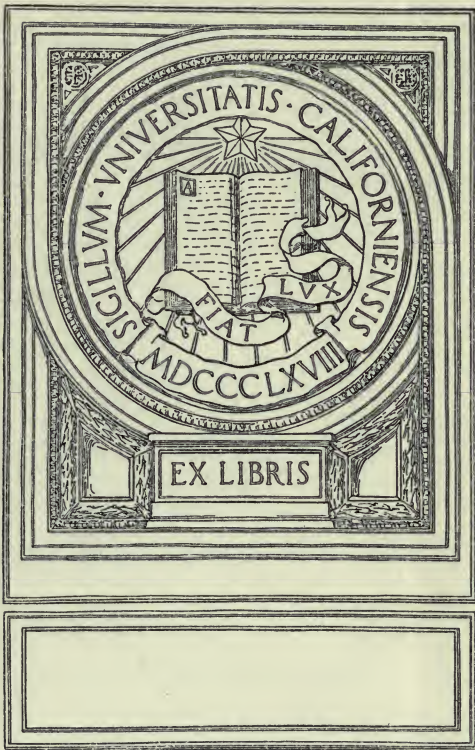




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**LABOUR TROUBLES AND BIRTH
CONTROL**

“Hitherto it is questionable if all the mechanical inventions yet made have lightened the day’s toil of any human being. They have enabled a greater population to live the same life of drudgery and imprisonment, and an increased number of manufacturers and others to make fortunes. They have increased the comforts of the middle class. But they have not yet begun to effect those great changes in human destiny which it is in their nature and in their futurity to accomplish. Only when, in addition to just institutions, the increase of mankind shall be under the deliberate guidance of judicious foresight, can the conquests made from the powers of nature by the intellect and energy of scientific discoverers become the common property of the species, and the means of improving and elevating the universal lot.”—JOHN STUART MILL.

ETHICS OF BIRTH CONTROL

“Morally, as well as eugenically, it was right for people in certain circumstances to use harmless means to control the birth-rate.

“It was immoral to avoid having children from selfish motives, but it was surely also immoral to have child after child under circumstances which, humanly speaking, were such as to render the proper upbringing of such children impossible.”—THE BISHOP OF BIRMINGHAM, Chairman of the National Birth-rate Commission (*The Times* report of the proceedings of the Commission, April 8th, 1919).

THE FUTURE OF THE ENGLISH RACE

“Our starting-point must be that the pressure of population upon the means of subsistence is a constant fact in the human race, as in every other species of animals and plants. There is no species in which the numbers are not kept down far below the natural capacity for increase, by the limitation of available food.

“Occasionally, from accidental circumstances, England was for a short time under-populated, and these were the periods when, according to Professor Thorold Rogers, Archdeacon Cunningham, and other authorities, the labourer was well off. The most striking example was in the half-century after the Black Death, which carried off nearly half of the population. Wages increased threefold, and the Government tried in vain to protect employers by enforcing pre-plague rates. Not only were wages high, but food was so abundant that farmers often gave their men a square meal which was not in the contract.”—THE DEAN OF ST. PAUL'S (*Edinburgh Review*, April, 1919).

MARTYRS TO MATERNITY

“No; my remedy is Birth Control. A knowledge of this ought to be made available for all who desire it, and I know from my own experience that many C3 parents earnestly do desire it. In Holland, they have regular birth control clinics, recognized by the State, where mothers can get practical instruction from sympathetic women doctors.

“I should like to see one or more similar birth control clinics started in this country (financed by private effort) as an experiment. It is possible that before long some public-spirited philanthropist will come forward in this way.”—DR. C. KILLICK MILLARD, Medical Officer of Health for Leicester (*National News*, April 6th).

POPULATION AND POVERTY

“Underlying all superficial causes of international conflict and national unrest is the problem of population. As long as the human race continues to increase at the present rate, it is certain that the different tribes of mankind will at frequent intervals wage destructive wars against one another; that is the only way by which they can secure for themselves what they consider an adequate share of the limited resources of the globe. Further, it is certain that, so long as individual parents produce more children than they can maintain in comfort, a considerable section of the population will be overcrowded and underfed. Attempts may be made to deal with these evils by such devices as Charity Rents and Mother’s Pensions, but they will only have the effect of encouraging the production of those types who lean upon the State, and discouraging the production of those who support the State.

“The real danger is that the higher racial or national types may be swamped by the lower types, and the only way of avoiding that danger is by popularizing throughout the world the knowledge of how to prevent conception. Were this done, within a few years the whole standard of human life would be immensely raised.”—MR. HAROLD COX (*Sunday Times*, April 13th).

THE ROOT OF REVOLUTION

“The secret revolt and bitterness which permeates every fibre of the unwillingly pregnant and suffering mothers has been finding expression in the lives and deeds of their children. We have been *breeding* revolutionaries through the ages, and at an increasing rate, since the crowding into cities began and women were forced to bear children beyond their desires in increasingly unnatural conditions.”—DR. MARIE C. STOPES (*Sunday Chronicle*, April 20th)

LABOUR TROUBLES AND BIRTH CONTROL

BY

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LABOUR TROUBLES AND BIRTH CONTROL

INTRODUCTORY

THE Great War is formally declared over, and now we may take a long breath of relief and go on in our old peaceful way again, may we not? Never! Never again! The dullest ears cannot fail to hear that note in the air, the dullest eyes cannot escape the signs of the universal negative. The military war is over, but the labour war is now commencing in dead earnest. What is it our workers want? Surely there have already been great concessions in wages during the war owing to the high cost of living. Every class of manual worker has doubled and sometimes trebled his pre-war earnings, and this at a time when the country

was wasting its substance—its savings and accumulated wealth in many forms—in the furnace of war. No other class of the community was able to obtain, or even asked for, such concessions. The soldiers who came forward from every class to defend their native land took such pay as was provided by the State, regardless of the higher wages or salaries they were relinquishing; the brain-workers of the community went on with their work, with a few exceptions, at old-time salaries; while those who had time or money to spare gave freely of both to the common good in our struggle against annihilation. One class of wage earners stood out in favoured contrast to the others. These were the manual workers who were needed for all branches of war supplies. Young men who preferred to make munitions to facing the risks of the battlefield, together with the older men and the newly employed women, were able

to demand and obtain enormously increased wages, amounting to five and even more times their former earnings. This was disgracefully unfair to those who offered their lives and the well-being of their families to their country for a few shillings per week. But, what would you? as the French say. It was a question of demand and supply, and when the nobler spirits had unselfishly come forward in their millions to beat back the German hordes, those who were left were needed so intensely for munitions, etc., that the Government took them at practically any terms.

Now that the war is over, and, save for those who will never come back, we may expect a large increase in the numbers available for labour, the agitators, backed by the workers' fear of falling wages, are now out for general strikes and an effort to capture the whole nation for the benefit of labour. The whole

world is in a seething state of discontent, and Bolshevism in various guises bids fair to ravish what four years of bloodshed and unbelievable heroism fought to save. And *yet*, is there nothing but reproach and worthy indignation at the present apparently selfish class struggle? Is there no gleam of justification? I beg to believe there is. I have personally a distrust of all forms of mass action—of Bolshevism, Socialism, and Syndicalism; and yet I honestly believe that the selfish thoughtlessness of the more educated classes of the community during the forty years or so preceding the Great War is responsible for the childish crudity of the present reconstructive Labour demands.

**WAR AND
PRE-WAR CONDITIONS AMONG
THE WORKING-CLASSES**

I

WAR AND PRE-WAR CONDITIONS AMONG THE WORKING-CLASSES

WHEN one contrasts the state of things prevailing in general—from the purchaser's point of view—before the war, with those to be found at the present day, the change is astounding. To illustrate my meaning, let us consider the case, from the point of view of the average middle-class householder. To-day everything we need in the way of food, clothing, household furnishings, etc., is very dear—somewhere about three times the pre-war figure; all service is restricted, very expensive, and rarely civil. We are short of everything that makes civilized life comfortable, whether it be in houses, travelling accommodation, or the thousand and one little necessities or luxuries

to which we had grown accustomed. In those far-off days of 1914, and still more so in the thirty or more years preceding that, service of every sort and kind was cheap and *humble*—soliciting our employment, and glad to get work at a wage which allowed for little more than bare subsistence. Shops were crowded, not only with the things everybody wanted, but with hosts of others whose use was problematical, evidently manufactured to create hitherto unknown wants, so that Labour might squeeze out a livelihood. On every hand in this teeming crowd one saw evidences of the horrible cheapness of labour, and its pathetic attempts to subsist on starvation wages. And even then, all over our country, we had hundreds of thousands in a state of unemployment, often subsisting on private or State charity.

To revert to our middle-class household and the ways its requirements were met. Shivering

boys and men brought their milk and the hot rolls for breakfast at an hour when most middle-class people were still in bed—speaking of all-night or very early toil. If the master of the house needed a cab to the station, one could always be obtained; while on his arrival at the station there would never fail to be a beggar to hold open the door—solicitous for alms—or a paper-boy anxious to offer his wares. Porters thankfully accepted two or three coppers for the labour of carrying bags and heavy luggage to the luggage-waggon, often using ten or fifteen minutes of their time. And throughout his day the gentleman would find plenty of such small services to his hand for next to nothing. Railway companies competed to carry him for smaller and smaller sums, and quicker and better services of trains. Restaurants vied with each other to give him better food, greater variety, and lower prices than others. Tailors promised clothes in an

impossibly quick time in order to retain his custom; and if he were an employer, his clerks and workpeople anxiously watched not to give cause for dismissal. His wife scarcely ever thought of carrying the smallest parcel—indeed, shop people generally refused such offers, protesting that it was no trouble to send it home. And when large firms, with numbers of service vans, did this, all the small tradespeople, however difficult it was, had to employ errand boys and girls to carry everything for their customers, although no one now finds it difficult to carry the greater part of these for themselves. No more pathetic sight do I remember than the tired little lads and girls toiling all day on Saturday, with never an hour for play, carrying (in many cases) loads far too heavy for their young legs and backs. Well, bit by bit, the positions have become reversed during the war, and, far from our custom being solicited, it is we who humbly have to wait

long and pay heavily for every service. It looks like one of Time's revenges! Yet is it really so, in the sense that one class of people is now in a position to revenge itself on another? I know that, according to the talk of agitators and the small-minded types of workmen, this is how the matter is being regarded. Yet I venture to say that there is no more cause for such a feeling of class revenge on the side of working people than there ever was of oppression on the part of the socially higher classes. The great fact that stands out is this: labour was too plentiful, and was obliged to sell itself for the crusts of existence. It, without being solicited, begged for a share of the earnings of those who had more than they required for bare necessities, and if they received this, it was no special fault of those who earned these larger sums that they could do no more.

Suppose a man is walking to his home

carrying a portmanteau, and he is clamorously hailed by several lads who wish to carry it for a trifle. He is not anxious for their services, and is quite willing and able to carry it himself. "I'll carry it for threepence, sir." He hesitates. "Let me carry it, sir; I'm starving—I'll do it for twopence." The boy who offered for threepence stands aside: evidently his need is not so great, or he would offer for the smaller sum. Finally, the second boy is allowed to walk the quarter-mile or so, and gets his twopence. He is satisfied, the gentleman doesn't grudge the twopence for this small (and really unnecessary) service. What harm is there, then? During the latter part of this war the same service would have demanded sixpence. If really needed, it would be paid without question. If not needed, the money would not be spent. Here we see an example of the free exchange of services. There can be no blame to the

employer in any work because labour is cheap; there is no compensation or pity for him if it is dear. In all cases it is to him to decide whether the particular service is worth *to him* the payment asked. Then the bargain is made.

Now we return to present-day labour and its attitude to employers.

During the war, as before remarked, the working-class—employed on war material—has made money as never before in its existence. It has tasted the joys of spending luxuriously, if not wisely, and very naturally it does not wish to return to its old condition of penury. It sees ahead, though dimly, that the golden days cannot last. The wastage of those awful four years has to be made good; the soldiers are soon coming back to congest the labour market, and, unless we can exchange the products of our toil for food and other necessities, there is likely to be a pretty bad time ahead of us. Now Labour is at the moment

top dog, and one cannot wonder that it is anxious to make its future position good and secure before the bad days at last dawn. It would be nothing short of foolish not to make such an attempt: it is the duty of everybody to do the best they can for themselves. But it would be wise to *be sure that the thing it is trying to do is the best for itself*. And here I would like to remind Labour of a certain proverb: "A house divided against itself cannot stand." Great Britain is a house consisting of a certain number of inhabitants of all kinds, degrees, and powers. Each unit is a part of the whole, each group or class works in conjunction with all other groups and classes; and you cannot have one large section antagonized against the rest without doing great harm to the whole body of the nation. If, then, the best results can only be obtained by peaceful co-operation, then the nation as a whole will suffer and fall out of the running with other nations, if it is

divided against itself. With such a downfall every *section* and every *individual* will suffer. We must, as the robbers used to say in olden times, hang together or we shall hang separately. "United we stand, divided we fall."

Since this is the case, and Labour seeks to get what it considers its more just share by nationalizing all the important services and property of the country, it had better consider whether this would keep up the former position of the country among other nations, or improve it, or cause it to fall. If the nation falls, Labour will lose all round. I do not hesitate to say, and we have ample confirmation of it among the extremists, that they would rather the whole nation collapsed than that any system of competition should go on. *Equality* is their watchword—*i.e.*, *equal pay for unequal services*—believing that equal effort is equal service, and that people

should not be penalized for inferior endowments caused by evil heredity and environment. But quite a large number of these *extremists* don't even want that. Their idea is to replace the educated classes in the Government by the almost uneducated—*i.e.*, Labour. A spirit of base envy and class hatred pervades this section. They are not out to benefit the nation. Their first thought is to exalt their own class regardless of all the other classes, or of the nation as a whole. They despise argument; they have no *noblesse oblige*, and I am convinced that they only represent what is base, envious, and short-sighted as themselves among the working-classes. At the same time, *I also believe most sincerely that this section represents only a small percentage of the wage-earners.* But the remainder of the working-men are apathetic, and may easily be led—from sheer indifference, and a vague hope of high wages—to subscribe to what will surely

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prove the grave of this country's prosperity, and therefore their own. I should like now to look briefly at the claims and actual rights of Labour, and how the employing class has failed in its duty to its representatives.

**HAS LABOUR A SUPERIOR CLAIM
ON THE COMMUNITY ?**

II

HAS LABOUR A SUPERIOR CLAIM ON THE COMMUNITY ?

I SHOULD like to lay stress on the word "community," because, however strongly we hold the view that every adult has a right and a duty to mind his own business, we all know that there is a point beyond which we cease to be independent of the rest of humanity, and look to the State for support. Law, for instance, is entirely in the hands of the Government, and is upheld for the common good. Every person has a right to his life, liberty, and property, and the Law upholds these rights, and punishes offenders against them. The Army, the Navy, and the Police are paid by the nation to look after the liberties of all members of the community, while law-makers

and law-administrators form another important section of men whose time is devoted to furthering the welfare and upholding the rights of the community as a whole. (At least, that is the general intention !)

But within recent years there has been growing a tendency—due principally to Socialistic teaching—to tamper constantly with the old idea of *laissez faire*, or individual freedom and responsibility of the adult to conduct his own affairs. We are told that we must, as a nation, be responsible for the welfare of each individual of the community to the point that he has a “decent standard” of life. This new spirit takes little or no account of the individual worth of the man to the community, only that he and his family should be fed, clothed, and housed in such a way as to guarantee all the necessities and some of the comforts of existence. This is to be managed by raising wages to a point which guarantees these things to the

“working-man,” and, as an easy way of securing a uniform standard and of having a voice in the future disposal of wages, nationalization of all the industries and means of transport which employ the large majority of Labour is now demanded.

Before one considers especially the claim, let us look for a moment at the position of the community as a whole. Roughly, though the classification is in many ways inadequate, we may divide the community into the familiar upper, middle, and working classes. Each adult in each of these classes has certain just claims on the community or nation as a whole; in turn, the nation claims certain duties and payments from each adult. But we must never forget, and must constantly remind ourselves, that the whole of the individuals comprised in those three classes comprise the nation; the nation is the sum of the individual citizens. This must lead us to the conclusion

that there is no mythical body or power known as "The State," behind and beyond the body seated in authority at Westminster, composed of members of those three classes, chosen by them and liable to be deposed by them if thought necessary. There is no magic fund behind and beyond that voted by Parliament in the name of its electors, and paid for by every section of those electors. "Out of nothing, nothing can come." Out of Government nothing can be taken save that which is put there by the contributions of the people. Every class contributes in greater or less degree, and every voter has a theoretical right to a voice in the national expenditure.

Now, to an unprejudiced observer, one would think that those members of the community who contributed the largest sums to the general use of the community should have more to say as to the disposal of this money than other members who contributed much smaller sums

—and that only through indirect taxation. This is always the case in a public company, where representation is proportional to the number of shares paid for. But what we really find is that the section of the community which pays no direct taxes is having more to say as to the spending of them than the others. Why? Because this section is numerically larger and as practically every man in it has a vote, it follows that an enormous power over the national expenditure can be wielded by this section; and we find now that, incited to such action by the Socialist- or Syndicalist-minded leaders, there is a strong disposition to pull the scales of national expenditure heavily down in Labour interests. The other sections of the community, Brains and Capital, are to see their special needs and interests disregarded, and to reflect that, if only this one section of the community is to be benefited by what all have contributed to, then Labour must have a claim far exceeding

their own in its contribution to the common store. Can Labour justify its demand to a wage which it cannot obtain in the labour market, to a right of control over that to which it has contributed little beyond muscular toil? Is this a fact? Do Capital and Brains—representing in the main the upper and middle classes—contribute less to the community's welfare than Labour? Many extreme Socialists, we know, claim that Labour is supreme in the world's workshop. They assert that Capital is of little or no account, and that every man is able with his hands to support himself and his family. But the majority now acknowledges that without the tools of his trade, without materials to hand, and without food, shelter, and clothing to sustain him during the time he was producing food or articles to exchange for food, Labour would be in danger of perishing; and all these necessary adjuncts to Labour are Capital

The real criminal of Society in the eyes of the Socialists and Syndicalists is the "Capitalist," while, according to them, "the Capitalistic System" is the real bugbear to working-class well-being. I am not going to debate this matter very fully here, but would point out that a capitalist is one who has saved something from past earnings and is in a position to lend it for the use of the community. Capital is the outcome of thrift, and betokens at least forethought and self-denial in its owner; and if built up by industry as well as thrift, indicates business capability, all of which are qualities that the nation benefits by. Every thrifty working-man who has managed to put by a few pounds is a capitalist; and as the banks invest all these savings in industrial enterprises, and as, in fact, those enterprises would not be run if capital could not be borrowed from banks for that purpose, we can say that these thrifty working-men are en-

couraging and partly responsible for the Capitalistic System. And who shall deny that they are benefactors to the community?

So we find that Capital is necessary in order that those who have nothing to give but their skill and labour may be supported while they produce food or things changeable for food. The capitalist may either lend his money to the community through the banks, or he may invest it himself in some enterprise. In either case he has a right to some return or interest for his loan—first, that he may live and yet not demand the return of his capital; secondly, because he risks losing some or all of it if the enterprise be unsuccessful (the more risky the undertaking, the more should he demand in the way of interest); and, thirdly, because if he had not the incentive of reward for his thrift and self-denial, he would have no encouragement, or much less encouragement, to save.

Then the whole community would suffer by losing the use of his capital. This is where the Socialist, in his desire to reap where he has not sown, is shortsighted in denouncing the Capitalist System. Any cause which discourages production of commodities and thrift in every form lessens the sum total of the necessaries and comforts of life for all members of the community. Capitalists and labourers are the counterpart of each other; neither can exist without the other, and it is a sad and unfortunate thing that interested parties are doing their best to set the representatives of these equally indispensable powers at each other's throats. Labour is at present the attacking party; but in the next chapter I wish to show that Capital was the first aggressor, by omission rather than commission, and has only its own shortsighted behaviour to thank for the present trouble.

The third great contributor to the wealth

and well-being of the community I have called Brains. In the main, the large middle class brings education and special skill and talent rather than money or muscles to the common stock. In this class we include such services as clerical, educational, organization, management, banking and finance, design, invention, the higher forms of manufacturing, distribution, navigation, etc., without counting those classes which exist for the safety and order of the State—the civil, military, naval, air, and police services. All these labourers are “worthy of their hire,” and without their specially gifted and specially trained services the whole machine of national life would soon be at a standstill.

One cannot, after a little reflection, see how any of these three divisions could exist without the other for any length of time—at any rate, not in a state of peace, comfort, or civilization; and equally one cannot see how either one can

arrogate to his own class the superior position to which all others should bow. The "working-class," or the class which works at heavy manual toil, escapes many of the physical and mental ills of the brain-workers. It has a smaller number of things to do with its wages, and it has also fewer responsibilities and worries. The one thing it does not often escape (at least it did not in the pre-war days) is an insufficiency of food and other necessaries, and one is full of sympathy at the strenuous efforts of the working-man to prevent a recurrence of the old unemployed and starvation-wage days of only five years ago. But, as I have tried to point out, the substituting of Labour where Brains and Capital now are, or the crushing of one class for the benefit of another, will not bring about that end; only chaos, misery, and total ruin of people and nation can happen if the wheels of our national machine do not run in their own grooves.

I will now deal with what I know to be the *true* root cause of labour unrest, and its remedy.

**THE ROOT CAUSE OF LABOUR
UNREST**

III

THE ROOT CAUSE OF LABOUR UNREST

CURIOUSLY, to students of psychology, the present rumblings of labour-war are not entirely presentiments of evil; on the contrary, they indicate a certain condition of healthy striving for better things—a spirit of hope and vigour which replaces the dead lethargy of those awful times of ten and twenty years ago, when Labour was, for the most part, too crushed by the struggle for existence to rise and demand its own betterment.

The louder and more effective the demand now that they be heard and answered when they insist on a higher standard of comfort, the more the rest of the community will listen and set their brains to work to devise a way. At the present moment the latter are examining

the claims and suggestions of Labour, and are finding that many of the latter will spell national ruin. As a member of a certain school of thought, which for the last forty years has been as a voice crying in the wilderness (so far as the majority of the labouring classes are concerned), I propose to draw attention to a certain law of nature which this class has almost utterly disregarded.

If one looks back to the middle and latter part of the nineteenth century, society in this country was very different from to-day. The three chief classes of aristocracy and gentry, the middle, and the labouring classes, were much more tightly restrained within these recognized boundaries, and it was more difficult either to fall from the upper or rise from the lower, though, of course, countless gradations of this limit allowed a certain amount of class absorption. The conditions of the workers was pitiable in many cases, and

although personal charity softened the edge of extreme suffering, and bridged over class differences by personal and human sympathy, the working-class had to struggle along, for the most part, voteless, despised, and inarticulate. To-day they have a larger vote than any other class; they are not only independent of their former masters, but are often haughty and intolerant, careless and uncivil, to all the other members of the community. But they are not content nor happy, and, despite their constantly increased wages and better conditions of labour, they are in many senses no better off than in the old days of political and social servitude. Why is this? Because food, clothes, and housing, as well as all the minor comforts of life, have risen in price *pari passu* as wages were raised. So that the labourer finds, though his wages are doubled, he must now pay at least twice as much as before for all he needs. And what, then, is the cause of

this phantom “shortness of necessities” which pursues the alleged improvement in working-class conditions? It is that *the number of mouths to feed increases faster than the food to put into them.*

And this is not a peculiar after-war condition. It is true that all conditions which make for a plenitude of food and good living conditions generally are in a worse state now, due to (a) destruction of peace materials in war; (b) feeding and maintaining millions of men (the ablest and youngest workers for the most part) while for four years they destroyed instead of created commodities; (c) the loss and disablement of about one-fourth of our best male workers; (d) the gradual using up of all forms of stores, which causes us to live from hand to mouth; and last, but not least, (e) the using of nitrates and other plant-foods for explosives—thus impoverishing agriculture. But while this causes available skilled labour

to be in a condition to make better terms for itself as far as wages are concerned, it does not increase the sum total of the nation's needed commodities of all sorts, and so the workers are not able to reach the elysium of high *real* wages, but must suffer equally in the general shortage.

This struggle between food available—I say food, as, this being the most important of our needs, all other necessities come after and not equally with it—and mouths, or individuals, to be fed, has been the factor which has caused poverty, disease, and premature death, in all communities since ever there have been human beings. It has proved, as Huxley says, the true Riddle of the Sphinx. What matter whether the food shortage takes place in a small remote tribe, accustomed, as our forefathers did, to struggle for a livelihood with a few rough hunting weapons, or in the noise and welter of factory life in an old civilization

like our own? The spectre is still there. The savages destroyed their surplus infants and useless old folk in times of great stress; we let them die peaceably, but painfully and lingeringly, according to the code of civilized morality. When we look around, and contemplate the marvels of Science and all the various arts, when we see the thousand enjoyments and luxuries available for those who can pay for them, when we remember the enormous output of commodities due to division of labour and all kinds of machinery, as compared with fifty years ago, and then see that the majority of workers in this country cannot, even now, command high *real* wages, then one begins to feel, if one is ignorant of the underlying cause, that we might just as well have done without civilization at all.

But when one knows that this Riddle of the Sphinx has been solved, that practical remedies for the evil of too rapid increase of numbers

have been known in our country and practised by the educated classes in ever-increasing numbers during these last forty years or more, then one cannot but burn with indignation that such a glorious fact—the very keystone of civilization—should have been steadfastly and deliberately withheld from the workers, who in their poverty and ignorance had no easy access to it.

The upper and middle classes, the land-owners, the employers of labour, the “respectable” classes, all adopted in turn the selfish and foolish plan of practising one thing and preaching another. I do think that in many cases it was a deliberate class conspiracy among men and women alike to keep the working-class as *cheap* labour. One knows also that among a large and more humane class it was merely due to stupidity—the feeling that it was not “nice” nor “safe” to let the working people know of this relief from grind-

ing poverty and sickness. The myth of cheap labour has been now fully disclosed. Entire ignorance on the subject of birth control did not exist for long; and gradually a general spread of it among the more prudent and educated working classes took place till all but the very ignorant or reckless of the workers have now, at least, some knowledge of the possibility of birth control. In forty years the birth-rate has fallen from 36 per 1,000 of the population to 24 per 1,000 just before the war. The death-rate has fallen almost *pari passu*. And the curious phenomenon is this: that the smaller and smaller families of the upper and middle classes have enabled more of the working-class children to survive than was the case before birth control was practised—owing to the decreased strain on the national food supply. If, at the same time, these latter had also limited their families to two or three children, as did those of the classes socially

above them, *real* wages would now have been high, even if the money wage was no higher than in 1914. There would have been smaller numbers of the labouring class, but they would have been the very aristocrats of labour—skilled, reliable, always sure of a good market, with comfortable homes, and small, contented families, dignified, worthy. All these things are possible, and would most certainly have been the rule, as they are in the middle classes. All this bitterness of class jealousy, backed by real and felt wants, is due to the improvidence in family considerations of the labourers. And now, when by organization and political representation this class is able, through its representatives (often aided and prejudiced by an unworthy agitating element), to demand all, and far more than all, to which it is entitled; those unenlightened individualists who, thinking to create a slave class, now find that democratic tendencies have made such wage slaves

into masters of destiny, must do their best to retrieve their mistake, and teach the lesson of true democracy. All classes or sections have their appointed gifts and duties; they are interdependent, and should be able to take advantage of all knowledge and opportunities. No section has a right to enslave the other, and as women are now to a great extent (and should be entirely) equally free, they should be equally responsible with men for the welfare of the community.

But until Labour understands and practises family prudence equally with all other sections of the community, it has no right to demand equal privileges. It is taking more than its share. Other classes restrict their numbers, pay all their own charges of maintenance and education, live, as far as the great middle class are concerned, temperate lives, and have no right, as at present, to be held responsible for those who are brought recklessly and improvi-

dently into existence, and then made a charge on the rest of the community. The world is narrowing; there are no great fields abroad open to the surplus population of our country. More and more we find that the surplus food resources all over the world are being needed by their own populations. And it is fully time that we here in Great Britain learned—the whole nation, not the more educated classes only—to cut our coat according to our cloth. And I am sure, from my own experience among them, that the working-classes are made as a whole of splendid fibre, and eagerly welcome the chance to make themselves independent of outside help, and to do the best for their few children. The reckless and really low type should be forced, if necessary, to conform to this ideal.

What has been wanting during these years when the middle and upper classes were controlling their own birth-rate was support and

encouragement by them of those who did their best to spread the same habit among the workers. Instead, every kind of opposition was met with. Employers, landed proprietors, Church and State, and all in authority, did their best to check the wide-spreading habit of parental prudence; and now that it is too late, many bewail the results as seen in the huge labour revolt and tyranny. On the other hand, the Socialists, who posed as the saviours of the masses, and who should have been the first to adopt and aid this reform, were no less active in denouncing it, on the supposed ground that there was no shortage of food, but only bad distribution. A more sinister and not always avowed cause was their desire to foster social revolution through the misery of the workers.



**SOME QUESTIONS AND ALSO
DOUBTS**

IV

SOME QUESTIONS AND ALSO DOUBTS

THE great bulwark of Labour in the past has been the Trade Unions, whose duty it has been to regulate and strive to increase wages for their members; to regulate and try to decrease the number of working hours of each wage-earner; and to decide on the conditions of apprenticeship. They acted as agent between the employer and the worker, in the interests of the worker, practically (though nominally acting on behalf of the worker) depriving each workman of a free market to sell his services, and depriving the workman's employer and community of the *best* services, because union conditions are regulated to suit the workmen of only average efficiency. No one can deny that *where the labour market is not overcrowded,*

and where men are given an incentive to make as much wages as they can, not only does the country benefit by greater and cheaper production of commodities, but it benefits by getting the fuller productive powers and applied genius of the best workers. Few will work their best without the incentive of reward; and when the reward is in direct relationship to the work turned out, the inducement is to increase both quality and quantity, thus benefiting the individual worker and the community (in which he is a member and buyer) at the same time.

Have the Trade Unions been able to raise wages during their long years of effort? The average workman used to think that if his wages were raised he would be better off, and that if his working hours were shortened it was all to the good. But gradually, and intensely so during the latter part of this war, the workman is beginning, with others, to realize the

difference between raising money wages and raising *real* wages. If, as this body of workers comes into the market to buy food, etc., with the extra wages received, it finds that gradually the prices rise to the point where the new wages will buy only as much as the old wages did, it learns in a practical way the meaning of an increase in *real* wages. Everyone is now rushing to inform the workers—already angry and puzzled by high prices and contradictory and confusing advice—that the only way to cheapen commodities is to increase their production. This is, of course, the truth. But truth is so often unpleasant, and sometimes dangerous, especially when the hearers have been taught a great deal of pleasant untruths, and find themselves baffled, disappointed, but *possessed of numbers and huge voting power*. If only, when Trade Unionism was in its infancy—*i.e.*, when the labour market was overcrowded, and discontent and hunger

forced the workers to fight for a "living wage" through organizing themselves into Trade Unions—some effort, honest and disinterested, could have pointed the right way *then* to the workers—viz., that it was their duty personally to keep up and increase wages by limiting the labour market to reasonable proportions—what misery might have been saved us all now.

During the years 1896 (about) to the beginning of the war in 1914 real wages had declined by about 15 per cent. And during this same period strikes were more and more prevalent, labour was increasingly represented in Parliament, and labour legislation of many kinds was introduced. Yet, despite all these efforts, wages fell as above mentioned—*i.e.*, while money wages remained about the same, prices rose some 15 per cent.

Two classes of labour at this time, and two only, constantly increased their wages, yet were possessed of no organization, and under-

took no agitation; they were always able privately to arrange good terms for themselves with their employers. These were domestic servants and boys. The latter were able, on leaving school, to get from ten to fifteen shillings per week, as against only four or five shillings per week a decade earlier, as they were suitable for managing small machines, or fulfilling a vast number of duties where it would not pay to employ the services of a man. This boy class has become increasingly valuable, probably through the falling birth-rate diminishing their numbers. Of domestic servants we need hardly speak, for the supply has lately never equalled the demand, and hence the enormously higher wages and better conditions.

During the war we have gradually seen that all other classes of workers—with their competing fellow-workers absorbed by war—were able to make extraordinarily good terms for themselves, and though these had still to be

made through their representatives, because of the unusual conditions of an unprepared and desperate nation having to get labour to help stem the threatened defeat and invasion, no terms were deemed too extortionate to pay.

One cannot, if one has common sense and no iron-bound prejudices in either direction, help feeling that demand and supply is the only true way of settling the question of labour value. Then, if labour can, by birth control, limit any particular market to the State where it is well paid, the unpleasant, inefficient methods and false values of labour as arranged by Trade Unions would never be needed. All that Trade Unions do is to see that no one is able to make separate or better terms, or offer better output than his fellows; the level is set, of course, to suit a medium worker only, and so the total output is lessened, and prices rise against the workers as well as everybody else. They "cut off their nose to spite their face,"

to use a vulgar proverb. And, as one listens to popular speakers on this subject of *equality*, one is aware of the virulent tone of class envy and distrust that underlies this desire. "We'd rather force all to perish than let the better endowed rise above their feeble (and envious) brethren," seems to be the attitude.

Trade Unions have been urged to put their theories to the test, and, instead of dictating to employers, to become employers themselves. But it is much easier to criticize than to perform, and no inducement seems able to get our stump orators to risk their own reputations by embarking in competitive production with their trusted workers, despite the large funds at their disposal and offers of outside support. As with Trade Unions, so, in a sense, it is with Socialism and the more revolutionary Syndicalism. The inspiring note is one of "envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness" of the other classes. The practical tendency is

to pull down all to the level of the feebler and less noble types, and there is a class consciousness and utter class selfishness about it which speaks ill for the future of the community as a whole—and of this class with it. The whole *spirit*, quite apart from the practical or unpractical nature of Socialism and Syndicalism, is narrow, and selfish, and unenlightened; it is like a moral cancer, destroying all community of interest and sympathy—and as such it is a danger to the State.

Whatever our views may be, if we are not blinded by any class prejudice, we must be convinced that it is better to level up than level down. If Labour will make itself—as it now can, and has a right and duty to do—an educated, independent body of workers, limited in numbers, but free agents, able through this limitation to stand before any employer or class of employers and make good terms for itself, then the levelling up will start,

and we shall begin to taste the joys and high possibilities of real democracy. Toil will be ennobled, and where it cannot but be irksome, or dangerous, or specially unpleasant, higher compensation will be able to rob it of its worst sting. The text that needs framing over every shop-door is: "Production of necessaries should be as high as possible, production of mouths limited." This makes for the aristocracy of labour, and for general well-being. Contrary to Socialistic teaching, all scientific research shows that Nature is not "beneficent." She is a brutal tyrant, breeding every form of life in vast numbers in order to preserve and improve the type by a revolting struggle for existence. If we had eyes to see and ears to hear, we could not but shudder as we take our walks through fields and woods, and by the pleasant lakes and streams, by the thousand evidences of this struggle for existence. "My life or thine," is the keynote among those

strugglers; the weak or badly equipped are soon killed or starved, and only a small percentage of the various forms of life survive any one season, unless the conditions are specially favourable. It is said that Nature is careful of the type, careless of the individual. To men alone, after a long period of civilization, has the truth come home that it is necessary to improve on Nature's method, if we would live, not like the plants and animals in one deathly struggle, but, by a conscious selection, preserve and improve our civilization. It is a part of our civilization that we live not only to ourselves, but that we co-operate and share and become to a certain extent responsible for the well-being of each other. Life is preserved as long as possible, no matter how senseless and unworthy of preservation, and no one is allowed to deprive another of life. And until recently there has been no question as to the rights of all individuals—no matter how

unsuitable, physically and economically—to reproduce themselves (and their defects) to any extent they wished. The results in this matter have been, and are, appalling. We have been increasing at far too rapid a rate, and chiefly from one end of society—the least useful and physically fit class. So long as we were able, as during the last fifty years, to import vast quantities of food at a cheap rate, and so long as our Colonies and America were able to absorb the unemployed surplus of our population, we were able to go on without being *forced* to consider the question of the “struggle for existence”; but surplus food is getting smaller for our importation, and colonization is only to a very small extent desired by former immigrating countries—and then only our better types of young men, who leave their own land when they are of an age and state to help it, leaving behind a disproportionate number of children and old people and

marriageable women. So it is high time we began to "cut our coat according to our cloth," and make a point of only "borning" such numbers as we are able to absorb into productive employment.

"Profiteering" is the latest and bitterest cry. "If only some (unknown) person or persons did not make and keep such enormous profits, there would be plenty of food and clothing, and prices would be cheap." But we did not hear of profiteering before the war, and may we not suggest that the two conditions (1) of real shortage of all necessaries, and (2) Government control and buying upsetting the ordinary competition, which is usually sufficient to prevent excessive profits to any extent, are the real causes both of high prices and excessive profits? Profiteering in a way benefits the community, because, as on board ship, when fearing famine through shipwreck or delay, the crew is put on short rations, and

so each life is preserved, though each person is somewhat hungry; in the same way the "profiteer" causes restraint in buying while there is a real shortage, and so makes for carefulness and economy, and the lasting out of commodities until the new supplies are in. Then his "profits"—he being a business man—are ready for helping to revive trade and industry, or for investing in Government loan to free the country of debt, and so benefiting Labour and the general community. How would it be possible to build new factories and fill them with machinery except from the profits of previous enterprise ?

It is the people who *spend*, not the people who make all they can and save and reinvest, who are the danger to a nation in times like the present. *Producers* and *savers* are the real guardians of society, and even though circumstances almost forced business men to become profiteers, they do not increase the

general shortage thereby. So they are not really of any harm to the community, and more often, as we see, of use.

In the same way, as a concession to Labour and a popular vote-catching expedient, the "excess profits" tax has its value. But in the end it will prove to hurt the workers instead of benefiting them, as all embargoes on thrift and the full reward of business enterprise tend to check such thrift and enterprise. Among the employers, as among the workers, freedom to enter into contracts and to enjoy the full benefits accruing to success is a necessary condition if full effort is to be encouraged.

In the end, when every attempt has been made to protect the worker in any class of the community, and to ensure his getting something from the community which his own efforts could not have won, we shall find that, by this artificial selection, this paying indifferent workmen more than they could get in the open

market, this trying to "equalize" wages for unequal production, if unchecked, will presently result in putting the nation out of the running with its competitors, and we shall go down together. Nietzsche's theory of "slave morality" is the keynote of present-day sentiment among sentimental people, but "a man's a man for a' that" of Burns is a far finer, nobler, and more "paying" idea for us all. But to reach it, to realize that character, and that a nation made up of individuals with character is the only road to salvation, we must teach the workers to raise themselves by their own individual effort to this standard. It can only be done by first attending to the question of birth control in their own class. Production (large), Reproduction (small), is the recipe for individual and national well-being.

**THE PERSONAL OR FAMILY
ASPECT OF BIRTH CONTROL**

V

THE PERSONAL OR FAMILY ASPECT OF BIRTH CONTROL

WHATEVER may be the opinion, from a political, national, or economic point of view, of birth control, there can be only one opinion from personal experience—viz., that it is the only practical and reliable way of introducing peace and prosperity to the working-man's home; and I have innumerable proofs that both the workman and his wife recognize this fact. While political tempests rage round labour demands, while Socialists and Trade Unionists urge this action or that on the part of Labour to improve its lot, the labourer himself can, if he will, improve his personal status, health, and comfort, by practising birth control and limiting his family within the bounds of decent

existence. The horrible revelations as to the mother's ill-health and struggle with poverty and semi-starvation which came to light through a publication of the Women's Co-operative Guild some time back in a book entitled "Maternity," and Mrs. Pember Reeves's two pamphlets, "Family Life on a Pound a Week" and "Round about a Pound a Week," give a few examples of what the painful struggle for life is where workpeople have a large and almost unlimited family to maintain. I say "almost unlimited" because very few people, save the doctors and midwives who work among them, have any idea of the amount of effort that is made by these over-driven mothers to rid themselves of a threatened increase in their families. Drugs of all kinds are purchased to assist them, and repeated attacks of lead-poisoning in a certain district showed how a simple plaster procured at the chemist's had been utilized to make a

child-destroying potion. Such is the desperate struggle to which mothers, worn out with families already too large for their health and means, are driven, through the lack of knowledge by which births are hygienically and legally* restricted. Not only is abortion illegal, but the attempts to bring it about, when unsuccessful, generally leave their injurious traces on both mother and child.

A working-man's wages, both before the war and now, rarely provide (in towns) for more than a couple of rooms, and from the point of view of both hygiene and decency not more than two children should be brought to share them. Even then, none but a capable and devoted wife and mother will make ends meet, and that bit over which spells home comfort to the family, within this narrow income and space. Every child after that means a further

* All attempts at birth control which cause pre-natal death are illegal.

subtraction of food, clothing, air, rest, and cleanliness from the entire family, a further addition of toil, ill-health, and anxiety to the parents, a greater temptation to give up the struggle and sink into pauperism, drunkenness, and loafing, even if not into actual crime.

The great percentage of all the crimes tried in our courts of law comes from the denizens of the slums and poorer tenements of our great cities. There conditions are so awful as to allow neither hope nor reality of any of life's good things to exist; where, neither by birth, nor training, nor environment, have the seeds of independence, honesty, personal pride, and ambition any chance of finding root and flourishing, seeds of an evil nature—despair, bitterness, jealousy, or, on the other hand, utter shiftlessness and indifference—are nourished, and bring forth fruits for the hospitals, the prisons, the lunatic asylums, the brothels, and the casual wards.

From such homes—if homes they can be called—are born the elements which rend civilization asunder. There can be no peace and content in domestic politics while a huge proletariat—having no interest, and taking no interest, in the general welfare—is yet able to paralyze trade and commerce through its unintelligent but powerfully engineered trade union and political votes. Apart from the political and economic aspect, too, humane considerations—the conviction that suffering humanity has a just call on the consideration of its more fortunate fellow-creatures—call for the relief and cure of the degrading poverty by which more than a third of the human race are afflicted.

If one goes into the poorest quarters of any large town—London, Liverpool, Glasgow (or, as I have seen lately in Greenock and Dumbarton)—particularly in the Roman Catholic quarters, the squalidity and discomfort are in

direct proportion to the huge numbers of children always swarming in the mean streets. If in any such street, or in any similar street of small houses tenanted by working-class couples, we could arrange to teach and persuade each such couple to limit their family to two children, the remarkable improvement in every way would soon be apparent. Let us imagine for a moment we have done so. The comparative quiet both inside and outside the houses is at once noticeable. The mothers, having now some chance to keep themselves tidy and their children well cared for, bear a look of conscious pride, hope, and independence singularly lacking among their more prolific neighbours. The homes are small but comfortable, the furniture still in good order, and safe from the dealer and pawnshop, where a larger family would have sent its choicest specimens. Milk for the children and meat for the parents are a regular and frequent part of their diet; and

both parents and children have best clothes in which they can take their holiday outings together. The mother, though busy, is not so over-tired and child-burdened as to lose her health and youthfulness; and the children are healthy, and a source of mutual delight and pride to both parents. In such a home drink, as a habit, has no place. *Hope*, the guiding star of humanity, shines bright on these birth-controlled homes; and by the personal effort and self-denial and prudence of the parents, the personal well-being of each member of the family is assured. Nor is this all; the mental and moral uplift of the man, due to his personal effort and personal success, is reflected in his character and work. He is unlikely to be affected by mob habits and mob stupidity into acting without thought. As he does not give way to drink, he has an unclouded mind to bring to the class problems that come before him. He is unlikely to be swayed towards the

specious *promises* of Socialism, because he knows of the *fulfilment* of individual effort, and tends to distrust the mass result, where the individuals which compose it are lacking in the qualities that make for success. All that this finer type of workman now needs is a better market for his labour. His improved health and intelligence, due to comfortable home conditions, tend to make him a better and more contented workman than others whose conditions at home are less favourable. But with the crowded labour market of ordinary times, and with the "ca' canny" policy of the Union-controlled workshops, the best workmen are often badly handicapped in their efforts to secure better wages for better work. The direct effect of a less crowded labour market which could soon obtain, if labour output were limited in numbers rather than commodities produced, would soon render Union restrictions needless. In such a limited market men

individually could make good terms for themselves, and, within the workshop, easily find their natural level, without antagonizing their fellow-workmen. If there were plenty of jobs at good wages, and with room for ability to be appreciated and rise, there would be an end of strikes and lessened output, and the limiting of individual ambition through Union restrictions, together with a contentment and spirit of good-fellowship now conspicuously lacking. Wages would go up automatically through supply and demand, just as we have seen them doing in the case of the totally unorganized domestic servants. Men everywhere are uncomfortable and discontented, yet do not know where to put the blame, nor how to improve their conditions. So they do as they are told by their Union and political leaders, though, from past experience, I believe the majority of them feel no confidence in the good results they are told to expect. But I believe, if,

as has been done in a limited way already in working-class districts, men and women everywhere were given help and encouragement to begin their salvation at home, by their own efforts, none but a small and worthless minority would hesitate to avail themselves of such aid. The recalcitrant minority, or those discouraged by their churches from joining this material redemption, could be compelled either by law or public opinion to come into line.

Encouragement and education is all that is needed, though, for this great work of reform; and if every one of the agencies now at work in stemming the miserable *results* of a too-rapidly increasing birth-rate would unite in the *prevention* of poverty to which such high birth-rates as we find among the working-classes give rise, I am sure (and I have excellent justification for my belief) that in from ten to twenty years from now degrading poverty would cease to exist.

Of the moral aspect of the question, too, it is necessary to say a few words. At a Socialist meeting in Germany a few years ago, met to combat the practice of family limitation, the audience howled down the anti-birth-control speakers, and several members got up and testified that the overcrowding and poverty caused by large families was the principal cause of prostitution; inasmuch as the herding of boys and girls together gave rise to promiscuity, and forced the girls eventually on to the streets. They also declared that birth control was the best hope of the working-classes.

Apart from the interest that the above has in showing that a humanitarian and rational spirit was alive in imperialistic Germany, there is no doubt that here also, as in all other civilized countries, the great root cause of prostitution is poverty. Again, on the other hand, poverty, or the fear of it, keeps men from marrying early in life; they create a market for

prostitution by expending on the prostitute the money which should have helped maintain a wife and home. But the reason is that, in the ordinary way, a wife implies a family, and it is the latter which causes a man to prefer the occasional expense of immoral relations than face the certain poverty which a family brings to him before he is solidly established in life. Though this habit of thought and act refers more to the classes above the workman's level, yet it applies to the latter also to a certain extent. But the knowledge of birth control would enable a young couple to marry early and live contentedly while adding to their home and saving for the children they hoped to have later. There is no reason at all why a young wife should not continue her trade or profession after marriage if each so desired, in order the better to be prepared for the future. No objection was made to this plan of employing married

women during the war, when labour was scarce, and no objection could be made now, save that of overcrowding the labour market. In this matter those who practised birth control would have a right to protest against those parents with large families who objected to the employment of unencumbered married women. There are few normal men and women who do not love children, and do not hope to become parents in their turn. But, as a whole, the children born of parents before the age of twenty-five are less strong and intelligent than those born from twenty-five to thirty or thirty-five years of age. And so, while many young people might be happier and healthier for being married soon after twenty—especially in the labouring classes—they will do well to wait a few years for their offspring.

It is urged by some opponents that the knowledge of birth control will put a great

power in the hands of immorally inclined young people. But it can scarcely be argued that this boon to humanity should be withheld in order that a small minority of evildoers should be enabled to sin without being found out. The probability is that were they inclined to "sin" they would do so, "preventives" being accessible or not; and the same argument might be applied to every new blessing that Science has brought to our use. "The greatest happiness of the greatest number" must be considered first, and for the foolish minority we must rely on education and the stern eye of an enlightened public opinion.

So one may safely say that from every point of view, so far as we have considered it, but especially from the family point of view, birth control has made out a strong case for itself. As I said before, one of the reasons that has prevented educated people from passing on

the knowledge to their poorer neighbours has been the secret fear that *nationally* they were themselves acting wrongly, while personally they felt it to be prudent and right. In the concluding chapter I should like to touch on this national aspect of birth control.

**THE NATIONAL AND INTER-
NATIONAL STANDPOINT**

VI

THE NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL STANDPOINT

AN argument that is frequently brought forward touching the question of birth control in its national and international aspects is that so soon as the labour market in our country was eased by the general limitation of families, the importation or immigration of cheap labour from abroad would soon bring it back to the old crowded and cheap state. That has been true in the past and there is no doubt that there are many overcrowded countries which would still be glad to send us their surplus populations in the same way that we in our turn have sent off (or allowed to emigrate) our better types of young men in order to ease our own labour market.

This only shows how important it is that all nations should unite in furthering birth control and making it a question of prime national importance. Until this is done it is impossible to avoid international jealousies and the difficulties caused by different racial or national standards of living within any nation. It also makes it difficult to set a national standard of increase of population which will keep the labour market adjusted to meet supply and demand in an efficient manner. It is not a good custom which forces our nation to part with our young trained men and at the same time to overfill our labour market with men and women from other countries who have a lower standard of life than our own labouring class. It would seem better at this stage of the world's progress in population and limited colonizing possibilities that each nation should cut its national coat according to its national cloth, and solve the

population and unemployment problems within its own borders. The time was when our Colonies and America welcomed our emigrants, but, as their own populations increased, great restrictions were gradually placed on the quality, and thereby the quantity, of immigrants; and the main result now is to impoverish the country they leave. Domestic servants, virile men, grown boys from such institutions as Barnardo's Homes (maintained by the home country), skilled agriculturists or miners, or men with capital, are the type of people our nation bleeds itself of to the constant detriment of the nation, since these emigrants are of an age to become productive to the country which has borne the expense of raising them, and their going leaves a sad disproportion of unproductive old men, women, and children.

Now that the knowledge of birth control is at the service of the State, it should be as easy to regulate the proportion between

consumers and producers as it is to regulate one's expenditure to one's income. And, since this knowledge is now almost universal, since practically all European and Western countries register a falling birth-rate, and Eastern nations are beginning to be interested in its possibilities, it only requires that the principles and practice should be taught and encouraged still further to remove the most dangerous and certain cause of international strife. If the great mass of the people in any nation can comfortably maintain themselves within their own domain, there will be little tendency on their part to provoke or further wars for merely political aggrandizement, and since all nations would be equally interested in maintaining peace any would-be aggressor would be quickly put back in his place. Civilization tends to promote the habits and love of peace, and superabundant energies can still find plenty of room for their exercise in

the more daring pursuits of national enterprise. Science will probably give more and more opportunities for adventure and thrill, while administering to the welfare instead of to the destruction of mankind.

The worldwide adoption of birth control would tend to change gradually the armed camp of our former civilization into a worldwide federation of common interests. The battlefield would more and more become one of brains and physical prowess in the pursuit of useful and wonderful achievements—a sort of intellectual Marathon, in which, while one or other nation could claim the victor, the whole world could enjoy the fruits of the special victory. Science, bringing rest, comfort, and abundance to all mankind, setting ever higher tasks for her clever children, and teaching the value of truth and honesty in every endeavour, should be the sure guide and international arbiter for the future.

There are many of us now who know that war is bound to come again unless this lesson of worldwide family prudence is acted on. Labour is now too wideawake in its own interests—watched over and nursed and prompted, as it is, by those who feel that constant rebellion and strikes are the way to labour (and bureaucratic) salvation—to go on peacefully in the old submissive way. So soon as conditions in the labour world become uncomfortable, and poverty is keenly felt, not only does labour strike in its own country, but there is a strong tendency to band with the labour of other European and Western countries and form an international solidarity of labour—a vast body of class interests whose political power can force the rest of the world to its feet. But political power does not take the place of production; it can only force a larger share to itself, while raising public opinion and counter class feeling against it.

by its selfishness and want of fair play. And, as we see at present, the military war between nations, at last settled, is being replaced by the labour war against society as a whole. The same cause will give rise to the same effect. The struggle for existence is the war that never ceases among all sentient life. The very formation of society—of family, tribe, nation—was only a kind of “trade union” organization of individuals united so as better to defend themselves in the common struggle for existence against all other groups or nations. Man is first and foremost an animal, struggling to maintain himself and increase his security. Self-preservation is the keynote of his aims, and to this end all his efforts at organization are directed, whether he fights as an aboriginal hunter, having only himself to look to for means to live, or whether he be a unit in a vast agglomeration of similar strugglers in the workshops

of civilization. The end is the same. He will live if he can. If another—man or beast, class or nation—be in the way, fight he will. No question of mercy or self-sacrifice, of class or creed, will prevent the hungry man from fighting to overcome the one who would snatch the bread of life from him. No international bond, no feeling of national unity and brotherhood, will avail over the desire to live. War is inevitable in one form or another unless the struggle for existence can be overcome.

It has been part of our creed in the past that we should increase rapidly in order to furnish the numbers for the inevitable wars. This policy was excusable to some extent when it was seen that a military and ambitious nation like Germany was increasing at the rate of a million a year, and when it was thought that a high birth-rate meant a correspondingly high rate of increase. And ancient tradition is difficult to kill. But had our statesmen studied

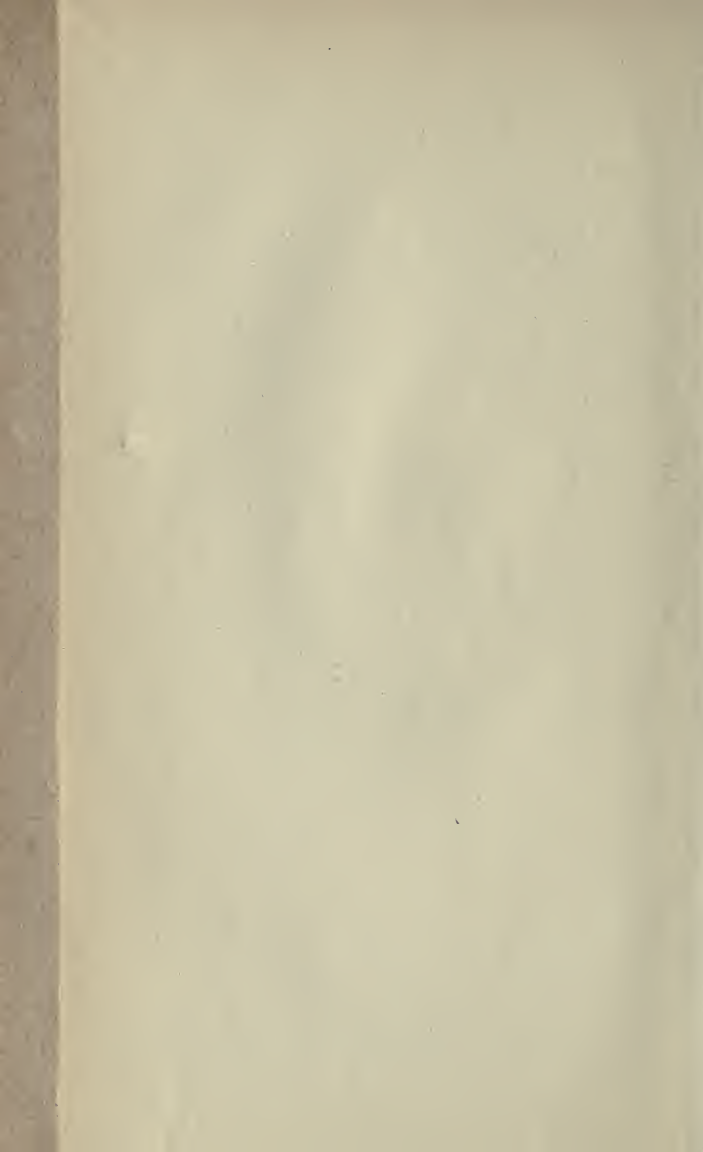
statistics with as clear judgment as Germany did, they would have found that, in an old and overcrowded country like ours, the means of existence never kept pace with the rate of increase of numbers. In the poorest quarters of large towns children died in infancy, or, worse still, suffered and died before reaching adult years—often to the extent of half those born—a cost to the State, and a source of ill-being to their parents and brothers and sisters. For, where families are so large as to be brought up in a state of semi-starvation and misery, not only do a large number eventually die, but while they live, they are a source of still further starvation to the rest of the family. Since the fall in the birth-rate of the middle and upper classes began to make itself felt, the death-rate among the poorer classes has gradually decreased, and this, with the higher birth-rate of the labouring class (as compared with other classes) has

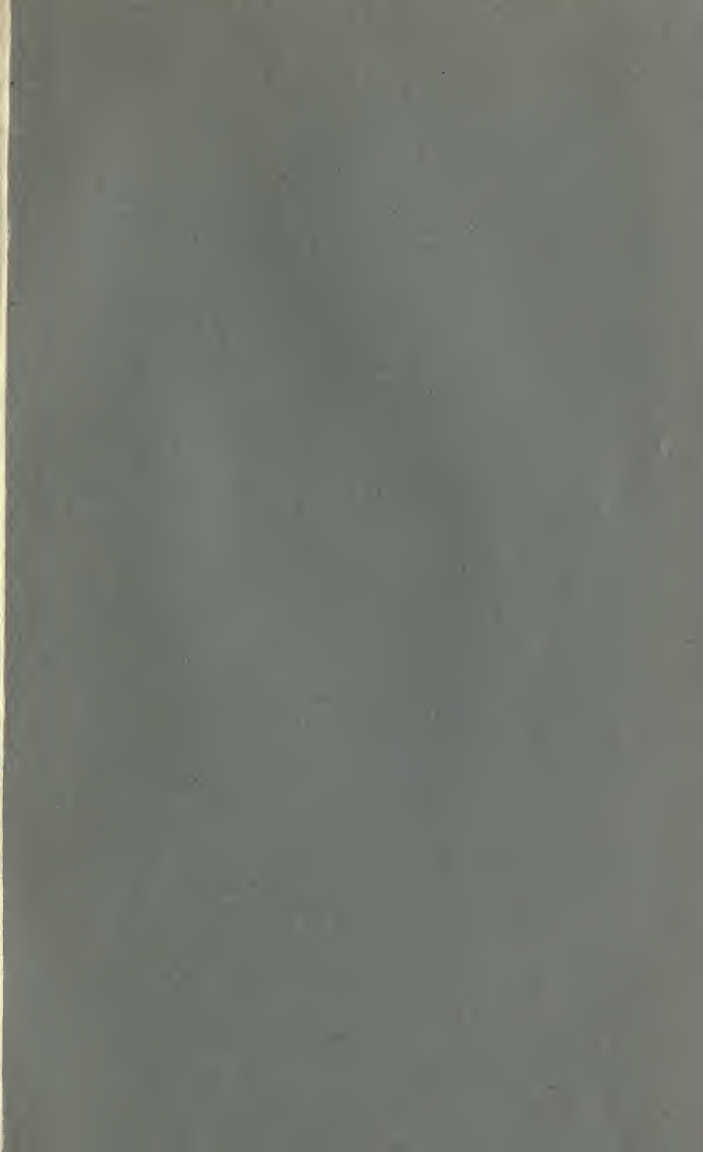
resulted in a higher survival rate in this class. We must not forget, however, that the fall of the birth-rate in the socially higher classes has enabled them to be taxed to an increasing extent for the support and education of the children of the poor. Class organization and the almost universal suffrage of the men has gradually placed the working-classes in a position of immense power. The unforeseen conditions of war enhanced this strong position, so that, relatively to other classes, they have now what might be called the "whip hand." Education and enlightened self-interest alone can show them that to use this tyrannically will only end in lessening their own prosperity by reducing the efficiency and so injuring the prosperity of the country as a whole.

Since their class interests are now so strongly entrenched, and their political power is so great, all that yet remains to ensure future well-being is to improve their individual value

in the labour market, and their personal condition in the home by adopting the principles of birth control—the practice of which has done so much already to improve the physical and economic condition of the rest of the nation.

And, just as among individuals, peace of mind and good-fellowship can exist best in an atmosphere of economic security, so among classes in the nation, and among nations in the great commonwealth of civilization, peace will follow plenty, and wars be a thing of past barbarism and that struggle for existence which is now overcome.





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