the use of contraceptives, but to a law of Nature the function of which is to adjust the birth-rate to suit approximately the needs of the race as manifested in the death-rate—a law the action of which can be clearly traced throughout human society, the animal kingdom, the vegetable kingdom, and even among unicellular organisms.

Nevertheless, my ultimate ideal—an intelligently regulated birth-rate—is exactly the same as your own, and I have no prejudices as to the methods by which this result is to be obtained. I recognize that, even granting the existence of such a law as that which I have sketched out in my book: "The Law of Births and Deaths," there are certain circumstances under which the use of contraceptives is defensible and even desirable. No one, I suppose, advocates the use of contraceptives for their own sake; but to those who urge that their use is an evil, it is permissible to reply that they are obviously a lesser evil than the multiplication of the hopelessly unfit whose reproduction is under all circumstances undesirable, and to whom the giving of advice about moral restraint is like advising the Ethiopian to change his skin or the leopard to change his spots. They are a lesser evil than the dragging down to poverty and misery of married couples and their children through the reproduction of families of a size far beyond their ability to support. While, as to the assertion that promiscuity of sexual intercourse is likely to result, it may be pointed out that the number of illegitimate children born and the number of abortions procured show that an absence of contraceptive knowledge is no guarantee of morality.

But this question of Birth Control has two main aspects. There is the question of the control of births as practiced occasionally with more or less success in individual families; and there is the question of the control of the birth-rate as a whole. The latter is the really important problem; and it must be remembered that a merely falling birthrate is not a controlled birthrate. At present the better stock in all the leading coun-



tries of the world is not merely reproducing least but tending to dwindle away, anything from a quarter to a third of them being childless. The old American stock is steadily dying out. The least efficient classes are producing the greater part of successive generations. Such a birthrate cannot be called regulated. Under-reproduction, with depopulation and the dying out of the better stock, is just as disastrous and undesirable on the one hand as over-production on the other. In my judgment we can only obtain an intelligently regulated birth-rate by a study of the biological problems involved along the lines laid down in my book, and by obtaining such an intimate knowledge of the laws governing reproduction as will enable us to secure fertilization at will.

It is true that the social and economic problems also involved in the securing of a really controlled birth-rate are stupendous, but that is not an argument for shirking them. It is an argument for attacking them as promptly as possible. And consider the tremendous advantages which would result from success. Not only would the spectres of depopulation and over-population be banished forever, and with them much of the poverty and misery at present prevailing, but the ability to obtain the largest proportion of births from the abler sections of the community, and the smallest proportion from the least fit, would open up vast possibilities of physical, moral, and intellectual development for the race.

For the American people the securing of a regulated birth-rate offers one very special advantage. The negro problem and the antagonism between white and black must become steadily more acute with the growth in numbers of the negro population. The only suggestions for a solution which I have ever seen are that the negroes should be deported to Africa or segregated in an area by themselves—suggestions even the authors of which must feel to be impracticable. But the wave of sterility now sweeping over America, in common with the leading countries of Europe, will ultimately overtake the negroes. Indeed, I believe it has already affected them to a not inconsiderable degree. If, then, it is possible to obtain the

power to secure fertilization at will, it should only be necessary to obtain as many children per family as are needed for the maintenance of the white race while allowing the negro population to diminish through increasing sterility.

There is nothing impracticable about such a course, as nothing in the way of coercion is involved and the onset of sterility is a practical certainty. If it be argued that a birth-rate so controlled is impossible of realization, the reply is that we must make it possible or see our civilization perish. We can conquer only by studying both sides of the question, by recognizing the danger of depopulation as well as overpopulation, and by studying the biological aspects of the problem alone. Given a readiness to attack the problem with clear heads and open eyes, we shall probably see the impossibilities vanish into thin air.

I trust that your Conference will bear steadily in mind the fact that a merely falling birth-rate is not a controlled birth-rate, and that it is the latter we require. I also trust that they will make a special point of searching minutely into the biological as well as the moral, economic, psychological and other sociological aspects of the question.

In conclusion may I offer you my congratulations upon the magnificent courage you have shown in grappling with this great problem, and my best wishes for the success of the Conference.

Dr. Mary Scharlieb

*English Surgeon*

**M**ANY thanks for your letter received this morning. I will do my best to briefly indicate my position with regard to this important subject.

In my opinion the limitation of families is wrong and dangerous because it does not control or discipline sexual passion but aims at the securing of the privileges of the married state while it shirks the responsibilities attached thereto. Thus it does away with the natural discipline of married life.

Secondly, the artificial prevention of conception does not appear to me to be in the real interest of the wife. It is true

that it may relieve her from the burdens of pregnancy and lactation and from the care that is involved in the proper bringing up of a large family. On the other hand the logical outcome of the removal of all restraint from the husband's desires tends to the virtual enslavement of the wife. Many men who have not the moral and intellectual development that is necessary to secure for her proper respect and consideration now refrain from making undue demands upon her for fear of the consequences, but when relieved from this fear they would recognize no limit to their desires. This most undesirable condition of things is not the intention and object of those who advocate artificial control but it is the logical outcome of their propaganda.

Thirdly, it is impossible to instruct married women in artificial methods of preventing conception without at the same time instructing unmarried women and girls. In doing this the outside conscience is removed: fear of disgrace and of adverse public opinion gives place to an unhealthy confidence that sin may be enjoyed and no unpleasant consequences will result. Already promiscuous intercourse is far too frequent, and its results in illegitimate births and in the dissemination of venereal disease are greatly to be deplored. Artificial prevention of conception, although to some extent protecting the girl or woman against the natural consequences of her action, would tend to blunt her moral sense and degrade the national standard of purity.

Fourthly, from the doctor's point of view the use of artificial contraceptives is wrong, because although many of them do not necessarily inflict any local, mechanical, or chemical injury, their effect on the nervous system is certainly injurious. Much of the joy and spontaneity of married relationship is destroyed, and the woman's nervous health appears to suffer not only during child-bearing years but more markedly at, and after, the menopause.

In addition to these reasons there are the wider considerations of national welfare, and of contravention of the Divine command—"Be fruitful and multiply."

Mary Kingsbury Simkhovitch

*Professor Social Economy, Greenwich House, New York*

I BELIEVE that doctors should be free to impart such information and give such advice as they regard to be of benefit to their patients.

John S. Sumner

*Secretary, The New York Society for the Suppression of Vice*

OUR replies to the questions which you propounded follow:

1. Over-population is not a menace to the peace of the world because there is no over-population. It is true that in some countries the density of population exceeds that in other countries, and that in cities there is hurtful congestion of population; but it must be remembered that prior to the World War, Belgium was the most densely populated country in Europe. It was also the most peaceful, prosperous and contented. It is not the physical fact of population but the mental and spiritual condition of a people which determines the question as to a menace to continued peace.

2. If there were general over-population as distinguished from congestion of population in certain limited areas, the logical way to meet the condition would be to check the birth rate or practice euthanasia among the unfit. But we are told by the disciples of Birth Control in Holland, where the doctrine is practiced, that there is no decline in the birth rate and that the period of the individual life has been increased. This would eventually lead to increased density of population and therefore the doctrine of so-called Birth Control, as practiced in the Netherlands, could not be an effective offset to over-population.

3. The knowledge and practice of Birth Control, through the prevention of conception, would and has changed the moral attitude of men and women toward the marriage bond, or preferably the marriage status. This is indicated by divorce statistics. Consider New York City. In 1919 there were 1224 matrimonial actions or 1224 married couples in the Courts



seeking to have a complete or partial dissolution of the marriage contract. As issue of these parties there were only 399 minor children. If each child were the issue of different parents that would still leave 825 or 67 per cent of childless married couples seeking to avoid a relation which was entered into for life. In practice so-called Birth Control means birth prevention and without a child, the climax of the assumption of the obligations of marriage, the parties to a marriage are inclined to regard that status with levity, to be assumed or discarded like a garment.

The knowledge of Birth Control, which is birth prevention, would lower the moral standards of the youth of the country. Anything which tends to encourage the evasion of obligations saps and breaks down moral fibre. The chief obligation of marriage is procreation. The husband and wife are partners in an enterprise, and the crowning glory of that enterprise, the true consummation of marriage, is the child. Unfortunately, the tendency of the day is to devote too much time to frivolous pleasure. This is true of all classes and ages. The result is an inclination to avoid what would interfere with self indulgence. There is no doubt that the bearing and rearing of children is such an interference. It follows that if knowledge for the prevention of conception is imparted to youth with authority and as a desirable thing endorsed by "nice people," that youth will eagerly accept and use that knowledge. At first the idea may be merely to delay procreation, but delays are dangerous and usually result in utter abandonment and as a result life's greatest and most soul-satisfying obligation, the obligation of parenthood, is entirely avoided. That is the story of the increasing divorce rate and the purposeless lives of so many.

Character is built by assuming obligations and overcoming difficulties. If obligations are evaded there is no character. Without character there is no moral standard. If we equip and encourage youth to evade life's greatest obligation, we are going far in the direction of no moral standards and purposeless, disappointed, bitter lives. Our elders did not serve us so.

4. We believe that where there is the probability of *diseased or mentally defective progeny*, or where the *health or life of the mother* would be endangered by child-bearing, *parents* should be advised against further issue and should be informed *personally by a licensed physician* of any known harmless means toward such a result. This can be *legally done* at the present time. It requires no propaganda and no change in the State law.

A correspondence course on the subject or remedies furnished by a mail order house would be neither safe nor useful. There is no need for a change in the Federal law. It would certainly result in a renewal of that situation when the mails were flooded with sealed packages addressed to boys and girls, placing temptation in their way with a promise of safety from unfortunate consequences, for the financial profit of vicious and mercenary interests.

We favor the prevention by *present legal means* of the aggravation or transmittal of either physical or mental disease and believe that it would make for human happiness and would raise the social and intellectual average of the community and probably also the verge of moral conduct.

We can see no reason for any alteration in either Section 1142 of the Penal Law of the State of New York, nor in Sections 211 or 245 of the United States Criminal Law, but rather the certainty of untold harm should amendments limiting the scope of those laws be enacted.

Virginia Terhune Van de Water

*Author, Pompton, N. Y.*

I DO believe strongly in intelligent Birth Control. But one trouble about this matter is that the better classes know how to control the number of births in their families,—while the uneducated classes seem ignorant of any safe method of preventing large families. Therefore the poor women resort to quacks and to abortionists, and ruin their health. I knew one poor woman who procured eight miscarriages, because she could not afford to have children. Then she wondered that

her health was wrecked! Yet had she been instructed in safe and sane methods of prevention of conception she might have continued to be a well, strong, useful person. When I knew her, she was a regular attendant at a free clinic for internal disorders. She was incurably ill.

In answering your numbered questions, I would say,—

1. That over-population certainly seems to be a menace to the peace of the world,—probably one of the big factors in causing the World War.

2. That legal dissemination of scientific Birth Control information through clinics conducted by reputable physicians would be the wisest and safest way of checking over-population.

3. That knowledge of scientific Birth Control would not change the moral attitude of men and women toward the marriage bond. In fact I fancy it would make them respect marriage more. Nor do I believe that it would lower the moral standards of our young people. They have certainly been lowered during the past few years without such knowledge of Birth Control as has been suggested. The fear of bringing illegitimate children into the world, or of giving birth to a diseased progeny has not kept the youth of our country moral. Plain speech on such matters would, in my opinion, make vice less attractive by removing all mystery from it and by showing it in all its hideous features.

4. I believe that knowledge that enables parents to limit their offspring will increase human happiness and raise the standards of the entire population. Fewer and better children are needed,—children that are wanted and planned for instead of unwelcome “accidents.”

Prof. W. F. Willcox

*Cornell University*

THE great number of living persons and their rapid increase are not in themselves a serious menace to the peace of the world. The trouble is that in civilized countries the increase is derived in large and growing proportion from the less desirable stocks. The privileged classes are now exer-

cising Birth Control in increasing proportions and cannot be prevented from so doing. Since deliberate and desired parenthood is the form which human reproduction is rapidly assuming and is on the whole conducive to a better race, it should and will be extended, though slowly, to all classes of population. Such a far reaching change is sure to modify profoundly the attitude of mankind toward marriage and parenthood. In some cases it will work ill, in others good. But the net result, I hope and believe, will prove to be a boon to mankind. Certainly the effort to prevent or check this great change by enforcing laws inherited from earlier stages of knowledge and morals is sure in the end to fail.

#### STERILIZATION OF THE UNFIT

*By Norman Haire, M.B., Ch.M.*

*The following letter from Dr. Norman Haire covers a somewhat different field from that suggested by the Questionnaire. It is a practical contribution from a doctor's own experience.*

**A**LTHOUGH Birth Control is gaining in public favor, it still has many active opponents—really earnest conscientious people, who sincerely believe that it is wrong for averagely healthy men and women to limit their families.

But there are few, I think, who would deny that it is justifiable, and indeed very desirable, to limit or prevent the multiplication of those, who, through either physical or mental disease, are obviously unfit for parenthood.

Especially in cases of mental disease is it necessary that reproduction should be avoided; and it is precisely in these cases that it is most difficult to teach the patient to take regular and adequate precautions. Through indifference, or carelessness, or lack of intelligence, these people generally fail to avoid conception, so that they continue to bring into the world a new generation of human beings handicapped from the beginning by a woefully small mental bank balance, who become bankrupt if too great a demand is made on their poor resources.

I was Resident Physician at three Australian Mental Hos-



pitals and Resident Superintendent of a large Obstetric Hospital, and there I have often seen women who suffered from attacks of insanity regularly each time they were pregnant. During the pregnancy or at confinement they would become insane, and would be removed to an asylum. If they recovered sufficiently, they would be discharged as cured, to return with a similar attack at the next pregnancy. I have seen women who have had as many as six attacks of this sort, and who nevertheless were not prevented from becoming pregnant again, or even taught to take any contraceptive precautions.

We investigated the family history of all cases admitted to the asylums, and in a very large proportion of them it was easy to trace further cases of mental disturbance in direct ancestors or in other near relatives. Often we would find insanity in several successive generations, the age of onset becoming earlier in each succeeding generation, showing that each individual tended to begin with less capital than its predecessor, and in the presence of an equal strain to become bankrupt earlier.

At present I am Honorary Physician at a Maternity and Child Welfare Centre in a very poor part of London, where a good many cases show mental disturbance or deficiency, and it is in these cases that I find it most difficult to convince the parents of the necessity for contraception and to teach them properly to use the ordinary simple methods.

In such cases, as also in the presence of Syphilis, Tuberculosis and certain other diseases which may be transmitted to, or may damage, the offspring, sterilization by surgical means seems to me to be clearly indicated. In some of the states of the American Union the compulsory sterilization of lunatics and habitual criminals is prescribed or permitted by law, and I have been informed by the Secretary of the State Board of Health for Indiana that about twelve hundred male criminals have been sterilized in that state, and that sterilization laws exist in New York, Michigan, Oregon, California, Washington, Kansas, Illinois and Iowa.

Public opinion in England is not yet ready to accept the

idea of compulsory sterilization, but I think there would be little effective opposition if voluntary sterilization were advocated for such cases, and its simplicity and harmlessness properly explained. Indeed I believe that soon many men and women suffering from less serious physical or mental disability, or from economic distress and even many who, while neither unhealthy nor poor, yet desired to limit their families from other motives, would also seek this operative relief; in order to avoid the constant necessity for troublesome temporary precautions, and the anxiety due to the fallibility of all ordinary contraceptive methods.

Unfortunately, when one speaks of sterilization by operation, the average English man or woman thinks that one means the actual removal from the body of the ovaries or testicles, with consequent loss of sexual desire and potency, and subsequent transformation into a neuter sort of person, lacking all interest and joy in life.

This, of course, is not what is meant at all. Sterilization can be safely, easily and efficiently carried out by any competent surgeon. In the female a small incision is made in the abdominal wall, the Fallopian tube is tied in two places and cut in between. In the male the operation is even simpler, because the seminal duct or Vas Deferens is nearer the surface of the body. In this case a small incision is made in each groin and the male duct tied and cut across in a similar manner. In either case, the patient should be quite recovered from the operation in a fortnight.

Surgical sterilization is far less painful and occasions less inconvenience than does a single confinement, to say nothing of the previous nine months of pregnancy. And it cannot be too strongly emphasized that the general health, sexual desire and sexual potency are in no way prejudiced by this operation in man or woman.

Indeed, the recent work of Steinach, of Vienna, and of his co-workers and disciples, goes to show that this operation in the male is often followed by increased sexual desire and potency and by considerable improvement in health.

THE AMERICAN BIRTH CONTROL LEAGUE, INC.

SHORTLY before the date of the Conference, the friends of the movement organized the American Birth Control League with the following officers and Executive Committee:—

MARGARET SANGER, *President*

JULIET BARRETT RUBLEE, *Vice-President*

ANNE KENNEDY, *Secretary*

CLARA LOUISE ROWE, *Corresponding Secretary*

FRANCES B. ACKERMANN, *Treasurer*

RICHARD BILLINGS, *Assistant Treasurer*

*EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE*

DR. JOHN C. VAUGHAN

DR. LYDIA DE VILBISS

ROBERT MORSS LOVETT

MRS. PIERRE JAY

AND OFFICERS OF LEAGUE

*Headquarters:* 104 FIFTH AVENUE

On April 22, 1922, the League received a charter of Incorporation from the State of New York. At the initial meeting of the League, a statement of Principles and Aims was adopted as its platform and program of work.

The statement was as follows:—

**PRINCIPLES:**

The complex problems now confronting America as the result of the practice of reckless procreation are fast threatening to grow beyond human control.

Everywhere we see poverty and large families going hand in hand. Those least fit to carry on the race are increasing most rapidly. People who cannot support their own offspring are encouraged by Church and State to produce large families. Many of the children thus begotten are diseased or feeble-minded; many become criminals. The burden of supporting these unwanted types has to be borne by the healthy elements of the nation. Funds that should be used to raise the standard of

our civilization are diverted to the maintenance of those who should never have been born.

In addition to this grave evil we witness the appalling waste of women's health and women's lives by too frequent pregnancies. These unwanted pregnancies often provoke the crime of abortion, or alternatively multiply the number of child workers and lower the standard of living.

To create a race of well-born children it is essential that the function of motherhood should be elevated to a position of dignity, and this is impossible as long as conception remains a matter of chance.

We hold that children should be

1. Conceived in love;
2. Born of the mother's conscious desire;
3. And only begotten under conditions which render possible the heritage of health.

Therefore we hold that every woman must possess the power and freedom to prevent conception except when these conditions can be satisfied.

Every mother must realize her basic position in human society. She must be conscious of her responsibility to the race in bringing children into the world.

Instead of being a blind and haphazard consequence of uncontrolled instinct, motherhood must be made the responsible and self-directed means of human expression and regeneration.

These purposes, which are of fundamental importance to the whole of our nation and to the future of mankind, can only be attained if women first receive practical scientific education in the means of Birth Control. That, therefore, is the first object to which the efforts of this League will be directed.

#### AIMS:

THE AMERICAN BIRTH CONTROL LEAGUE aims to enlighten and educate all sections of the American public in the various aspects of the dangers of uncontrolled procreation and the imperative necessity of a world program of Birth Control.

The League aims to correlate the findings of scientists, statisticians, investigators and social agencies in all fields. To make



As far as possible, it is necessary to organize various departments:

**RESEARCH:** To collect the findings of scientists, concerning the relation of reckless breeding to delinquency, defect and dependence.

**INVESTIGATION:** To derive from these scientifically ascertained facts and figures, conclusions which may aid all public health and social agencies in the study of problems of maternal and infant mortality, child-labor, mental and physical defects and delinquency in relation to the practice of reckless parentage.

**HYGIENIC AND PHYSIOLOGICAL** instruction by the Medical profession to mothers and potential mothers in harmless and reliable methods of Birth Control in answer to their requests for such knowledge.

**STERILIZATION** of the insane and feeble-minded and the encouragement of this operation upon those afflicted with inherited or transmissible diseases, with the understanding that sterilization does not deprive the individual of his or her sex expression, but merely renders him or her incapable of producing children.

**EDUCATIONAL:** The program of education includes: The enlightenment of the public at large, mainly through the education of leaders of thought and opinion—teachers, ministers, editors and writers—to the moral and scientific soundness of the principles of Birth Control and the imperative necessity of its adoption as the basis of national and racial progress.

**POLITICAL AND LEGISLATIVE:** To enlist the support and co-operation of legal advisors, statesmen and legislators in effecting the removal of state and federal statutes which encourage dysgenic breeding, increase the sum total of disease, misery and poverty and prevent the establishment of a policy of national health and strength.

**ORGANIZATION:** To send into the various States of the Union field workers to enlist the support and arouse the interest of the masses to the importance of Birth Control so that laws may be changed and the establishment of clinics made possible in every State.

INTERNATIONAL: This department aims to co-operate with similar organizations in other countries to study Birth Control in its relations to the world population problem, food supplies, national and racial conflicts, and to urge upon all international bodies organized to promote world peace, the consideration of these aspects of international amity.

THE AMERICAN BIRTH CONTROL LEAGUE proposes to publish in its official organ *The Birth Control Review*, reports and studies on the relationship of controlled and uncontrolled populations to national and world problems.

The American Birth Control League also proposes to hold an annual Conference to bring together the workers of the various departments so that each worker may realize the inter-relationship of all the various phases of the problem, to the end that National education will tend to encourage and develop the powers of self direction, self-reliance, and independence in the individuals of the community instead of dependence upon public or private relief of charities.

## INDEX

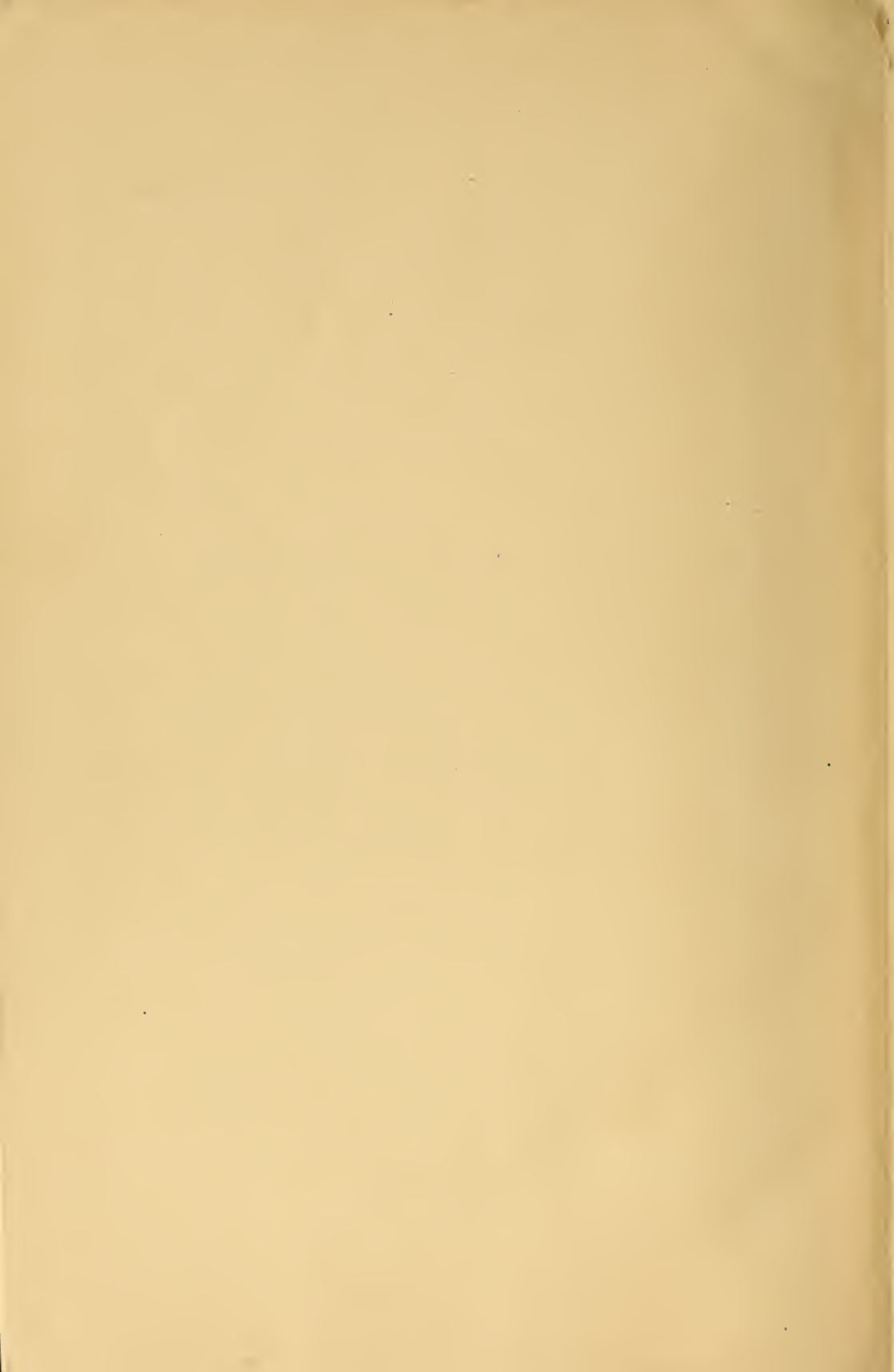
Adams, S. H.....	179
American Birth Control League .....	207
Anthony, K.....	180
Austria, Birth Control in.....	151
Barker, E. C.....	180
Bell, B. I.....	181
Bennett, Mrs. M. T.....	53, 160
Birth Control Not Abortion .....	18
Birth Control in Its Relation to Disease.....	31
Bland, J. O. P.....	82
Bowen, E. W.....	182
Bushee, F. A.....	182
Butler, Dr. Alice.....	37
Butler, Pearce.....	182
Cannon, W. B.....	183
Carpenter, E.....	176
Committee, Birth Control Conference .....	1
Conscience and Birth Control .....	46
Cox, Harold.....	4, 120, 121
on War and Population..	111
on Is Birth Control Moral	164
on Freedom of Speech...	169
Delinquent Woman, Problem of the.....	60
DeVilbiss, Dr. L. A., 39, 122,	163
Dilla, Dr. H. M.....	5, 74
Disarmament, Birth Control and .....	123
Discussion .....	48, 85, 119
Drysdale, Dr. C. V.....	123
Durant, Will.....	184
Dutch Opinion.....	143
Ellis, Havelock.....	177
Eugenic Aspect of B. C.....	56
Exhibits .....	5
Ferch, Johan.....	155
Fite, Warner.....	184
Freedom by B. C., The Greater .....	74
Gibbons, Mr.....	146
Giddings, F. H.....	186
Goldstein, Dr. S. E.....	147
Gruening, E. H.....	186
Haire, Dr. Norman.....	204
Hamilton, Cosmo.....	188
Hine, Lewis.....	5
Hirshfield, Comr.....	163
Holland and B. C.....	133
Holmes, John Haynes.....	188
Hooker, Edith H.....	12, 85, 94, 123 159
Hurst, Fannie.....	189
Hussey, Dr.....	122
Infant Mortality, B. C. and..	102
Inge, Dean.....	177
Johnson, Roswell H.....	56, 158
Johnson, Dr.....	52
Johnston, Mary.....	190
Jones, Mr.....	121
Jordan, David S.....	190
Knopf, Dr. S. A.....	31, 49
Konikow, Dr.....	87
Lewis, Mr.....	158, 160
Liber, Dr. Benzion.....	48
Limitation of Armaments...	157
Lindeman, Prof. E. C.....	66
Lindsey, Ben. B.....	191
Little, Dr. C. C.....	58
Lovejoy, Owen R.....	193
Malthus, T. R.....	22
Marsh, Robert.....	163
Maurer, James.....	102
Medical Aspects of B. C....	39
Mental Disease, Inheritance of .....	36

## INDEX

Merchant, Mr.-----	85	Rowe, C. L.-----	157
Mitchell, Mrs.-----	146	Rublee, Juliet Barrett-----	163
Moens, H. M. B.-----	148	Rural Social Progress, B. C. and -----	66
Myer, Adolph-----	46	Sanger, Margaret-----	
Myerson, Dr. Abraham--36,	51	1, 4, 111, 121, 123, 138,	146
Neo-Malthusian Formula----	135	Opening address of-----	14
Order of Birth and Sex		Speech at Park Theater--	170
Ratio -----	58	Scharlieb, Mary-----	193
Patrick, Dr.-----	49	Sentiment against B. C., Some Sources of-----	21
Paul, E. and C.-----	193	Simkhovitch, M. K.-----	200
Peabody, G. F.-----	195	Spaeth, Reynold A.-----	29
Pell, C. E.-----	195	Sterilization of the Unfit----	204
Petitions -----	157, 158	Stoddard, Lothrop-----	94
Population Problems in Asia	94	Sumner, John S.-----	200
Population Question in Asia.	82	Telegrams sent by Conference	94
Principles and Aims.-----	207	Todd, Helen-----	119, 120
Programme of Conference.3,	9	Van de Water, V. T.-----	202
Psychiatric Standpoint, B.		Vaughan, Dr. J. C. ----	18, 52
C., from a-----	53	War and Population-----	111
Psychoanalysis, B. C. and---	139	Wattal, P. K.-----	97
Public Health Measure, B.		Willcox, W. F.-----	203
C., as a-----	29	Winsor, Mary-----	4, 151, 163
Public Meeting-----	4, 163	Woman's Need of B. C., The Individual -----	37
Questionnaire -----	4, 175	Young, Virginia C.-----	60
Reiland, Dr. Karl.-----	163		
Robie, Dr. W. F.-----	139, 159		
Rosanoff, Dr. Aaron J.-----	53		









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