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# POPULATION AND PROGRESS



# POPULATION AND PROGRESS

BY

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LONDON  
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1907



*I dedicate this little book  
to my friend*

FRANCIS GALTON, F.R.S.,  
D.C.L.(OXON), HON. SC.D.(CAMB.),

*Founder of the Science of Eugenics,*

*whose efforts for the improvement of the human race  
are recognized throughout the civilized world*



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# POPULATION AND PROGRESS

## FOREWORD

**T**HE first three of the following essays appeared (with slight variations) in the *Fortnightly Review* for October, 1872, December, 1906, and February, 1907, respectively. The earliest had for its original title, "The Morality of Married Life." The last two are new.

That the main theme of all the essays is of vital importance is beyond dispute, whatever may be thought of the manner of its presentation. The thread binding them together is the "Voluntary Principle," which is itself linked with several old controversies—controversies between Free Will and Determinism, between Evolution

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and Church Orthodoxy, between Individualism and Socialism, between Sex and Sex.

This principle has now been much too widely adopted to be negligible in any quarter. For whilst to those who are hostile it gives an opportunity for pharisaic thankfulness, that they are not as other men are—rebels against the decrees of Heaven—to the rest, who sympathize, it affords a stimulus to social duty and the promise of a happier, because more unselfish, life.

By way of preface, I would first draw attention to an article *in pari materiâ* contributed to the *Nineteenth Century* for March, 1907, by Mrs. Ashby Macfadyen. Its keynote is sounded in the following passage :

There is no question that has been the cause of a more heated discussion than that on the decline of the birth-rate. Clergymen, economists and statisticians have made learned and eloquent pronouncements over it. Amid the hubbub there has been one not unimportant person whose point of view has been almost entirely ignored, that is, the mother. It is a moral platitude to say that those who do what they believe to be wrong are self-condemned. Our spiritual mentors appear not to

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have grasped the fact that we are face to face with a new development of the mother's conscience.

I may say from personal experience that a desire for limitation of family is at work through all classes of English-speaking peoples, notably among the most provident of all classes. It would, indeed, be surprising if the infallible guides along this new path were celibate or childless men like Father Bernard Vaughan, the Bishop of London, and Mr. Sidney Webb.

This was written from South Africa, where Mrs. Macfadyen has been resident for some years. She has, however, travelled in other British colonies, on the continent of Europe, and in the United States. Her field of observation has, therefore, been very wide; her testimony to the Voluntary Principle is both independent and fresh. I heartily commend her very able paper to every man and woman in the United Kingdom.

2. It is a far cry from the *Nineteenth Century* to the *Clarion*, of which the editor is Mr. Robert Blatchford. Mr. Blatchford's book, "Not Guilty: a Defence of the Bottom Dog," has had an enormous circulation during the last twelve months. Issued at the modest price of sixpence, it still

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commands a ready sale at our railway book-stalls. The author has set himself to prove that heredity and environment—and these alone—cause (*i.e.* compel) every man to be what he is ; so that, to quote his own words, “everything a man does is the only thing he *can* do, the only thing he can do *then*.” A logician might say that this is a truism, equivalent to the proposition A is A, since if we know *all* the antecedents (of which the individual ego is one) we necessarily know the consequents. But Mr. Blatchford is not addicted to truisms. What he means to proclaim is that pernicious and depressing doctrine according to which we are all puppets and automata, wire-pulled by circumstances over which we have no sort of control. He means to make short work of moral responsibility, including the responsibility of fatherhood. He would characterize the Voluntary Principle as a misnomer and an absurdity.

It is fortunate that the poison thus offered to the working - man has been in great measure neutralized by another book, similar in form and identical in price, from the pen

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of Mr. Frank Ballard. Mr. Ballard's "Guilty—A tribute to the Bottom Dog"—a title which somewhat sacrifices lucidity to anti-thesis—has left the "dog" of Mr. Blatchford without a single leg to stand upon. I make this remark by the way, because poison and antidote should go together; but that is not my present point. What I wish to insist on is that Mr. Blatchford's "Determinism," monstrously extravagant as it is, is not more extravagant than the Determinism of those Church dignitaries who seem to hold that, once the marriage service has been officially read, children come into the world again and again by the special interposition of Providence, irrespective of consequences to the wife, to the children themselves, and to society at large. This teaching, however well-intentioned, is as ruthless and depressing as Mr. Blatchford's.

3. I would next make an appeal on behalf of the Voluntary Principle to all students of Sociology. I would ask them to note that there are three stages through which humanity has to pass in the course of its evolution.

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The first stage is that in which man violently struggles with his fellow-man, or rather tribe struggles with tribe, for the necessities of bare existence; in which the weak are continually being routed by the strong, and from which the strong emerge triumphant.

Charles Darwin, as is well known, named this struggle "NATURAL SELECTION."

To this first stage succeeds in course of time a second, in which philanthropy steps in and starts a counter-struggle to save and succour the weak, and to make the victorious strong contribute to their support. It is to the glory of Christianity that she has initiated this counter-struggle by setting on foot in nearly all civilized countries a multitude of charitable institutions for the maintenance of the degenerate and the fallen. With the help of these institutions the rigour of "Natural Selection" has been greatly relaxed. ASSISTED SELECTION, if I may so call it, has largely taken its place.

Humanity has, however, now reached a third stage which re-acts on both the previous stages. In it, struggle No. 1 is abated by proportioning population to means of

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subsistence, whilst much of struggle No. 2 is rendered superfluous by the elimination of the suffering which that struggle can at most alleviate.

This last process may be termed **PURPOSIVE SELECTION**. It operates by the Voluntary Principle.

I agree with Mr. Leonard Hobhouse, in his work on "Morals in Evolution," that humanity having at length learnt the laws of its own growth is beginning to appreciate the conditions on which its progress depends; that the future development of society must follow a very different course from what it has followed in the past; and that instead of being subject to the blind pressure of circumstances, intelligence, aided by scientific inquiry, must guide and organize it.

4. I now pass on to say a few words on the attitude towards the Voluntary Principle which the Socialists take up.

As a body, the Socialists are not, I believe, hostile to this principle. Those who profess to be so hail from the extreme left wing of the party. Their peculiar ideas of regeneration lead them to consider that the

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existing order of things has to become worse before it can become better. They therefore silently acquiesce in the reckless multiplication of numbers in the hope that the social edifice may totter, and a popular demand thereupon be created for a trial of their favourite Collectivism.

On the other hand, the centre and right wing of the Socialists take a more rational view—a view which has been expounded by one of the ablest of them, Mr. H. G. Wells, in a pamphlet recently published under his name.

The children (he says) people bring into the world can be no more their private concern than the disease germs they disseminate or the noises a man makes in a thin-floored flat. Socialism says boldly the State is the Over-Parent, the Outer-Parent. People rear children for the State and the future ; if they do that well, they do the whole world a service and deserve payment just as much as if they built a bridge or raised a crop of wheat ; if they do it unpropitiously and ill, they have done the world an injury. Socialism denies altogether the right of any one to beget children carelessly and promiscuously, and, for the prevention of disease and evil births alike, the Socialist is prepared for an insistence upon intelligence and self-restraint quite beyond the current practice

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At present we deal with all that sort of thing as an infringement of private proprietary rights; the Socialist holds it is the world that is injured.

Later on in the same pamphlet—which seems to be a Fabian manifesto in favour of the Endowment of Motherhood—occurs this astonishing passage—

Socialism is, in fact, the State family. The old family of the private individual must vanish before it, just as the old waterworks of private enterprise.

In these two quotations the author of “Mankind in the Making” shows Socialism both at its best and worst. At its best, in so far as the first quotation affirms the value of the Voluntary Principle and the necessity for acting on it. At its worst, in so far as the second declares for the supersession of family authority and responsibility by the authority and responsibility of the State.

To this last teaching these essays are diametrically opposed. They show that the Voluntary Principle is eminently adapted to increase parental responsibility and to draw closer the ties of family, since with it those children only are born who are desired

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before, and are warmly welcomed after, birth. It shows that the principle is a strong preservative of the Home, and not a solvent of it. (See especially pages 116, 117.)

5. To say that the three essays here reprinted from the *Fortnightly Review* encountered on their first appearance no opposition would perhaps be going too far. But the only serious criticism I have come across is that dealt with at page 98, viz. that the Voluntary Principle may be all very well for the educated and the well-to-do, but that there is little or no ground for expecting that it will be adopted by the very class which stands most in need of it.

The observation is, I admit, just, but its force is diminishing day by day. Let me make this last statement good by quoting once more from Mrs. Macfadyen. She tells us, on excellent authority, that in America it has been shown, as the result of exhaustive inquiries among medical practitioners and school officials, that even the lowest classes of immigrants, fresh from the slums and hovels of Eastern Europe, as one of the first results of their new environment,

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begin to put a limit to their child-bearing ; that as soon as it is realized that better social conditions are within reach, restriction is adopted as one of the necessary means to obtain them. And she adds from her personal knowledge, that even in the conservative and far less sophisticated Southern States of America the result is the same.

What is true of America is even more true of Europe where civilization is older and more advanced. In fact, all the world over, *wherever social conditions have been improved*, there the Voluntary Principle has struck its roots, and continues to hold its ground. This is proved by statistics, some of which are cited in the following pages.

And why should not social conditions be permanently improved, so that this principle may percolate downwards? Is it an idle dream to look forward to the time when public health administration shall have been made more thorough ; when more air, light, and house-room shall have been supplied to the dwellings of the poor ; when instruction in the laws of hygiene shall have been made compulsory ; when mothers with infant

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children shall have been debarred from engaging in factory work; when they shall have been taught the art of child-rearing; when epileptics, degenerates, and drunkards shall have been prevented from undertaking what are commonly reckoned the obligations of marriage; when, in short, men shall have become more manly, women more womanly, and both more vigorous in mind and body, and more fit for active employment in the service of the State and of humanity?

Not that this is all that is required for the progress of the race. It is not enough that men and women be better fed, better clothed, better housed, better taught, and better paid. Material comforts alone can never ensure happiness. Great external wealth may be combined with great spiritual poverty.

To compass real happiness, we must cultivate an enlightened altruism, a lively sense of social duty, and, above all, a vitalizing faith in the true "At-one-ment," by which, working in unison with the Divine Spirit, we overcome evil with good.

# I

## THE VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLE AND INDIVIDUAL LIBERTY

OCTOBER, 1872

**I**T is an old saying that nothing makes or mars a man like marriage ; there is another equally true that those who marry in haste repent at leisure. To enter lightly on the marriage state is the act either of a fool or a madman ; the one cannot look beyond the present, the other is wholly reckless of the future. Average Englishmen take a much more serious view of the matter, and for several obvious reasons. It will be sufficient to mention three. First, marriage in the eyes of the majority is a sacramental or quasi-sacramental ceremony. Secondly, its dissolution by divorce is rendered difficult by the law, whilst it nearly always involves a social scandal. Thirdly, and this reason operates very powerfully with most thinking

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persons, marriage is supposed to lay us open, whether we would so have it or not, to indefinite cares and responsibilities consequent on the birth of a numerous offspring. This last gratuitous assumption is the subject of the present paper. Its argument is addressed to those who are still under the popular delusion that, in this particular department of conduct, no man is his own master, therefore no man can lend a helping hand to his brother. "If there is one thing," says Mrs. Grundy, "which is outside the sphere of calculation, it is the number of hostages to fortune which a man who marries will be called upon to give. As well set about to ascertain by a study of the Registrar-General's returns whether the first child will be male or female as try to speculate on that. Leave such vaticinations to the astrologers or the gypsies; you will have as many children as are good for you, neither more nor less."

And yet, all the current language and ideas of the day notwithstanding, there is nothing, if we reflect on it, for which we are more responsible than the reproduction of

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our own species. No one disputes this in the case of bachelors or spinsters. No one doubts that it is lawful for us all to abstain from marriage altogether, or to put it off for an indefinite number of years. Prolonged celibacy may, or may not, be a good thing in itself—on that opinions will differ—but all are agreed that the marriage state itself is, and ought to be, a matter of free choice. This being so, is it not a little wonderful to find thousands of married persons manifestly holding it to be their duty to bring into the world as many children as possible, whilst they would never think of blaming those who prefer to remain single for not contributing to the multiplication of mankind?

But the popular view of marriage is not only illogical, it is also at variance with morality. It takes for granted that, marriage once entered upon, all self-control not only ceases but ought to cease; and that, instead of the conjugal relations being subject to regulative laws, husbands and wives have no standard of prudence corresponding to that set up for the government of other folk.

The time has arrived when it has become

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necessary to use plain speech on this matter, and to make it clear that this pernicious doctrine is not only wrong in principle but fraught with most mischievous consequences. For what does it amount to? It involves a break in the education of humanity which is incompatible with the continuity of moral growth; it is certainly without a parallel in the evolutionary processes of the physical world. It means that man is free only up to a certain point in his career, free to choose his own vocation, to work out the best part of himself, to enlarge his experience by travel, to recreate his strength by leisure, to store his mind with varied knowledge, but that when he marries, he surrenders this freedom utterly, embarks on an unknown sea, exposes his fair hopes to shipwreck; becomes a victim to new circumstances against which it is vain for him to struggle.

Is there one of us who cannot call to mind a dozen instances of this kind amongst his acquaintances? Look at the poor married curates and incumbents, whose large families have passed into a proverb. Twenty-five years ago our college friend, whose hair is

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now silvering with premature age, had a reputation in his university, was enthusiastic in the cause of science, conspicuous for general culture, promised many brilliant things. Since then he has had ten children, for whose education (all he had to give them) he has overtaxed his powers till he has sunk to the level of his own drudgery, and his mind has become the mind of a pedagogue. His contemporaries are at a loss whether to pity or to praise him most. "Excellent fellow," they exclaim, "but he has been sorely weighted in the race of life ; to put out so many boys in the world is too much for any man ; no wonder he looks worn out and haggard." It never seems to strike these sympathetic observers that this hard labour is self-imposed—as much so as if a man were to set himself the task of walking thirty miles a day for a month. And what, all said and done, is there to show for it? I do not deny that during the long struggle some virtues may have been acquired, such as patience, resignation, the habit of sustained effort. But these, surely, might have been learnt apart from the weary round of constant

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family anxiety. Domestic worries, after all, are not exactly the moral rod one would choose, even though they sometimes have a chastening effect. Certain it is that in most cases they tend to narrow the outlook, and to shut out those larger human sympathies which alone make life noble and really worth living.

The condition of the overweighted husband is, indeed, melancholy enough. But that of the wife is still more so. First, consider her often-recurring physical suffering, her tedious months of dreary outlook, uncrowned by any adequate reward if they only result in adding a fresh source of trouble to the domestic circle. Consider the repeated risking of the mature and more valuable life for the sake of that other whose signal of approach has long ceased to be hailed with joy, because the chance of its finding a foothold in the world is too slender for speculation. Nor is this by any means all. Excessive child-bearing tends to arrest the education of the woman at its most critical stage, and renders her incapable of fulfilling duties which she is naturally called on to discharge. The complexities of

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modern life require that a wife should be something more than the chief domestic of her establishment. Should she come to realize that her head is empty, she will hardly be consoled by the reflection that her nursery is full.

Observe, too, the special drawbacks to which the weaker sex is subjected. On a father who is happily gifted by nature, a large and increasing family may, often does, act as a spur to exertion. In the case of the mother, however, the concentration of her whole being on the details of the domestic drama grows, and must grow with each new birth, until her daily life becomes one round of trivialities from which she is powerless to escape. At last the time comes when she would not have it otherwise. When this sad stage of helplessness is reached, sufficient for her, if the teething is not too troublesome, or if the pleasing alternation of measles and whooping-cough does not take place too rapidly. Life, as she looks on it, has now only two sides—the duties of maternity and the management of the

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household. She will be fortunate if she does not one day awake to the consciousness that, the days of her children's childhood once gone by, her maternal influence over them has disappeared also.

Victims of this description—for victims they are—earn amongst a certain class of people the title of “motherly” women. If the advantages to be gained by their self-sacrifice were such as to make it a legitimate one, it would be unjust to say a word in their dispraise. But the misfortune is that the children suffer nearly as much as their parents. In order not to sink in the social scale, they must, when too numerous, bear an amount of strain of mind wholly disproportionate to their strength. Given a perfectly healthy frame, this mental over-exertion may do them no permanent harm. But the cases are few in which the frame is perfectly healthy, and then the hot-bed system of education—let parents ignore it as they may—produces incalculable mischief. Can anything be worse for boys of ten or twelve years of age than to force them to get up a smattering of all sorts of subjects

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of which it is impossible that they can acquire any real knowledge? Yet before a boy can hope to gain an entrance scholarship at any of our great public schools this is what is exacted of him, whilst every year scores of aspiring lads are sent away sorrowful, smarting under the sense of their first failure. It is strange that a child should be crammed before he has the power to digest, but this is now the accepted plan. Under a system of excessive competition we turn out prigs and pedants by the gross, thick with honour in more senses than one, whilst at the same time we strew the educational path with a quantity of waste products for which society can find no more use than could Beau Brummel for his crumpled cravats.

For, in forecasting the fate of large families, there is one evil star which is no rare phenomenon in their horoscope. Account must be taken of the proportion of dullards that are born into the world, who, being without natural gifts, find themselves outstripped by their more nimble-witted rivals, and who are left behind in despair,

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not so much at the defeat itself as at the contempt with which it is regarded by the onlookers. There can, of course, be no race unless some one is beaten, and the advocates of universal competition are therefore bound, if they would do justice to their own pet theory, to require that weakness and strength shall be ranged side by side at starting. This is all very well so long as both weak and strong are "placed" somewhere at last; but every day we see that the weak not only go to the wall, but are cruelly squeezed when they get there. Who is to blame for this? The crowd that squeezes, or those that get the crowd together? And are we to acquit the authors of the fatal pressure because forsooth they have acted unthinkingly, or else with that ignorant fanaticism that mistakes the indulgence of man's inclinations for the furtherance of God's purposes?

But the lot of the boys is an enviable one compared with that of the girls, who, being the more feeble, are unfortunately also the more plentiful. Granted that education in their case may be procured at a much

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cheaper rate ; yet when cheapness and inferiority go hand in hand, the purchaser gains little by his bargain. There never was probably a greater delusion in the world than the ordinary young ladies' school ; and the flimsy accomplishments learnt there, so far from accomplishing anything, are apt, after marriage, to evaporate as quickly as a blown soap-bubble. Nor can attendance later on at a few scientific or other lectures, even when the lady-student condescends to take notes, supply radical intellectual defects—defects due partly to imperfect training and partly to the mental tight-lacing of catechismal formularies checking the circulation of new ideas. But let this pass for the moment as beside my present point. Improve the education of girls as you will, all girls cannot be made self-dependent, and, as things at present stand in England, a considerable number of them cannot possibly become wives. It is difficult to imagine a more unhappy condition than that of a middle-aged spinster, cast adrift with no interests and no definite occupations. The institutions of the country—such as hospitals

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and sisterhoods—can only provide work for a few. Others must seek their homes among strangers, where their presence is only tolerated for the sake of their purses, or they must become “exotics” in a private hotel or a general boarding-house, where the selfishness and eccentricity of the inmates are usually increased in direct proportion to the time during which they have been “planted out.”

So much for that section of the community which enjoys qualified independence and goes by the name of the middle class. But we must go further and apply the argument to the masses if we would realize its overwhelming importance. It would not be difficult to show that to initiate limitation of numbers amongst those who support themselves by manual labour would be to introduce the germ of nearly every social reform, and that, without such limitation, social reform can effect no permanent good. Take, first, the case of the agricultural labourer. What scope is there for useful sanitary legislation when cottages are over-stocked with human life, and neither

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doctor nor clergyman thinks of telling the parents that, in their recklessness of multiplication, they are wronging both themselves and their offspring? To reply, as is sometimes done by the optimist, that if there are seven or eight children in the cottage, three or four are certain to be bread-winners, is only to reveal unconsciously a malignant feature of the disease. It is true that Education Acts have interposed with the strong hand and have expelled from rural districts the absolute nihilism of ignorance, but hundreds of lads have still to take to field-toil long before their real education has begun in order to help to keep the wolf from the paternal door. As to overcrowding in cottages, now happily much less frequent than formerly, the blame must not be wholly thrown upon the landlord. It is the landlord's plain duty to afford his tenant fair room for a family, but it is no less the tenant's duty to adjust his family to the room.

What has been just now said of the country is still more true of the town, where the social problem is further complicated by

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the conflict always going on between labour and capital. It cannot be doubted by the best friend of the artisans that, if they were less numerous than they are, the rise and fall of the labour market would be within their own power. Why is it that, in spite of the great increase in the price of animal food during the past twenty years, the advantages secured by free trade, and the efforts of trades unions, wages in England have not, on the average, made an advance of 5 per cent., and that during the same period in France and Italy, with a much smaller advance in provisions, they have increased 40 per cent.? Why, but for the circumstance that the births in England have been relatively far more numerous than in Italy and France? Temporary scarcity there may be from cattle disease and like causes, but money must each year become cheaper at the butcher's as there are more mouths to be fed. Already production is admitted to be at an extraordinarily high pressure, and although, of course, we cannot say that the researches of science may not carry the pressure higher, still the last

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proposal on the part of the capitalist to work our machinery on the double-shift or relay system, indicates that we have now reached the point when time must be economized by encroaching on the hours of the night, instead of, as hitherto, accelerating speed during the day. Beyond this we cannot go, and, things remaining as at present, it is difficult to see what is to be the next step towards reconciling the antagonistic forces. Although machinery may never stand still, it cannot do more than twenty-four hours' work in twenty-four hours.

Look which way we will, there are clear signs that the resources of the nation are being tried to the utmost, and the main cause is the prevailing excess of numbers. The increase of the population of London alone exceeds 1000 souls a week, and the result is that in the Metropolis there are swarms of paupers, without reckoning the habitual thieves and those who occupy the borderland between poverty and crime. Whilst multiplication goes on, the competition for land must be ever becoming more active, and, as Mr. Fawcett has shown in

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the essays which bear his name, the margin of cultivation must gradually descend until at last every acre of ground which it will repay the farmer to rent will have been brought under tillage. Does any one realize what the thorough unloveliness of the face of England will be when this climax is arrived at? Imagine Windsor Park or Yardley Chase meted out into allotment grounds, and their glorious timber laid low to make room for turnips or mangold wurzel! Already the cry of commons and spaces for the people has been raised in the neighbourhood of our dense cities, and Epping Forest has in consequence got into the Court of Chancery. Not an autumn passes but the expropriation of some sequestered spot in one or other of our most picturesque counties calls forth the protest of some indignant pedestrian with an eye for the beautiful, who resents the exclusiveness of the landowner's notice-board, to which, as one of the multitude, he is forced to defer. The toiling millions will ere long be deprived, in this and other ways, of all opportunity of making acquaintance at first hand with the grander

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scenes of nature, and will have to guess them from miniature specimens, to which they bear about the same relation as the ocean does to an aquarium.

If there were no counteracting causes, the time would come when this England of ours would be overstocked to such a degree that the great bulk of the inhabitants would be unable to procure the bare necessities of life. For, however unpalatable the truth, it is useless to disguise the fact that the sources of food are limited, and that, but for war and disease, the augmentation of human beings would be unlimited. Emigration is only a temporary expedient, for it only aids equal distribution and does not diminish numbers. And it has special evils of its own. If the most active and intelligent of our workers are to be continually drafting themselves off to better their condition in America and the Colonies, like bees in search of a new hive, it will soon be left to the old country to be served by the feeblest and most degenerate of the drones. If the most helpless and indigent are to be shipped from our shores at the expense of Government, we shall not

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only be doing no slight injury to our neighbours, but holding out a positive premium to improvidence and incapacity.

We have tried something of this kind before, and we ought to be wiser now. The history of our Poor Law discloses a series of attempts to repair the rotten parts of our social system by a species of tinkering which only added to the rottenness. In the last century we overloaded the statute-book with well-intentioned measures, which, by sapping the independence of the labouring classes, stimulated the very poverty they were designed to repress. The Act of 1834 dealt with the subject on a sounder basis by applying the workhouse test, and making pauperism a hard profession ; but it has so far failed that the recipient of parochial relief is sometimes better off than the ratepayer who helps to support him. Many persons, in sheer despair, are now disposed to abolish outdoor relief altogether, and leave it to be provided, if at all, by the casual ministration of voluntary charity. On the other hand, a good deal of philanthropy is occupied with putting down all private almsgiving, and has

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organized associations for the purpose. Between the two, the destitute mendicant, who is not prepared to go before an investigation committee, is likely to come badly off. I am not prepared to say that he deserves anything else, for in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred his destitution is his own fault, and the law is inexorable that men must reap as they have sown. But it would be deplorable if our boasted civilization were only able to deal with the poor by letting them die in the streets, or in their own miserable homes. No wonder, therefore, that in the present calm of the political atmosphere the problem how to deal with the unemployed is rapidly becoming the foremost question of the hour.

If there were no remedy for the prevalent distress and discontent which meet us at every turn but the form of prudential check first insisted on by Malthus in his famous Essay on Population, we had best yield to our fate with as much resignation as we can muster. For Malthus offered man only two alternatives, either total abjuration of marriage or its postponement, however long,

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until means of subsistence should have been secured sufficiently ample to render future penury impossible. To both remedies there are serious objections. The first, total abjuration of marriage, deprives us of nearly all that cheers and ennobles life, without offering any moral equivalent. The second, indefinite postponement of marriage, fails to furnish any standard of competence to which we can refer with a sense of security, since it prescribes no ascertainable limit to the number of the family, and, therefore, none to the pecuniary needs of the marrying parties. Moreover, this teaching lays a heavy burden on the shoulders of those who are least capable of benefiting by it. It sends the weak and helpless to the battle, and leaves the stronger forces idle at home. The poor have many special virtues, but it is too much to expect that in this particular they should have a complete monopoly of wisdom and self-sacrifice. To tell a labouring man who has the chance of a cottage that he is not, on prudential grounds, to think of marrying, is little else than solemn mockery. He may well retort that he does not care to be more

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prudent than his betters. To him a wife is infinitely more necessary than to those of ampler means, for, the public-house apart, all his material comforts must be looked for in his own home, whilst his richer neighbours may satisfy all their wants abroad. It is one thing to have a club kitchen; another and very different thing to have nothing but a kitchen for your club.

If we were all perfect beings, prolonged abstention from marriage might be both practical and safe. As it is, it has a direct tendency to promote the cardinal vice of cities, the vice of unchastity. The number of women in England who ply the loathsome trade of prostitution is already large enough to people a vast territory, and, as our great thoroughfares show at nightfall, is certainly not diminishing. Their chief supporters justify themselves by the very plea which Malthus uses to enforce the duty of continence, namely, that they are not well enough off to maintain a wife and family. If they could be sure that they could limit the number of their children so as to make it commensurate with their income, not only would the

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plea be generally groundless, but I believe it would not be urged. The so-called Social Evil would thus be stormed in its strongest fortress. The vice itself would become more immoral because more without excuse, and its greater immorality would, as in the case of other offences, help to make it more rare. The world at large is only tolerant in matters relating to the sexes where the frailty of human nature compels it to be so.

I rejoice to think that the number of those who have learnt, by reflection and experience, the moral lesson I am now seeking to enforce is growing every day. It is, however, one thing to entertain a private opinion, which we never impart to others; it is another thing to formulate our ideas on the subject and communicate them to the outside world, regardless of Mrs. Grundy, because we believe they ought to be more generally held. No great social reform was ever brought about that did not spring from small beginnings. Even those laws of health which appear now most obvious were once nothing more than the registered experiences of a few individuals. Temperance in eating

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and drinking only becomes a settled habit when we have thoroughly convinced ourselves of the wisdom of it, either by watching our own sensations or by imagining the sensations of those whom we have seen suffer from its opposite. As between the different classes of society, the higher morality must always filter down from the educated to the uneducated. We cannot expect that the importance of the limitation of numbers will be equally appreciated by the philosopher in his study and by the untutored rustic in his cottage or the factory hand in his lodging. It would be idle to hope for regulative control after marriage among the lower classes of the English people, when it is only in recent years that it has been recognized by the classes above them, and not by all of these.

Many will probably think the practical conclusion to which I point, wilder than anything that Malthus ever dreamt, whilst others will regard it with dislike or pious horror on moral or religious grounds. To the former I would say, it is premature to predict that any untried experiment will fail until you

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have shown that the conditions of its success are at variance either with established facts or with ascertained laws. In the case before us, the established facts do not belie the conclusion, for, I repeat, there are already numbers of persons who share the convictions here set down, and who do not in their hearts desire that their secret should perish with them, although they have not the courage to say so. As regards ascertained laws which militate against the experiment, there is not one to be found except the law of our own inclination, and this we can, if in earnest, mould as we choose, each strengthening each in the task.

To those who seek confirmation of the views here expressed by reference to experience or economic law, I would say: It would be entertaining if it were not melancholy to observe the way in which, both in writing and speaking, men are perpetually admitting the material inconveniences due to an excess of population, whilst they give the go-by to the obvious solution that the numbers of children born after marriage ought to be limited in the manner I have endeavoured

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to indicate. Test the principle involved thus. At present the country is suffering from the abnormally high price of meat: The foot and mouth disease among cattle, and the threatened recurrence of the more terrible rinderpest, which scourged us so grievously five years ago, are creating widespread consternation amongst our breeders of stock; whilst the unsatisfactory condition of the potato crop, and the rise in the price of coals, are likely to make the poor man's coming winter a more desperate season than usual. A farmer who did not use every means in his power to protect his flocks and herds against the incursion of an epidemic, or to save the roots on which they live from being destroyed by blight, would be looked upon as a lunatic; not so much because charity demands that flocks and herds should be cared for, as because necessity requires that our bodies should be nourished. Suppose that the rinderpest were to set in with such violence as to carry off one-half of the animals whose flesh we eat, it is clear that the residue would only suffice to maintain half the present population; and that, owing to the dearness

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which always waits on scarcity, the fraction so maintained would be the richer half. Would not every economist declare it to be the duty of the lucky possessors of beef and mutton to restore, as far as possible, the equilibrium of demand and supply by abstaining from bringing fresh consumers into the world? This may be an extreme case, but if the duty exists in one state of circumstances, it may obviously exist, although dormant, under any circumstances whatever. The particular conjuncture which calls for the exercise of this duty, and the precise limits which it prescribes, it is for each one of us to determine for himself.

There is, I note, a set of feminine thinkers—moralizers rather than moralists—who pretend to an intimate acquaintance with the dispensations of Providence, and, as Mr. Matthew Arnold pithily puts it, speak as familiarly of the Deity “as if He were the man in the next street.” The language which they hold is something of this sort: “You who seek to control the destinies of mankind by arranging so carefully the affair of your family, how do you know you will ever

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succeed in rearing the two or three children that in your shallow wisdom you have prescribed as your appropriate number? If it should please the Divine Author of their being to carry them off at one fell swoop by some terrible accident, your pride of human knowledge would have a proper fall, and you would be forced to bow your head in silence before the heavenly visitation. Bereft in your old age of the solace you have reckoned on, you would then be given up to the anguish of remorse, and would weep not only for those you had lost, but for those whom you might have gained. Your sin would then truly have found you out.” “My dear Sir or Madam,” I reply, “do you not perceive that this line of reasoning has a double edge? While you remind me of my ignorance you really give me credit for more knowledge than I can lay claim to. I do not know how to detect the occurrence of these special interferences which you dangle before my eyes like a bugbear. I do not know whether my children will be alive ten years hence, be they few or be they many. I do know

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that if they are very numerous I shall probably follow one or more of them to their graves. And if you suppose that I shall sorrow less then because the lost ones can be more easily spared, you establish the very opposite of your own position, by implying that the instinct of parental affection is apt to become fainter, like light, by diffusion over a larger area. It is my duty to foster my parental instinct, which is surely as direct and precious a gift to me as the children which are its object. I refuse to be influenced by any such selfish considerations as those you seem to suggest. If there are two paths before me, I shall choose the one that appears most in keeping with my entire being and with the general good. I cannot tell even whether I shall or not outlive my own wife, but as I hold that monogamy is the purest and best form of marriage, I am not going to turn Mormon by way of meeting the contingency."

An attempt is sometimes made to cut short all discussion by quoting the old biblical precept, "Be fruitful and multiply," and by an appeal to the authority of the

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Church. The reply is obvious. First, the urgency of the Divine command has long been exhausted in its fulfilment.\* Secondly, even if it were not, the time is past when the language of a remote age, addressed to a wholly different race, can be detached from its historical surroundings and cited as a rule of modern life. To do this is to extinguish the spirit of the ancient records for the sake of the letter that killeth. There is no war, however bloody, no intolerance, however cruel and persistent, which may not thus be justified on authority by dexterous manipulation of Scripture texts. It is true that in the Prayer-book the Church tells us that the production of children is the main final cause for which marriage is ordained. Well, if she is right, the barrenness of a marriage furnishes a stronger argument for divorce than any other that can be adduced, for the ordinance itself must be shaken to its base when its principal purpose has failed. Yet amongst all the pleas for dissolution of a

\* When this injunction was given, there were, according to the biblical record, only eight persons living on the whole earth, viz. Noah and his wife, and their three sons and daughters-in-law (Gen. viii. v. 17, 18).

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marriage which are allowed by civilized states, no one ever met with the plea of sterility.

The end and aim of marriage, be it said in all thankfulness, is a great deal higher and grander than the one thus crudely put forward by the Church. Marriage is a marvellous instrument of education. It develops the sense of moral responsibility and, therefore, the mainspring of right action more completely than any other factor in our lives. It imparts strength to the weaker nature, and softness and moral beauty to the stronger, conferring a blessing both on the giver and the receiver. The sweet companionship of well-matched minds, whose most potent bond of union lies in the very fact of their difference, is in itself almost a religion, for it quickens the spiritual instincts and enlarges the social sympathies. To refuse marriage to men altogether, or to require them to postpone it indefinitely after the maturity of their judgment has justified their choice, is to inflict an injury to the whole community by encouraging special forms of evil, perhaps even calling them

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into existence. Many a woman whose daily life is now devoted to her dress or her household, or who has become so entangled in the narrow meshes of society as not to have a notion beyond, might have escaped all this bondage if an imaginary necessity had not doomed her to spinsterhood. Many a man into whose soul has stolen the slow poison of moral and intellectual cynicism, might have retained his early freshness if the example of some friend had not taught him to remain single rather than succumb to the yoke of marriage with its heavy, because uncertain, burdens. Better perhaps not to pry closely into the consolations which he allows himself, or the mode in which he seeks to reconcile what is with what might have been. If, as the phrase runs, the woman is the victim of the man, the man also is the victim of the prevailing ideas respecting the serious risks of marriage which have raised unbridled license to the level of a recognized law.

Marriage followed by the birth of children stands, it must be admitted, on a higher platform than marriage which is wholly

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unfruitful. Children serve to impart a new impulse to all that is noble in the character of both parents, diverting old feelings into new channels of love. Provided their number is so limited that they engage the affections without distracting them, and stimulate the mind without overtaxing it, the result is immeasurably good. Let this boundary-line be overstepped, and all is thrown into confusion. That which might have been a source of additional strength becomes a very fountain of weakness, and the blessing is, at least to the eye of the impartial bystander, turned into a curse. I do not say that the curse is not, in the parent's case, occasionally turned back again into a blessing, but it is the blessing which springs from resignation, and not that which springs from hope. The hermit in his wilderness did better than this. If he filled up his cup of misery for himself, he never offered it to others to drink, and at the close of his days he could reflect that he had laid no burden on any one else's back. He did not add to the cares of the next generation by an unthinking and needless augmentation of its ranks. He left behind

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him no representatives for whom society was bound to provide, because, for lack of opportunity or power of push, they were incapable of providing for themselves. He made no contribution to the sum of human happiness, but he certainly did nothing to diminish it.

One word more and I have done. The object of this paper would be greatly misunderstood if it were thought that I intended to propose any panacea for the ills of the times. My aim is much more simple—namely, to point out that the conditions of our existence are far more elastic than is commonly believed. Their elasticity consists in the limitation of the number of the family by obedience to a natural law, which, although not infallible, holds good in a large number of cases.\* This limitation the writer holds to be—should circumstances so require—as much the duty of married persons, as chastity is the duty of those that are unmarried. Until of late years an impenetrable veil of mystery has been drawn over the whole of this subject, no one ever thinking of lifting

\* See *infra*, p. 47.

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a finger to assist his neighbour. And so it has come to pass that the advance of the human race in this all-important department of knowledge has been scarcely more rapid than that of the brute creation. Yet herein lies the germ of a social revolution, the course of which will be traced, not in blood or plunder, but in our moral, intellectual, and material growth.

The change cannot unhappily take its rise in that quarter where it would yield the most beneficial results—amongst the lowest strata of society. It must begin with those higher up in the scale; and, indeed, with the most thoughtful of these. Let us cooperate manfully to this end until what is now a floating article of belief, the stay and comfort of many an individual household, shall have ripened into a universal creed. No religious body professing Christianity can with reason reject such a faith, for the faith is pre-eminently Christian. No Secularist or Materialist can deny its practical expediency. It should commend itself to each and all of these. For it rests on a two-fold foundation—(1) on a divinely appointed

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arrangement of nature ; (2) on a habit of wise obedience, springing from a fine sense of social duty. Accepted as an enlightened guide of conduct, it solves in large measure the darkest problem of our time, becomes a means of raising the standard of living amongst the poor, and carries a message of light and hope to the toiling millions of mankind.

*The following letter explanatory of the above appeared in the "Fortnightly Review" for December, 1872.*

SIR,—In answer to numerous correspondents and others who have not understood the closing paragraphs of my article on "The Morality of Married Life," in the *Fortnightly Review* for October, I shall be glad if you will allow me to state that the reference intended is to physiological laws first enunciated about thirty years ago, and since recast with greater exactness of limitation by writers of eminence in that department of science. If authorities are needed, it will be sufficient to mention the treatises of

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*Raciborski* (1844), *Courty* (1845), *Pouchet* (1847), *Avrard* (1867). M. Raciborski's latest work (1868), while properly qualifying the absoluteness of his previous conclusions, does not lessen their practical value to the bulk of the community.\*

\* Dr. August Forel, writing on the above "law" in 1905, says: "Man hat auch behauptet, dass der Beischlaf, der kurze Zeit vor dem Monatsfluss vorgenommen wird, keine Zeugung zur Folge hat. Die Zeugungen sind zu jener Zeit freilich seltener, aber durchaus nicht ausgeschlossen; wer sich daher auf jene Regel verlässt, kann schwer enttäuscht werden" (*Die Sexuelle Frage* (Ernst Reinhardt, München)).

## II

# THE VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLE AND MORALITY

DECEMBER, 1906

SOME thirty odd years ago the present writer, then an active member of the Bar, contributed to the *Fortnightly Review* an article entitled, "The Morality of Married Life." Although of no particular literary merit, the article attracted considerable attention, and drew forth letters from a variety of persons. Its salient feature was that it touched on matters which at that time were seldom openly discussed. Some of the intimate friends of the writer shook their heads gravely, telling him they feared he had been over-bold in handling a theme so alien to the conservative instincts of the profession to which he belonged. They imagined that the stream of briefs then flowing into his chambers would receive a serious

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check. Nothing of the kind happened—thus proving once again that even a practising lawyer loses nothing by concerning himself with the things that endure.

The article in question contained a reference to the natural physiological law testified to by several medical authorities—a law, however, which is uncertain in its operation, because subject to exception in individual cases. This was the “over-bold” speaking. And yet so rapid has been the progress of thought, that if “The Morality of Married Life” were to appear in print to-day, it would create no surprise, probably attract no notice. Another illustration, this, of the truth that the discoveries of one generation become the commonplaces of the next.

This personal statement is not made with the view of adding one more to the numerous “Reminiscences” now crowding the booksellers’ shelves. It is made to show that the subject of the present paper is not here dealt with by a novice, but rather by one who has had ample opportunity of thinking it out in all its bearings. The conclusions arrived at may, and no doubt will, be

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challenged. At all events they have not been formed in haste, and are not put forth without having been carefully weighed.

The broad facts of the situation cannot, whether we like them or not, be questioned. They have been established by several independent inquirers. The processes of investigation are, however, slow and difficult, so that only the net results can be given now.\* It has been lately shown that in almost every country which has an accurate system of registration, not only does a decline of birth-rate exist, but that its main cause is the regulation of the number of the family by deliberate voluntary choice. Mr. Sidney Webb, in a remarkable communication to the *Times*, has summed up the position very clearly. "It must," he says, "be inferred that this practice of regulation, either with the object of family limitation or merely with that of regulating the intervals between

\* The difficulty is greatly enhanced by the use of the expression "corrected birth-rate," as distinguished from "crude birth-rate." The first, however, does not *correct* the second, but only corrects conclusions often erroneously drawn from the second. "Apportioned birth-rate"—apportioned, that is, as regards age and sex distribution—would be a more appropriate term.

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birth, prevails among at least one-half, probably three-fourths, of all the married people in Great Britain of reproductive age, from the agricultural labourer in sparsely populated districts, and the artisan in the towns, up to the various grades of professional men, and even to the wealthy property owners." \* Other investigators have shown that the like practice prevails on the Continent of Europe and, as it would seem, in some of our Colonies.

If we take the period from 1881 to 1903, the rates of birth-decline, as "corrected"—or "apportioned"—may, according to Drs. Newsholme and Stevenson, be tabulated as follows:— †

TABLE I.

	per cent.				per cent.
Sweden ... ..	7		France ... ..	15	
Italy ... ..	7		England and Wales ...	17	
Bavaria ... ..	10		New Zealand ... ..	18	
Prussia ... ..	11		Saxony ... ..	24	
German Empire ...	12		Belgium ... ..	24	
Scotland ... ..	13		Victoria ... ..	25	
Denmark ... ..	15		New South Wales ...	33	

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\* The *Times*, October 11 and 16, 1906.

† Paper read before the Royal Statistical Society, December 19, 1905.

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The only country showing a stationary birth-rate is Austria.

The decline of the birth-rate in our Colonies may cause surprise, seeing that they are comparatively young, and the public should be cautioned against drawing any inference from the figures in the above table without taking into account the special circumstances pointed out by the Government Statist of Victoria in his official report of 1904, and very recently by Professor Karl Pearson.\*

The birth-rate in the United States is not easily gauged, by reason of the imperfection of the records, but among the races of English descent there resident the decline does not differ much from what it is in England.

In order that the facts may be fully appreciated, Table I. must be supplemented by another table, which I take from a paper read by Dr. Jacques Bertillon at a meeting of the International Statistical Institute held at St. Petersburg in 1897. Dr. Bertillon computed the annual births per 1000 women,

\* The *Times*, October 23 and November 1, 1906.

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aged 15-30, in different quarters of the under-named cities to be as follows :—

TABLE II.

Classification.	Paris.	Berlin.	Vienna.	London.
Very poor quarters ...	108	157	200	147
Poor quarters ...	95	29	164	140
Comfortable quarters ...	72	114	155	107
Very comfortable quarters	65	96	153	107
Rich quarters ...	53	63	107	87

The significance of these tables will be at once perceived. There were during the selected years fewer births in almost all parts of the world (Table I.), and (Table II.). The decline is greatest amongst the well-to-do classes, and least in the overcrowded districts, such, for example, as the East End of London, where unskilled labour is most abundant, and where young children are forced to work by their parents in order to eke out their own inadequate earnings. To the same effect is the conclusion of Mr. David Heron, who in a very recent paper says “the birth-rate of the abler and more capable stocks is decreasing relatively to the mentally and physically feebler stocks, and the reduction in the size of families has begun at the wrong end of the social scale.”

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This conclusion is further borne out by the following metropolitan statistics. During the year 1905, the average birth-rate in Bermondsey, Stepney, Southwark, Shore-ditch, Poplar, Bethnal Green, Whitechapel, Mile End, and St. George's in the East was 35·6 per 1000 of the population. In Islington, Hackney, St. Pancras, Wandsworth, Woolwich, Lambeth, Greenwich, and Fulham, the average birth-rate was 29 per 1000. In St. George's, Hanover Square, Hampstead, and Kensington—practically the wealthiest parts of London—it was 18·6 per 1000.

From time to time attempts have been made to explain the above facts by a theory first advanced early in the Victorian era by Mr. Thomas Doubleday in his "True Law of Population." This theory has lately been revived, consciously or unconsciously, by Mr. James Barclay, who holds, with Doubleday, that it is natural for the upper classes to die out and for those below to increase in number and take their place. Mr. Barclay seems to think this an admirable arrangement of Providence, for he says that by population increasing from below "all classes

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of society are mixed together, and every class has in due succession a share of life's advantages and disadvantages." Unfortunately for both master and disciple, Double-day's theory is not sound. It was exploded long ago by Mr. John Stuart Mill, and later on by Mr. Herbert Spencer, who advanced a theory of his own for which there is more to be said. Mr. Spencer held that "organisms multiply in inverse ratio to the dignity and worth of the individual life," so that a falling birth-rate is at once "a consequence of the struggle for existence and in part a means of abating it." \*

This last view, that cerebral development tends to lessen fecundity, receives some support from Table II. But there are other facts which show that it falls far short of covering the whole ground—facts, I mean, which force us to recognize, as Mr. Webb recognizes, the advent in the world of a new element or factor dependent on human volition.

This new element is so widespread in its manifestations, and so formative of the

\* "Principles of Biology" (1864).

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destinies of mankind as to deserve a special symbol. Since its function is to *determine* the number of the family, it is proposed to denote it, for convenience of reference here, by the letters D.E. (*determining element*), in this following the electricians who employ E.M.F. to designate electro-motive force. And, curiously enough, there is an affinity between the two formulæ. For, just as for electrical purposes it is unnecessary to define the nature of E.M.F. (the nature of electricity itself being unknown), so for the present purpose it is unnecessary to define D.E., beyond stating that it is capable of producing stupendous effects both for good and for evil. In this respect, however, it does not differ from chloroform, gunpowder, dynamite, or the thousand and one other double-edged agents with which we are familiar in ordinary life.

It would be interesting, were it possible, to trace the history of D.E. in each of the numerous countries where it is found to exist. To associate it with the name of Malthus would be a mistake. Malthus had no inkling of the D.E. of the present day,

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for at the time of his death, which occurred in 1834, medical science was not sufficiently advanced to enable him to form any notion of it. Malthus's mode of solving the population problem may be expressed in a single sentence — "Do not marry until you have a fair prospect of supporting a family." The great merit of his teaching was that it looked beyond the limits of the domestic circle, and deepened the responsibility of parenthood by reference to the well-being of the nation. Its weak point was that it put too great a strain on the individual, overlooking the Pauline precept, "It is better to marry than to burn." \*

The torch lit by Malthus was carried much further in the early part of the nineteenth century by Dr. Chalmers, a divine of the Church of Scotland. He advocated a form of D.E. which, permitting an early marriage, operated after marriage.

In the futility of every attempt (he says) permanently to relieve the wants, or to raise the comforts of the people, by means of an increase in one

\* Malthus's opinions are also discussed at pp. 31-33 *supra*.

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term of the proportion—the effective demand for labour—we are shut up, as our only refuge, to a diminution of the other term, that is, the supply of labour. The only expedient which we have yet considered, and which proceeds by an operation on this second term, is that of emigration. We have tried to demonstrate how impotent and ineffectual this expedient is; and how utterly unable we are, by all these excessive drafts or transformations of families that we shall ever make, to prevent the fulness, even to a distention, of people in the land. We feel assured that it is not by drawing off the redundancy of the population, after it is formed, that we can uphold a well-conditioned state of society, but by preventing the formation of that redundancy. In the whole round of expedients, we are persuaded that this is the only one which, however obnoxious to sentimentalists, can avail for the solution of a problem otherwise irreducible. It has been the theme, sometimes of ridicule and sometimes even of a virtuous, though, surely, misplaced indignation; its distinctive excellence being that it harmonizes with the moral and economic interests of a community, and, indeed, can only take effect in proportion to the worth and wisdom of our people. . . . It is to a moral restraint on the numbers of mankind, and not to a physical enlargement of the means of subsistence, that we shall be henceforth beholden for sufficiency and peace in our commonwealth.\*

\* "Political Economy," by the Rev. Thomas Chalmers, D.D. (1832).

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It is obvious from the above extract that Dr. Chalmers would have welcomed Raciborski's discovery, and would have desired it to be made known.

The next economist I propose to put in the witness-box is John Stuart Mill.

Poverty, like most social evils, exists because men follow their brute instincts without due consideration. But society is possible, precisely because man is not necessarily a brute. Civilization in every one of its aspects is a struggle against the animal instincts. Over some even of the strongest of them, it has shown itself capable of acquiring abundant control. It has artificialized large portions of mankind to such an extent that of many of their most natural inclinations they have scarcely a vestige left. If it has not brought the instinct of population under as much restraint as is needful, we must remember that it has never been seriously tried. What efforts it has made have been mostly in the contrary direction. Religion, morality, and statesmanship have vied with one another in incitements to marriage, and to the multiplication of the species, so it be but in wedlock. Religion has not even yet discontinued its encouragements. . . . There is still in many minds a strong religious prejudice against the true doctrine. The rich, provided the consequences do not touch themselves, think it impugns the wisdom of Providence to suppose that misery can result from the operation of a natural

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propensity ; the poor think that God never sends mouths but He sends meat. No one would guess from the language of either that man had any voice or choice in the matter. So complete is the confusion of ideas on the whole subject, owing in a great degree to the mystery in which it is shrouded by a spurious delicacy, which prefers that right and wrong should be mismeasured and confounded on one of the subjects most momentous to human welfare, rather than that the subject should be freely spoken of and discussed. People are little aware of the cost to mankind of this scrupulosity of speech. The diseases of society can, no more than corporal maladies, be prevented or cured without being spoken about in plain language. All experience shows that the mass of mankind never judge of moral questions for themselves, never see anything to be right or wrong until they have been frequently told it. And who tells them that they have any duties in the matter in question while they keep within matrimonial limits? Who meets with the smallest condemnation, or, rather, who does not meet with sympathy and benevolence, for any amount of evil which he may have brought upon himself and those dependent on him by this species of incontinence? While a man who is intemperate in drink is discountenanced and despised by all who profess to be moral people, it is one of the chief grounds made use of in appeals to the benevolent that the applicant has a large family and is unable to maintain them.

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One cannot wonder that silence on this great department of human duty should produce unconsciousness of moral obligations, when it produces oblivion of physical facts. That it is possible to delay marriage, and to live in abstinence while unmarried, most people are willing to allow; but when people are once married, the idea, in this country, never seems to enter any one's mind that having or not having a family, or the number of which it shall consist, is amenable to their own control. One would imagine that children were rained down on married people, direct from heaven, without their being art or part in the matter; that it was really, as the common phrases have it, "God's will, and not their own, which decided the numbers of their offspring." \*

The following characteristic utterance by Mr. Matthew Arnold, philosopher, poet, educationist, is a definite advance upon Mill:—

Hebraism, with that mechanical and misleading use of the letter of Scripture on which we have already commented, is governed by such texts as "Be fruitful and multiply," the edict of God's law, as Mr. C—— would say, or by the declaration (of what he would call God's word) in the Psalms, that the man who has a great number of children is thereby made happy. And in conjunction with

\* "Principles of Political Economy" (1848).

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## The Voluntary Principle and Morality

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such texts as these, Hebraism is apt to place another text, "The poor shall never cease out of the land." Thus Hebraism is conducted to nearly the same notion as Mr. R—— B——, that children are *sent*, and that the divine nature takes a delight in swarming the East End of London with paupers. Only when they are perishing in their helplessness and wretchedness, it asserts the Christian duty of succouring them, instead of saying, "Now their brief spring is over; there is nobody to blame for this; it is the result of Nature's simplest laws." But Hebraism despairs of any help from knowledge, and says that "what is wanted is not the light of speculation."

I remember only the other day a good man looking with me upon a multitude of children who were gathered before us in one of the most miserable regions of London—children eaten up with disease, half-sized, half-fed, half-clothed, neglected by their parents, without health, without home, without hope—said to me, "The one thing really needful is to teach these little ones to succour one another, if only with a cup of cold water; but now, from one end of the country to the other, one hears nothing but the cry for knowledge, knowledge, knowledge!" And yet, surely, so long as these children are there in their festering masses, without health, without home, without hope, and so long as their multitude is perpetually swelling, charged with misery they must be for us, whether they help one another with a cup of cold water or no; and the knowledge how

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to prevent their accumulating is necessary even to give their moral life and growth a fair chance. . . .

What we want is [not Hebraism but] Hellenism, the letting our consciousness play freely and simply upon the facts before us, and listening to what it tells us of the intelligible law of such things as concerns them. And, surely, what it tells us is, that a man's children are not really *sent*, any more than the pictures on his wall, or the horses in his stable are *sent*; and that to bring people into the world when we cannot afford to keep them and one's self decently and not too precariously, or to bring more of them into the world than one can afford to keep, is by no means an accomplishment of the divine will or a fulfilment of Nature's simplest laws, but is just as wrong, just as contrary to reason and the will of God, as for a man to have horses, or carriages, or pictures, when he cannot afford them, or to have more of them than he can afford; and that, in the one case as in the other, the larger the scale on which the violation of reason's laws is practised, and the longer it is persisted in, the greater must be the confusion and final trouble. Surely no laudations of Free Trade, no meetings of bishops and clergy in the East End of London, no reading of papers and reports, can tell us anything about our social condition which it more concerns us to know than that! And not only to know, but habitually to have the knowledge present, and to act upon it as one acts upon the knowledge that water wets and fire burns! And not only the

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sunken populations of our great cities are concerned to know it, and the pauper twentieth of our population; we Philistines of the middle class, too, are concerned to know it, and all who have to set themselves to make progress in perfection.\*

My last quotation shall be from Professor Huxley :

One of the most essential conditions, if not the chief cause, of the struggle for existence, is the tendency to multiply without limit which man shares with all living things. It is notable that "increase and multiply" is a commandment traditionally much older than the ten, and that it is, perhaps, the only one which has been spontaneously and *ex animo* obeyed by the great majority of the human race. But in civilized society, the inevitable result of such obedience is the re-establishment, in all its intensity, of that struggle for existence—the war of each against all—the mitigation and abolition of which was the chief end of social organization. . . .

So long as the natural man increases and multiplies without restraint, so long will peace and industry not only permit, but they will necessitate, a struggle for existence as sharp as any that ever went on under the *régime* of war. If Istar † is to

\* "Culture and Anarchy" (1869).

† *Istar* is the Babylonian personification of non-moral nature, combining the attributes of the Greek Aphrodite with those of the Greek Ares. [M.C.]

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reign on the one hand, she will demand her human sacrifices on the other. . . .

Let us be under no illusions. So long as unlimited multiplication goes on, no social organization which has ever been devised, or is likely to be devised, no fiddle-faddling with the distribution of wealth, will deliver society from the tendency to be destroyed by the reproduction within itself, in its intensest form, of that struggle for existence, the limitation of which is the object of society. And, however shocking to the moral sense this eternal competition of man against man and of nation against nation may be, however revolting may be the accumulation of misery at the negative pole of society, in contrast with that of monstrous wealth at the positive pole, this state of things must abide, and grow continually worse, so long as Istar holds her way unchecked. It is the true riddle of the sphinx, and every nation which does not solve it, will sooner or later be devoured by the monster itself has generated.\*

So much for authority. Let us now come to principles. We must first deal with the crucial question, Is D.E. moral? If it is not, there is nothing more to be said. We must accept the inevitable, although with a feeling not far removed from despair. What says the Roman Catholic Church? She

\* The *Nineteenth Century* (February, 1888).

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answers the question by an unhesitating No, because she holds that marriage is a Sacrament, and, therefore, it is to be presumed, the purposes for which marriage is "ordained" are also of a sacramental or quasi-sacramental character. But if marriage is a sacrament, why does the Roman Church enjoin celibacy on her clergy and so deprive them of the benefit which sacraments are supposed to, and certainly in many cases do, confer? The Protestant Church has an easier course before her, for she settled long ago that there were only two sacraments, and that marriage was not one of them. Amid the confusion caused by these opposing currents, we are thrown back on the profounder question, What do we mean by the word "moral"? Now, surely an action is moral or immoral according as it helps, or hinders, the spiritual, mental, and physical development of the individual who performs it, and benefits or injures the community of which he forms part. Under which category does D.E. fall? That is the real point to be decided—to be decided not by *a priori* considerations, but by observing results.

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Mr. Sidney Webb, indeed, in the paper referred to, does not appear to think it necessary to apply any ethical test at all. "If a course of conduct," he says, "is habitually and deliberately pursued by vast multitudes of otherwise well-educated people, forming probably a majority of the whole educated class of the nation, we must assume that it does not conflict with their actual code of morality. They may be intellectually mistaken, but they are not doing what they feel to be wrong. Assuming, as I think we may, that no injury to physical health is necessarily involved—aware, on the contrary, that the result is to spare the wife from an onerous and even dangerous illness, for which, in the vast majority of homes, no adequate provision in the way of medical attendance, nursing, privacy, rest, and freedom from worry can possibly be made—it is, to say the least of it, difficult on any rationalist morality to formulate any blame of a married couple for the deliberate regulation of their family, according to their means and opportunities." Mr. Webb's way of presenting the case may be satisfactory

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to some minds, but many more will not accept it. What now follows is addressed to the majority.

There is, however, one argument which must be first disposed of. "Outraged Nature," we are often told, "will have her revenges." This rhetorical flourish comes from Gibbon, the historian, whose purpose it doubtless served; but it has no more to do with the decline and fall of the birth-rate than it had to do with the decline and fall of the Roman Empire. Gibbon certainly did not believe in "Nature," nor did the advent of Christianity have any special interest for him, except as an event of deep importance to the world. My quarrel is not, however, with Gibbon's words, but with their application to the group of phenomena now under discussion. The exact contrary of the dictum is, indeed, as true as the dictum itself. "Nature is being constantly outraged by man, and, unless he does her violence, he himself will be destroyed." The entire course of protective invention is a witness to the truth of this, from the lightning conductors on our cathedral spires to the safety

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lamps in our coal mines. It is the part of the wise man to strive to divert the course of nature, where, if left alone, her action would be harmful, into salutary and beneficent channels, instead of vainly endeavouring to stop advancing tides with the Partingtonian mop of abuse. "Nature outraged," forsooth, and "taking her revenges!" Why, as has been said by a thoughtful writer, "to use our power of controlling the physical conditions of reproduction through the application of human intelligence, in favour of general happiness and well-being, is to obey the highest law of nature." \*

A curious illustration of the length to which the "Outraged Nature" argument may be carried is furnished by a book entitled "Man's Responsibility," published in 1905. Here is an extract :—

As soon as man begins to tamper with his own nature, the nature the Almighty has thought fitting for him, and seeks to defeat its purposes, or to become something different, his fate is sealed. If the race becomes extinct, this is the rock upon which it will split. Nature will neither be cheated

\* "Scientific Meliora" (1885).

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nor deceived without taking instant revenge. . . . We can form no idea for ourselves so high as the idea of the Almighty who has considered the matter carefully and settled it for us to the end of time. Any variation from His plan will bring time to an end so far as mankind is concerned.

Such an entertaining combination of arrogance and absurdity is not often met with. Pressed to its logical conclusion, it would keep alive new-born monstrosities, condemn orthopædic treatment, and suppress many of the methods of modern surgery as improper interferences with the appointed scheme of creation. Is the author of the passage just cited aware that the determination of the sex of a child by the ante-natal diet of its mother has been for some time the subject of research by Dr. Schenk, of Vienna, and by other specialists in London? Since he appears to be so familiar with the counsels of the Deity, will he tell us whether these cities are, in consequence, to be consumed with fire and brimstone from heaven like Sodom and Gomorrah; or if, peradventure, London only is doomed, is Vienna to be spared because Austria, being three-fourths

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Catholic, has at present a stationary, and not a declining, birth-rate?

Let us now look a little deeper into this question of morals in reference to one or two of the evils which D.E. might remove or at all events diminish.

I will begin with infantile mortality.

If, as the alarmists tell us, it is beneficial to the State that as many babies as possible should be born, it must be prejudicial to the State that they should prematurely die. A large infant birth-rate, then, cannot be of advantage if it is accompanied by a large infant death-rate. Now this is precisely what happens under the present *régime*. Although, owing to improvements in sanitation and in methods of combating disease, the general death-rate is declining, infantile mortality is on the increase. In England, in 1903, there were 514,628 deaths, of which 124,718, or 24 per cent., were infants under twelve months of age; in London, there were 70,281 deaths, of which 24 per cent. were infants. In 1904, there were 549,714 deaths, of which 137,392, or 25 per cent., were

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infants. In 1905, there was in England and Wales alone a loss to the nation of 120,000 dead infants, a figure which is almost exactly one-quarter of all the deaths in England and Wales in that year. This enormous sacrifice of human life is being repeated year by year, and it is not growing less.\*

The next question that arises is, To what is this high rate of mortality due? Certainly to a large extent, but by no means exclusively, to overcrowding. This was the conclusion come to by the Royal Commission on the Housing of the Working Classes. And not only does overcrowding produce infantile mortality, it also produces diseases which, although not directly fatal, impair physical efficiency throughout life. "There is," says the Report of the Commission, "a great deal of suffering among little children in overcrowded districts that does not appear in the death-rate at all. In the St. Luke's, ophthalmia, locally known as blight among the young, is very prevalent,

\* I am indebted for the above facts to the exhaustive treatise on "Infantile Mortality," by Dr. George Newman, Medical Officer of Health of the Borough of Finsbury (1906).

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and can be traced to the ill-ventilated rooms in which they live. There are also found scrofula and congenital diseases very detrimental to the children as they grow up. . . . That overcrowding lowers the general standard, that the people get depressed and weary, is the testimony of those who are daily witnesses of the lives of the poor. Among others, too, it causes a vast amount of suffering which can be calculated by no bills of mortality, however accurate. It has the effect of reducing their stamina and thus producing consumption and diseases arising from general debility of the system, whereby life is shortened." Yet these are the persons who are being urged to propagate their stocks in as large numbers as possible. Why, I ask, except to swell the birth-rate statistics on paper, and to provide food—of the perishable sort—for Imperial powder later on? Surely it is *quality*, and not *quantity*, that is wanted everywhere. Would it not be better for the community at large, as well as for themselves, if many of these degenerate stocks were never propagated at all?

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Let me further illustrate the argument by the case of the "feeble-minded" now being inquired into by another Royal Commission. Without reckoning the certified lunatics, there are in the United Kingdom some 90,000 persons to whom this description is applicable, all of whom, according to the present law, are at liberty to marry and intermarry, and to produce children, some of them probably more feeble-minded than themselves; feeble-mindedness being, it must be remembered, an inherited, not an acquired defect, and, consequently, transmissible. An official report, presented early this year to the London County Council, revealed in startling fashion the physical and mental condition of a large number of children attending the Council's elementary schools. The Medical Officer certified that of the 1212 which he examined, 431 should be placed in schools for the mentally affected, and 169 in specially equipped schools for the physically defective, whilst he found 33 to be imbeciles, and 225 to be invalids and unsuitable for school attendance. The total "ineffectives" out of the 1212 were, therefore,

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868, or nearly 75 per cent. When the assets of the Empire are being reckoned up, are these to be boastfully added to the credit side of the balance-sheet?

Upon the so-called "Social Evil," which parades our thoroughfares and haunts our side-streets, a word or two only can here be said. It is obvious that, human nature being what it is, to defer marriage indefinitely in order to avoid the burden of an unlimited progeny, must greatly promote prostitution. The appalling fact that in Great Britain over 60,000 women publicly ply this trade, should surely make us endeavour to get at the root of the mischief. These "unfortunates," as they are termed by their more virtuous sisters, many of whom, never having been tempted, hardly know what virtue is, are by no means all "wantons." Largely are they the victims of circumstances—of overcrowding in the homes of their childhood, and of the fierce struggle for existence which awaits them in their adult years. On no class does the problem of reconciling the conditions of living with life press more hardly than on

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this class. Until the "efficient causes" are removed, it is idle to imagine that the "social evil" can be extinguished. Rescue societies and midnight missionaries are valuable in their way; so, too, are the nurses in the accident wards of our hospitals who tend the disabled inmates. But for any permanent cure we must look to the science of the surgeon, with whom must rest the decision whether the injured limbs shall be set or be amputated.

Subscriptions to relief funds, the organization of our charities, farm colonies, a more humane administration of the Poor Law, even the latest suggestion of the Fabians—State endowment of motherhood—are all mere palliatives. They are but as drops drawn from the ocean of distress. Unless the supply of workers bears a fair proportion to the demand for them, the dock gates will continue to close on hungry applicants for a day's wage, and the children of want and despair will betake themselves, some to crime, some to prostitution, as their only apparent means of livelihood.

Possibly some one will here interpose, "But

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you have forgotten the Socialists. Have they not a remedy for all these things?" No, the Socialists have not been forgotten. They are far too much in evidence for that. Have we not witnessed within the last few weeks the capture by the Socialists at Swansea of the Executive of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, who number some 600,000 persons? Have we not witnessed the Socialist onslaught on the Miners' Federation at Cardiff, where, although the Executive was not captured, the delegates passed a resolution in favour of the Socialist programme? If powerful trade union organizations such as these are won over to the new creed, what is to be expected from the lesser trade unions? With an "Independent Labour Party" in the House of Commons, comprising twenty-nine members, who are Socialists almost to a man, the Socialists will, of course, have to be reckoned with. And it is to them that I would make appeal.

For, what is it they propose? Their remedy for overcrowding is "Nationalization of the land;" their remedy for trade competition — "State organization of all

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industrial enterprise to be worked in future for the use of the people and not for private gain ;” their remedy for the needs of hungry school-children—“free meals” to all those whose parents are not able to support them. Well, assume all these points to be carried, would not the problem of population still remain unsolved? It seems to me that the only difference would be that the State, turned Collectivist, would have to interfere and impose by law that very limitation of numbers which can at present be secured by enlightened, altruistic individualism. Unless the birth-rate were held in check, no change in the land laws could bring about a lasting improvement. The birth-rate in this country is at present 450,000 annually, or over 1200 a day ; but for our infant mortality, it would be 1500 a day. No mere readjustment of the ownership of the soil would enable these newcomers to turn the soil to account, for it is the lot of our agriculture to be the sport of the seasons ; moreover, the bulk of the newcomers, being town-born and bred, would be wholly unsuited to till the land. With regard to the proposal that the State should

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organize all industry, thus abolishing the supremacy of capital, this, if carried, would at most affect distribution only ; it would add nothing to the world's wealth. As to "free meals," it is inconceivable that these could be supplied in perpetuity to a population encouraged to multiply recklessly by the very fact that they were so supplied. For the time would come before long when there would not be food enough to go round.

No ; in Socialism there is nothing which puts D.E. out of court. Socialists and Individualists alike must sooner or later recognize that labour is a commodity, just as books and boots are commodities, and that if an author writes more books, or a bootmaker makes more boots, than he can reasonably hope to dispose of, neither the one nor the other has any right to demand that his fellow citizens, or the State as representing his fellow citizens, should employ private or public funds in purchasing his surplus stock.

Further, the value of D.E. is not confined to reducing the area of domestic poverty and redressing the balance of classes ; it also offers international advantages. Why is

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France, where, during the last fifty years, the population has only increased by four millions, pacific as well as prosperous, whilst Germany, where the population during the same period has increased by twenty-six millions, is in a condition of unrest? France has already arrived at a point to which all the more civilized States are slowly but surely travelling. In the words of M. Paul-Leroy Beaulieu, "France n'est pas une exception; elle n'a fait qu'accomplir plus tôt que les autres une évolution qui mène graduellement les nations civilisées à l'amoin-drissment du taux de leur natalité." The principal reason why France is pacific is that she has not to seek an outlet for a surplus population which she cannot contain within her own borders. On the other hand, Germany is compelled to seek such an outlet, and only by colonization can she find it. This pressing necessity it is which brings her into national rivalry with England—a rivalry which may one day develop into hostile collision.

What, then, is England's duty? It is to

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remember that beyond the petty strife of party politics there lie tremendous issues. Her first duty is to set herself to improve the race so that she may have men physically capable of defending her shores, and, on emergency, of taking the field abroad. Over and above her professional soldiers she needs a capable citizen army at home, such as exists in Switzerland. This she will never achieve by the indiscriminate multiplication of the fit and the unfit—in spite of the knell of the falling birth-rate constantly being sounded in our ears—but only by the multiplication of the fit, or those who are reasonably believed to be fit. England's second duty is corollary to the first. It is to censure all those who, stricken with that wasting sickness, hyper-egoism, refuse to add to the brain and muscle of the Empire, lest their pleasures and dissipations should be inconveniently curtailed thereby. The crazy dance of life which these persons lead is (in the sense I have attached to the word) immoral, because, whilst damaging the individuals who pursue it, it does no real good to any one else. Finding three or four

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children tiresome, because they interfere with the daily round of excitements, these egoists determine to have only one or two, or perhaps none at all. Here, indeed, lies a very real danger. Unless it is well guarded against, no national progress can there be. For, *it is as important that the right people should be born as that the wrong people should not be born.* A general apprehension of this truth would be worth a dozen *Dreadnoughts*, a legion of Lee-Enfields.

If such are the facts, is England to act any longer the part of a hypocrite and refuse to admit the plain truth that a man, whatever his station of life, has no right to become the father of a dozen children when he can only afford to maintain two or three? Is she to refuse to admit that where there is serious hereditary, transmissible disease a man ought not to allow himself any children at all? Our hospitals and medical schools, with an aggregate income of over two millions a year,\* are nevertheless in dire straits for

\* The precise amount was recently stated by Sir Henry Burdett to be £2,212,398.

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money, because of our national neglect of common prudence. It is unnecessary for me to dwell further on this matter. Let Mr. W. R. Greg pursue the argument and also point the moral :

I look forward to a not very distant day when, as the moral tone of society advances, and men rise to some larger and more vivid perceptions of their mutual obligations, the propagation of vitiated constitutions, as well as of positive disease, will be universally condemned as culpable, and possibly prohibited as criminal. Some classes and communities have already, from time to time, reached this slight rising-ground in social virtue, in reference to the three fearful maladies of insanity, leprosy, and cretinism. Surely a further progress in knowledge and reflection, and a somewhat wider range of sympathy, may extend the list to scrofula, syphilis, and consumption. I can discern no reason—beyond our own halting wisdom and deficient sense of right, the strange ignorance of some classes, and the stranger senselessness of others, our utterly wonderful and persistent errors in political and social philosophy in nearly every line—why a very few generations should not have nearly eliminated from the community those who ought not to breed at all, and have taught prudence to those who ought to breed only in moderate and just proportions.\*

\* "Enigmas of Life" (1887).

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Political economists and other writers have, as has been shown, spoken out pretty plainly on this subject ; so, too, have some of the more liberal-minded clergy. Why is it not made more widely known that men should be as much masters of themselves after marriage as before, and that the workman with uncertain employment, the needy clerk, and the struggling professional toiler are all in this respect on a par? Why is not the profligacy of bringing more mouths into the world than there is any reasonable prospect of filling more clearly impressed on the parents? Men might, surely, be as easily taught to think on vital social problems as they are supposed to be taught, at election time, to think on problems political.

It may be asked, How can increase of the weaker and less desirable classes be checked? I answer, Here, as elsewhere, by creating a strong public opinion. Let the educated classes not shrink from affirming that sublime principle of individual liberty by which some of them have learnt to order their own lives, not that they may the more enjoy the good things of the world, but that

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happily they may help to leave the world a little better than they found it.

Mr. Francis Galton, to whom we are all indebted for his untiring researches into heredity, has with great force reminded us that "man has already furthered evolution very considerably, half unconsciously, for his own personal advantage, but he has not yet risen to the conviction that it is his religious duty to do so deliberately and systematically." To the same effect was the rejoinder of the well-known West London preacher, the late Mr. Haweis: "You may say children are from God; I reply, so is the cholera. I suppose we are here, among other things, to determine when and how God's law shall operate." This view is at once the rational and the reverential view—rational, because in the spirit of true science; reverential, because, in the spirit of true religion, it presents a high ideal of Humanity to be striven after and worked for.

In a recent visitation charge dealing with the population question, the Bishop of London warned his hearers against "eating

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the heart and draining away the life-blood of our country." This is precisely what reformers of the Eugenic school are seeking to avoid, though not according to the episcopal prescription.

The episcopal prescription leaves untouched and unsolved the social problems above set forth. It delivers us over to the sway of material forces which our intelligence—a gift more akin to spirit than to matter—teaches us may be counteracted and controlled. It is a gospel rather of despair than of hope.

On the other hand, the Eugenic system of race-culture, the advancement of which is one of the aims of this paper, helps us to solve each and all of these same problems. It brings us nearer to the reconstruction of society on a more stable, because more uniform, basis. It renders the component parts of the nation more healthy, more virile, and, by consequence, more effective. It is the direct opposite of Race Suicide: it is Race Regeneration.

### III

## THE VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLE AND NATIONAL WELFARE

FEBRUARY, 1907

**I**N December, 1906, I endeavoured to show that it lies within our power to improve the human race physically in various ways, the most direct being the adoption of the "voluntary principle"—either for the amplification or the restriction of numbers—wherever the welfare of the community makes such amplification or restriction expedient. I tried to show further that this principle fits in with the doctrine of evolution, and can be supported on grounds national, international, moral, and religious. Pursuing the same subject, I now proceed to investigate briefly certain lines of thought and action which lead, indirectly, to the desired goal.

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## Voluntary Principle and National Welfare

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For the present purpose I select from the common stock of humanity three classes, viz. (1) the luxurious rich, (2) the necessitous working poor, (3) the mentally and physically afflicted. I leave out of the account the class intermediate to (1) and (2), because this class has learnt to take care of itself. I also omit the tramps and the loafers, for these, when not being looked after by the Poor Law or the police, may be left to the care of the Salvation and Church Armies respectively.

I will begin with class (3), which includes all the "degenerates," since it offers less difficulty than either of the other two classes. And for this reason. In considering it, we are concerned mainly with biological facts on which science speaks with ever-increasing certainty. But in classes (1) and (2) we are confronted with problems both social and moral—problems as yet incapable of being expressed in scientific formulæ.

I am aware that statistics are, as a rule, repulsive, yet a few must here be set down in order to make the position clear and show that a remedy is needed.

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In 1859, there were in England and Wales 37,143 certified insane. In 1906, there were 121,802—an increase, in the space of less than half a century, of from 1 in 536 of the population to 1 in 285. In 1902, the rejections for the Army on the score of physical unfitness showed an increase of 26·77 per 1000 over the rejections in 1901. In 1903 the increase of such rejections was 14·61 per 1000 over that of 1902. On last census-day (1901), when the population of the United Kingdom was 41,458,072, every fifth person was disabled by illness. No less than thirteen million of pounds sterling are expended every year upon the maintenance of the mentally degenerate and the physically unfit—expenditure which, from a national point of view, is, of course, wholly unproductive.

Again, the number of cripples in the United Kingdom at the present time exceeds 124,000, and in the metropolis alone there are 7200 crippled children, without reckoning those in public institutions. Last Christmas Day, each of these 7200 received, we are told, by the bounty of the Lord Mayor,

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“materials for a solid meal, and an ornamental box containing half a pound of tea.” This is one instance (among many) of the efforts made by the charitably disposed on behalf of the “ineffectives”—many of whom are the result of unions that ought never to have been formed, and others of whom are the result of parental neglect, either before or after birth.

It is far from my intention to imply that the money spent on supporting those who enter the race of life thus handicapped is not well laid out. It is better to expend thirteen millions a year than to relax the cords of human sympathy which bind us all together. No, the persons who, if they are consistent, should object to these subsidies are those who object to the “voluntary principle” on the ground that it is an “outrage on nature.” For the effect of this particular kind of charity is to thwart the operation of the “law of natural selection,” which, left to itself, makes short work of the unfit by a process of elimination. Still, whilst recognizing the duty of altruistic effort, we may, and we ought, to endeavour

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to get at the cause of the evil by using our common sense. If the doctors will not give us a lead by an authoritative deliverance on the misery caused by the marriage of "degenerates," the laymen—the ignorant laymen—must speak out. This they are at last beginning to do. Public opinion is being slowly formed. It is in the hope of hastening its formation that I venture to make the suggestions that follow.

From time immemorial banns of marriage have been published in our churches inviting all who "know any just cause or impediment why these two persons should not be joined together in holy matrimony" to declare it forthwith. The object of this appeal is to call attention to the prohibited degrees of consanguinity and affinity. Is there any reason why the appeal should not have a more extended range? Surely there can be no greater impediment to a marriage, or to the primary purpose for which, according to the English Prayer-Book, marriage "was ordained," than the fact that the man or the woman is afflicted with a transmissible disease, whether of mind or body. Why

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should not the law of the land supplement the law of the Church by requiring each of the contracting parties—the man on his own account, the woman by her parents or guardians—to make a solemn declaration that no such impediment exists? Such a requirement, as has been lately pointed out by Dr. Rentoul, of Liverpool, is enforced in some Continental countries and in several of the States of North America :—

In Austria, parents and guardians may refuse consent to a marriage for want of adequate means, bad moral character, contagious diseases, and infirmities.

In Servia, idiots, maniacs, complete cripples, deaf and dumb, physically or mentally defective, those too poor to maintain a family, those very ill or who suffer from infectious or hereditary complaints (unless a medical certificate is presented showing that the disease is cured) are not permitted to marry.

In Michigan (the first State of North America which dealt with the subject) no person insane or afflicted with certain specified diseases, and not cured of the same, may marry. If he does, he is guilty of felony, and is punishable on conviction by fine, or imprisonment, or both.

In Connecticut, no man and woman, either of whom is epileptic or imbecile or feeble-minded, can

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intermarry or live together as husband or wife when the woman is under 45 years of age.

In Minnesota, no woman under the age of 45 years, and no man of any age, except he marry a woman over the age of 45, who is epileptic, imbecile, feeble-minded, or afflicted with insanity may intermarry, or marry any other person within the State. No licence to marry is issued to any person who, or whose intended spouse, is afflicted with any of the above diseases.

In New Jersey, it is unlawful for any person who has been confined in any public asylum or institution, as an epileptic or insane or feeble-minded patient, to intermarry within the State without a certificate from two regularly licensed physicians of the State that he or she has been completely cured, and that there is no possibility that he or she will transmit any of the above defects and disabilities to the issue of such marriage. Any person of sound mind who intermarries with such epileptic, insane, or feeble-minded person, with knowledge of his or her disability, or who advises, aids, abets, causes or assists in procuring, any marriage contrary to the above conditions, is guilty of misdemeanour.

There should be no difficulty in passing through the British Parliament a Bill requiring all candidates for matrimony to conform to the spirit of the statutes just cited. It is, no doubt, to be expected that there would

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be some perjury, but, even if the legal conditions imposed were violated, the fact of their existence would create a public opinion. And, public opinion being stronger than any law, the "voluntary principle" would, in time, render this new law superfluous.\*

Apart from definite diseases and infirmities, a great deal of the "degeneracy" we see around us is caused by the imperfect nutrition of the mother during the months of gestation, and of the offspring during infancy and childhood. On these points also an authoritative pronouncement by the heads of the medical profession has been long waited for. Popular books on the subject exist, but they have not the seal of authority, and in consequence they are often regarded with suspicion.

This question of imperfect and mistaken feeding was fully investigated and reported on in 1904 by the inter-departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration. But who nowadays has the time, or rather thinks he

\* The idea of this declaration occurred to me before I had read Dr. Rentoul's "Race Culture" (1906). For the statutes in the text I am wholly indebted to him.

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has the time, to read a Blue Book, unless he happens to be a Cabinet Minister superintending the preparation of a Bill, or a private M.P. seeking materials for a speech? This particular report, however, deserves not only to be read, but to be closely studied by all who have at heart the improvement of the race, not only for the facts it discloses, but for the recommendations it contains.

Let me summarize these last. The Committee suggest that the law with regard to the employment of women in factories should be strengthened, either by throwing on the *employer* the burden of proving that the requisite period has elapsed since the confinement of the married women he employs, or by prohibiting such employment in the absence of (1) a medical certificate that it would not be prejudicial to their physical well-being, and (2) proof that reasonable provision had been made for the care of their infants (if any). This safeguard would also help to promote breast-feeding, and to oust the pernicious system now too often adopted of "letting baby have a sup

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of everything." The Committee further advocate systematic instruction being given to elder girls in the processes of infant feeding and management, by means of continuation classes, and they recommend that leaflets on the rearing of infants should be issued to mothers by the local municipality, by voluntary associations, or by the district registrar of births.

The Act of 1904, which established a central board in London for issuing certificates of competency to women aspiring to be midwives, has been a forward step in the right direction, and may, as the Committee remark, "be made an instrument of the greatest utility for dissemination among mothers of proper knowledge and practical advice."

The condition of the necessitous poor is in its way quite as pathetic as that of the degenerates. It is equally due to causes that are largely preventable. The chief of these is overcrowding, which in nine cases out of ten carries along with it arrested development and a craving for drink. Mr. Charles Booth, in his monumental work on

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the London Poor, affirms this over and over again. "Overcrowding," he says, "is the great cause of degeneracy." "Crowded houses send men to the public-house." "Crowding is the main cause of drink and vice." With overcrowding also inevitably go bad sanitation and foul air, for the landlord who shuts his eyes to the first is always also indifferent about the other two.

It has been remarked by some critics that the "voluntary principle" is least likely to be acted on by the very persons who stand most in need of its adoption. This is, unfortunately, true not only of the "voluntary principle," but of every part of eugenics. Nor is the criticism only applicable to the "very poor." It applies throughout the social system. Mr. C. S. Loch, the learned secretary of the Charity Organization Society, has put this point very well. "With regard," he says, "to the possibility of the idea which eugenics represents becoming operative in the lower section of society, an intelligent regard to the social welfare *beyond what is now prevalent in any class* is the first condition." And he adds that "as

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the members of the lower section learn at public elementary schools and in other ways the conditions of healthy life, they may realize the necessity of what in a broad sense may be called 'good breeding.'” \*

The first step towards the improvement of the “very poor” should accordingly be to grapple boldly with the housing problem. One of the next steps should be to make the lives of the poor brighter by supplying them with music and other innocent delights. The Report on Physical Degeneration, from which I have already drawn, dwells on the contrast between the happy-go-lucky way in which we, in England, suffer our towns to grow with the methodical provision for such growth which is to be found in parts of Germany. “In England, no intelligent anticipation of a town’s growth is allowed to dictate municipal policy in regard to the extension of borough boundaries, with the result that when these are extended the areas taken in have already been covered with the normal type of cheap and squalid dwelling-houses which rapidly reproduce on the

\* *Transactions of the Sociological Society* (1904).

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outskirts of a city the slum characteristics which are the despair of the civic reformer in its heart." In Germany an opposite system obtains. "As soon as the original nucleus of a town has reached certain proportions, a broad zone with lungs something like the points of a star is drawn round it. Within the zone and the avenues leading outward no population beyond a certain very limited density is allowed, and the increase of the town on the scale of population permitted in the centre is pushed back beyond this zone. No such town, therefore, in Germany, however large, would be without its proportion of open space in the immediate vicinity, and the lungs or avenues provide for the indraught of a due quantity of fresh air into the very heart of the city." So long as the population does not continue to multiply indiscriminately, every extension of the means of transit between the outskirts and the centres of cities and towns is a contribution to the welfare of the community. If it does continue so to multiply, the old mischief simply shifts its site, reappearing elsewhere in more unmanageable shape.

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We hear constant complaints of the extravagance of municipal bodies and of the mounting up of the rates. No municipal expenditure would be extravagant which furnished the artisan class with decent dwellings constructed for a limited number of inmates—and which paid for the employment of a sufficient staff of sanitary inspectors to see that this number was not exceeded. By these means will a sense of individual parental responsibility be most effectually aroused. When it is felt that a large family entails a removal and a higher rent, then the lower layer of the artisan class will cease to be reckless of results, and will learn the lesson of moderation which has been already learnt by the layer immediately above. In this connection, the report of Sir J. Dickson-Poynder's Committee appointed last May to examine the provisions of the Working Class Acts Amendment Bill contains some suggestions which are of great general interest. It recommends (amongst other things) that a register of survey of all buildings intended for human habitation should be compiled and revised periodically ;

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that owners of dwelling-houses should be required to make an annual return of the sanitary condition of every dwelling-house, a penalty being imposed for making a false return ; that the sections of the Public Health and Housing Act which deal with sanitary defects should be widened in their meaning, so as to include not only houses "dangerous or injurious to health," but houses in a bad state of repair or neglect ; and that the law on the whole subject of housing should be simplified and codified. A more useful, or more practical, reform than this last the present Government could hardly set on foot. In comparison with it, the provisions of the defunct Education Bill "pale their ineffectual fires." The health of the people is the highest mundane law.

With regard to the rural labouring classes, to which the attention of the last-named Committee was more especially directed, the way to deal with them appears to me to be this—to give to their children an education, adjusted on common-sense lines, which shall fit those who are to live in the country for intelligent oneness with their surroundings,

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and shall pick out the favoured, or unfavoured, few and send them well equipped into the stream of more eventful existence; to take care that the adults have healthy and fairly roomy cottages, each with an adequate plot of garden ground attached; to influence them as they can best be influenced by the force of good example—and then to leave them alone.

The case of Class I. — the “luxurious rich”—which I have left to the last, can only here be dealt with very briefly. Their refusal “to add to the brain and muscle of the Empire, lest their pleasures and dissipations should be inconveniently curtailed thereby,” is but one symptom of a widespread malady—a malady which has its counterpart, though with a curiously contrary result, in the reckless reproductiveness exhibited by Class II. *Les extrêmes se touchent*. But the blame cannot be distributed equally between the two classes. When those who, if they lived by ideals, might become real illuminants diffuse instead an artificial limelight, and when a cheap Press persistently dogs their footsteps and

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draws attention to their doings, small wonder if the classes below are dazzled even to blindness by the glare. Nor is bedazzlement the only consequence. Much of the aggressive collectivism which is to-day reckoned so alarming, and which is certainly gaining ground at the bottom of the social scale, is the direct result of the ever-increasing worship of wealth at the top, for at each end the governing principle is the same.

Ideals are more potent than acts. Let a millionaire give £10,000 to a hospital. The public is for the moment struck, but who save the institution itself remembers the gift next day? Let a "leader of society" start a charity bazaar. Let her gather a little court around her. Let the stall-holders be visions of beauty—their colouring perhaps just a trifle "assisted"—and under their spell let the buying be brisk, and a great financial success be scored. The masses will read the account in their newspapers with wondering admiration, but they will find there no wholesome stimulus for themselves, since the motive of the brilliant function was rooted in display. In charity, as elsewhere,

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it is, I repeat, not the action, but the spirit of the agent that permanently tells.

Last summer Father Bernard Vaughan launched a formidable indictment against an influential section of the dwellers in the West End of London. The indictment was unquestionably true in substance, although possibly exaggerated in parts. The Golden Calf *is* set up to be worshipped. Gambling in its manifold forms *does* prevail: neither is immorality absent, although its victims may be too discreet for the tower of Siloam—in the shape of the Divorce Court—to fall upon them. Carelessness here would be worse than a crime. It would be “bad form.”

In Father Vaughan's published volume, “The Sins of Society,” there are passages which one reads with regret, but not with surprise. He seems to think it the duty of all married persons, without regard to considerations of either health or means, to produce as many children as possible. This, he tells them in an epilogue to his sermons, is “in accordance with the Will of their Maker.” Such teaching appears to the present writer to involve a denial of the wisdom

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of Providence. For the moment, it brings the teacher almost into line with the distinguished author of the "Wessex Poems," who, bursting with a fine frenzy of pessimism, lately pictured the Author of the universe as "working evermore in His unweeting way." Another remarkable instance, this, of "extremes meeting."

One count of Father Vaughan's indictment is that the persons he has more particularly in view are lamentably deficient in religious faith. May a layman—from his lower plane—be permitted to suggest that they are also lamentably deficient in imagination? For they fail to recognize the essential truth that society is one organic whole—that although each individual passes away in his turn, the organism remains—and that to the harmonious adjustment of the several parts of this organism we are, each and all, bound to contribute our due share.

But more. These same worshippers of wealth, strangely in unison with the advanced Socialists, on the one hand, and the spread-eagle Imperialists, on the other, fail to

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apprehend that a nation cannot progress by material prosperity alone. That its greatness consists not so much in what the people *do* as in what they *are*. That only by right thinking can right action be determined. And that humanity, now at length become conscious of itself, has not merely to strive to improve its physical condition, but also to develop those spiritual potentialities which, in varied forms and in different degrees, may be realized in all lives, even the most stately, when they are simply and faithfully lived.

## IV

# THE VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLE AND WOMAN SUFFRAGE

**T**HE subject of this paper has not been selected because it is one of the foremost topics of the day, but because it is intimately connected with the subject of the preceding papers.

Any one who has followed the Woman Suffrage movement and the correspondence upon it in the public press, will have noticed that the Voluntary Principle has become mixed up, implicitly rather than explicitly, with the arguments for and against that movement. For instance, one eminent woman novelist, Mrs. Flora A. Steel, has recently written to the *Times*, that "the dutiful and reverent procreation of children places woman in the first fighting line," and therefore, in her opinion, entitles her to a vote just as if she were a man.

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The precise import of Mrs. Steel's words is not at first sight obvious, and it is perhaps rash for a "mere man" to attempt to elucidate their meaning. However, in this world one must run some risk; or one will make no way at all.

The idea underlying the words "dutiful and reverent procreation of children" is, I take it, the same as that to be found in the preceding papers, that marriage involves duties not only by husband to wife, and *vice versa*, but also by both to society in general. I further infer that Mrs. Steel would not dissent from the view expressed at page 86, viz. : that—in the matter of the number of children — to determine when and how Nature's laws shall operate, is a truly "reverential view, because it presents a high ideal of Humanity to be striven after and worked for."

Mrs. Steel has herself explained what she means by the "first fighting line," to wit that, in her opinion, the dangers and pains of childbirth are not a whit less arduous and severe than are the dangers and pains to which our soldiers and sailors are exposed in

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action, and that therefore—this by way of answer to another eminent novelist, Mrs. Humphry Ward—if willingness to incur dangers and pains is the proper criterion of fitness for electoral power, woman is already on a par with man.

Mrs. Humphry Ward's counter-argument was "that in working for the vote, women are grasping at direct political power without the possibility, in a majority of issues, of combining with it direct responsibility—the responsibility of action, and that this is impossible because they are women." "It is of no use" (she further urged) "to labour the point; we all know the broad fields of action—action of many kinds, not merely or chiefly that involved in war—on which the very existence of the State depends, and into which, women, because they are women, cannot enter."\*

I must again summon up courage, and avow that this argument strikes me as a trifle obscure. Mrs. Ward seems to have something in her mind which she would rather

\* See her letter to the Hon. Secretary of the "Women's Anti-Suffrage Movement." *The Times*, March 8, 1907.

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not utter, though why she should suffer from timidity passes my comprehension. *Précisons.* What, I ask, does Mrs. Ward mean by action—apart from naval and military service—“on which the very existence of the State depends, and into which women cannot enter?” Here I am again at sea. And does she not “prove too much”? Is it not clear that if action is the test of the right to the vote, there must be disfranchisement of many stay-at-home males who are peculiarly qualified to exercise the vote, and of almost every man, no matter how wise, who is of advanced age?

To return for a moment to Mrs. Steel. Her contention also has its weak point, unless we read into it—as I believe we are entitled to read into it—that the dangers and pains of childbirth are to be *deliberately* undertaken, the attendant conditions being such as to justify the hope of healthy offspring, capable of becoming useful members of the community. It is of course true that women do not marry *solely* in order to produce children for the benefit of the State, but then neither do soldiers go into battle *solely*

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out of devotion to their country. Let, however, the Voluntary Principle be once accepted by women, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, let soldiers continue to go forth to fight unconstrained by any conscription law, and the upshot is surely that both alike will deserve—not, indeed, the Victoria Cross, as was lately suggested by an ironical critic—but the grateful thanks of the nation.

Perhaps I have given too much space to each of the above arguments, but when two such protagonists are in the field, it is necessary to try and do justice to both. The discussion must now take a wider and more historic range.

It cannot have escaped the notice of any thoughtful, fair-minded observer that the hour has struck when the position of Woman as a factor in human economics has got to be seriously reconsidered and, possibly, revised. Fraught with difficulty, doubtless, will this process be, for is not the Woman of to-day, for the most part, swathed and swaddled in the stiff cerecloths of prejudice, wrappings which in the not distant past floated about her gossamer-like, rainbow-tinted? Ideals,

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however, even the most exquisite, run, like the human beings who create them, their appointed course, which, briefly summed up, is this—birth, maturity, decay, death. Only when voluntarily relinquished are their flower-covered graves revisited with reverence. When, on the other hand, they are clung to after the breath of life has ceased to animate them, they stand like bare and grinning skeletons in the catacombs of the churches once dedicated to their worship. Wiser far to admit the truth that “the old order changeth,” nay, more, frankly to recognize that so is it best. For only by handing on from one generation to another the fresh torch kindled from the dying one into ever-brightening flame, can the immortality of the permanent *idea*, as differentiated from the fleeting *ideal*, be ensured.

Time was, and not so long ago, when Woman was the appanage of Man, and whether her position was that of lawful wife or hidden mistress, this was the settled point of view. Let me illustrate by an authentic anecdote. At the Worcester Assizes, a few years ago, a labouring man was on trial for

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kicking and otherwise ill-using the wife of a neighbour. The evidence being strongly against him, he was asked by the judge what he had to say to the jury in his defence. "Is it likely now," he made answer, "that I should beat another man's wife when I have a nice little wife of my own?"

At the present day, amongst the working classes, a bad husband is usually regarded as a visitation of Providence, which the woman who has drawn "the unlucky number" must put up with—must not resent or rise in revolt against until she has been three parts killed. Then, and then only, will the public opinion of her class back her if she goes for relief to the magistrate in the Court hard by.

But, educated as woman at last is, times are changing rapidly. She is to-day alive and alert not only to what life offers her personally, but to what it denies to other women. It follows that the old notion of "feminine excellence" is no longer possible. Woman is now wide awake, her long slumber ended; to put her to sleep again is

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beyond human power. She has warmed her hands at the fire of life, she has been permitted to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. It is natural, then, that she should ask for a full share of responsibility — responsibility which in an ideal State should ever accompany knowledge and understanding.

Amid the mists that hover round this controversy between the sexes, one thing is plain. To increase woman's sense of citizenship would be to enlarge her field of vision. Women, in their unselfish pursuit of philanthropy, are too much given over to the consideration of *effects*. Rarely can they be persuaded to exchange dealing with details, in which assuredly they excel, for the arid contemplation of *causes*. So long as this cart-before-the-horse system obtains, it is hopeless to look for lasting improvement. It is those alone who are prepared to cease scraping the surface, and fearlessly to deep-prune the roots below, who can hope to get rid of the "Social Evil" or any of the other upas trees which poison the moral atmosphere around us.

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But, it may be asked, how does this bear on the question of woman's acceptance of the Voluntary Principle? A moment's thought will show that the connection is close. The ideal woman of the twentieth century is a fully developed creature, physically, mentally, above all spiritually. Her responsibilities are wider, deeper, broader than heretofore. No longer limited to the *rôles* of mistress, wife, mother, she has come to recognize the all-important part assigned to her in the destiny of the race. She realizes that on her depend its ascent, its descent, its very continuance. Sex instinct she still possesses and will always possess, but it is sex instinct in its best and highest form. She declines to give to her children for father the degenerate, the drunkard, the physically or mentally unfit. Marriage is for her a sacrament in the best sense of the word, and one to which only the shriven are bidden. It is no longer a love-feast without any thought of the morrow.

Some excellent persons may here forecast possible danger to the "Family" or the "Hearth and Home." It is difficult to see

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on what ground. Surely common sense suggests pretty plainly that the interests of the "Family" are best served by the refusal to increase it under conditions unfavourable to its physical, mental, and spiritual development. It must never be forgotten that children are not unlike plants, which, if they are to thrive—even to live at all—must have a certain space allotted to each for growth and expansion. The remark of a working-class woman whose life had been one long, hopeless struggle against circumstances over which she had, as she imagined, no control, "gives," as the French say, "furiously to think." "Yes, I've had thirteen, but the churchyard's been my friend."

It is no part of my present purpose to strike a balance between the arguments for and against Woman Suffrage. Suffice it to say that I am perfectly satisfied of this—that the truest enfranchisement of woman lies in her learning rightly to estimate her position as wife, and her responsibilities both to her children and the State; nay, more, that any political power which may, or may

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not, follow on, is, in comparison, not worth counting with. Salvation, we are told, comes ever from within. It is woman herself who in this matter can save herself. Let her look to it that she does.

## THE VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLE AND WAR

**T**HERE are two indispensable requisites for war—money and men—money to be expended on armaments, men to be expended on fields of battle. Here are a few facts as to both, which I take, with absolute confidence in their accuracy, from a speech by Lord Avebury, on May 25, 1906, reported in *Hansard* (4th series), vol. 157.

Ten years ago our naval and military expenditure was £35,600,000. Last year, without including extra receipts and other items which would very largely increase the real amount, it was £66,270,000, showing an increase of no less than £30,700,000. . . . In the last ten years Italy has increased her naval and military expenditure by £1,500,000, France by £6,000,000, Germany by £8,700,000. Our increase during the same period has been over

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£30,000,000, something like double that of France and Germany.

Look at the contrast between Europe and America. The United States have a population of about 90,000,000. That of Europe is about 350,000,000—nearly four times as great. The area is about the same, but the expenditure of Europe on armaments is over £250,000,000 sterling, that of the United States is £40,000,000; and the number of men under arms is 4,000,000 against 100,000 in the United States, or forty times as great. It is obvious, therefore, that our European manufactures are heavily handicapped as against those of the United States, and unless something is done, will be so, more and more. Our expenditure on the Army, which ten years ago was under £18,000,000, is now over £29,000,000, more than half as much again.

The effective state of our Navy is, in round numbers, 1,050,000 tons, that of France being 398,000, and of Germany 286,000, so that our strength is, in round numbers, 370,000 tons more than that of France and Germany combined.

To these statistics should be added a few more relating to naval expenditure. On July 30, 1906, the Civil Lord of the Admiralty stated in the House of Commons that the tonnage and cost of battleships completed for sea during the six years ending

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March, 1906, by the four great naval Powers, was as follows :—

	Tonnage.	Cost.
Great Britain ... ..	348,385	£25,538,041
France ... ..	44,285	4,086,347
Russia ... ..	164,726	14,173,330
Germany ... ..	143,122	13,237,105

He also stated that at that time the following battleships were under construction—Great Britain, 6 ; France, 6 ; Germany, 6 ; the United States, 12.

In view of the situation abroad, the strenuous efforts on the part of our present War Minister (Mr. Haldane) to effect economy, have made very little impression on our Army estimates, and unless some drastic remedy can be devised, England must, in common with nearly all European nations, continue to groan under oppressive War Budgets.

Two remedies have been proposed. I will first deal with the one suggested by the Tsar of Russia, when, in August, 1898, he issued, by the hands of Count Mouravieff, his famous Imperial Rescript, which led to the convening of a general Peace Conference at the Hague in the following May. We are now on the eve of the meeting of a

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second Hague Conference, which is to take up the dropped threads of the first, prominent amongst which, if England had her way, would be the armaments question. From further discussion of this whole subject, Germany has, however, announced her intention to stand aloof, and if we recall what took place at the first Conference, it is easy to see why.

In 1889, the discussion on armaments was opened before the Committee to which it was referred, by M. Beernaert, President of the Belgian Chamber of Deputies. He pointed out that the problem presented two aspects. (1) Is it possible to set a limit to the progressive increase of armaments? (2) Can the nations agree, by common accord, upon any such limit? The matter, he urged, was one of which it would be impossible to exaggerate the importance, for it was closely bound up with that of public wealth and of the highest form of progress. Assuming the nations were willing to agree, should the agreement provide for the number of the effective forces, or for the amount of the budget of military expenses, or for both?

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How should the numbers be fixed and verified? How should the armies of to-day be taken as the basis for the designation? Should naval forces be treated the same as armies? What was to be done about the defence of Colonies?

The questions thus framed by M. Beer-naert in order to assist the discussion, proved fatal to its issuing in any practical result. Insurmountable difficulties were at once raised by General von Schwarzhoff, one of the delegates from Germany. The question of effectives could not, he argued, be regarded by itself—disconnected from a number of other questions to which it was quite subordinate—such, for instance, as the state of public instruction, the length of time of active military service, the number of established regiments, the effectives of each army unit, the number and duration of the drills, the military obligations of the reserves, the location of the different army corps, the railway system, the number and situation of fortified places. In a modern army, he went on, all of these hung together and formed the national defence which each

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people had organized according to its character, its history, its traditions—taking into account its economical resources, its geographical situation, and the duties incumbent upon it.

General Schwarzhoff further pointed out that the situation of his own country offered special obstacles to any such international convention as was proposed. In Germany, the number of effectives was fixed by an agreement between the Government and the Reichstag, and in order not to repeat every year the same debates, the number was now fixed for five years. At first sight it might seem that such an arrangement would facilitate Germany's adhesion to the proposal, but (1) there was a great difference between a municipal law and an international convention, (2) the international period of five years would not synchronize with the national period.

Most Englishmen will admit the weight of this reasoning. It no doubt influenced Prince Bülow, when on May 4, 1907, he told the Reichstag that whilst Germany welcomed the advent of a second Hague

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Conference, she could not take part in the discussion on the reduction of armaments, because such discussion was unpractical. The friendly tone towards England which characterized the speech in which this decision was announced ought to reassure those writers in our Press whose imaginations appear to be clouded with mists of prejudice, wherever Germany is concerned.

It is proverbially dangerous to prophesy ; but I shall be much surprised if the Hague delegates of 1907 go further than their predecessors of 1899, who had to content themselves with the "pious wish" that "a limitation of the military charges which now weigh upon the world is greatly to be desired in the interests of the mutual and moral welfare of humanity."

Failing a reduction of armaments by international convention, I turn to the second remedy, proposed and suggested by the friends of peace, for rendering armaments and war unnecessary, viz. universal international arbitration. The bishops and clergy of the province of Canterbury assembled in Convocation have not lost sight of this

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remedy. They also have lately formulated a "pious wish," and resolved that "it is the duty of every Christian man by earnest prayer, and by the use of such influence as he possesses, to further the efforts of Governments and Statesmen, in the direction of preventing the horrors and calamities of war, by the systematic and recognized adoption of arbitration when international difficulties arise."

It would ill become me to say a single word in disparagement of these admirable sentiments, but I am bound to point out here, as I have pointed out at more length elsewhere, that whilst International Arbitration has its virtues it also has its limitations.\* Instead of repeating myself, I will transcribe, from *Hansard*, what was said by Lord Lansdowne, when he followed Lord Avebury in the House of Lords on the occasion already referred to.

"I attach the greatest value to the principle of arbitration. It creates a disposition in favour of peaceful settlements; it prevents great Powers from fastening a quarrel upon one another for

\* *Encyclopædia Britannica* (10th edit.), *sub voce*.

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some purely trivial reason, and, when trouble is brewing, the existence of the machinery of arbitration tends to give time, which so often has the effect of cooling down hot and angry passions. But treaties of arbitration will certainly not rid the world altogether of the danger of conflict. There are some questions about which no Power will go to arbitration; and in every treaty of arbitration that I have ever seen or had to do with, there is a clause in which it was expressly laid down, that upon certain matters touching *the vital interests*, or the honour of the contracting parties, they would not consent to submit to arbitration."

It is with the words I have italicized that we are concerned here. It will naturally be asked, What is meant by the "vital interests" of a nation which are excepted from all arbitration treaties? The only answer that can be given is that the phrase is elastic, to be interpreted according to the national needs of the moment. If, for example, a nation is seeking an outlet for its teeming population, if it is craving for an extended seaboard, or even for fresh coaling-stations for its fleet, its "vital interests" are certainly involved. Many other examples might be given. Thus it happens that, although, with

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the advance of civilization, the old pretexts for war have disappeared, new ones have arisen to take their place. The wars of brutal conquest and plunder, of religion, and of dynastic succession, which have from time to time devastated Europe, are now things of the past. But there remain commercial and colonial wars—wars to procure in old countries fresh markets for manufactures and to provide in new countries an outlet for their superfluous inhabitants. These are the wars that the future has in store for us, unless we can remove the causes of them.

At page 81 I have alluded to the present unrest of Germany for the purpose of illustrating my argument. I refer to Germany again for the like purpose, and in no unfriendly or unsympathetic spirit. "Germany's present boundaries," as has been well said by one who knows, "are rapidly ceasing to suffice, not merely for her ambition, but for her *needs*; she is adding to her population at the rate of a million a year, and this rapid growth takes either the form of increased pressure at home or is lost to *Deutschthum* and the flag by emigration

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abroad. More room is not alone desirable ; it is, or will be, an imperative necessity. Immured in a geographical prison, the walls of which are spiked by the power of the Dual Alliance, Germany must either burst her bonds or acknowledge final defeat."

What then is the real remedy for war, seeing that both Convention and Arbitration fail us? The real remedy may be given in a sentence: It lies in the more complete consciousness of the human race as to the conditions on which its progress depends.

Let me explain my meaning by a parable. A man, with a genius for observing the habits of ants, was minded to parcel out a small plot in his garden for the purpose of harbouring an ants' nest. He built a wall of brick round this plot, and started a colony of ants upon it, allowing them ample room for their operations. In course of time the ants began to multiply and to separate off into distinct tribes, not always on good terms with each other. As multiplication proceeded, every available inch of space was occupied by the busy insects. After several serious intertribal encounters, they at length agreed

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not to quarrel expect when their "vital interests" were concerned. A question then arose what were "vital interests," and they appealed to the owner of the garden for advice and assistance. His decision caused them some surprise and not a little indignation. It was, that if they had become too numerous to find accommodation in the plot assigned to them, their "vital interests" were certainly affected, but that as the "vitality" was entirely within their own control, he could do nothing for them.

In the course of these Essays I have had occasion more than once to differ from some of our Church dignitaries. I have now pleasure in making the *amende honorable* by quoting, in support of my main thesis, words uttered not long ago by one of the most eloquent members of the episcopal bench—

There is such a thing as an ideal aspect of the world, and it is to the ideal that our attention should be constantly directed. The statesman, no less than the artist, needs to be sustained by ideal considerations. If we think of the ideal, may we not picture to ourselves an age when armaments will no longer be necessary, and when instead of

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withdrawing one out of every five of the real bread-winners to stand as an armed soldier, and therefore rendering him a non-producer from an economic point of view, the standing armies and navies shall be reduced to a kind of minimum which would represent only the necessary police, as it were, of the world? The industries of the world would then flourish, its productive power would then increase, in every hamlet, as in every land, there would be a sense of security, peace, and happiness.

This aspiration of Dr. Boyd Carpenter's is, as we must all agree, loftily conceived; it is for him to show how it can be realized. I venture to think that its realization is impossible save by the acceptance of the Voluntary Principle. Only by such acceptance will the outcry against armaments, and against over-population—now the prime *raison d'être* of armaments—cease to be heard. Only thus will Population and Progress, at last reconciled to each other, pursue their even way through the ages, attended by the angel of Peace.

THE END

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