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Rapport sur les Causes Economiques de la Depopulation. by M. Alfred Neymarek

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rates" of wages and profits "have been fixed without any reference to what may meanwhile be called" their "amounts." Neither of these two statements would, we are confident, command the assent of the informed instructed student of contemporary economics. He would find in the conceptions we have noticed the indispensable key to the riddle which Mr. Robertson allows to puzzle him, and then seeks a violent, unnecessary solution. L.L.P.

V.—*Rapport sur les Causes Economiques de la Dépopulation.* Par M. Alfred Neymarck. (Commission de la Dépopulation. Sous-Commission de la Natalité.) 31 pp. Melun, 1905.

M. Neymarck commences by claiming for France that it is the country in which careful economy is the most pronounced. He then proceeds to give a historical study of the population movements of France. According to M. Goldstein, before 1870 every effort of the State tended towards reducing the population. M. Dunoyer, the préfet de l'Allier in 1831 and de la Somme in 1833, recommended that succour to married people should be limited to them and to one child, "so that the succour should not be an occasion of profit."

M. Neymarck then proceeds to the seven considerations which form the subject of his thesis: (1.) *The more civilisation develops and the greater the progress of a country, the more the birth-rate tends to decrease.*—Ireland is unfortunately given as an illustration on this point; but it has recently been shown in this Journal that there is no decrease of fertility in that country.

(2.) *The cost of living and the increase of wants.*—The distinction between these two points is not made sufficiently clear, but it is notorious that the "cost of living" has declined,³ though the standard of requirements has greatly increased. "Telle jouissance qui est luxe pour le père, devient habitude pour le fils et besoin pour les petits-fils." The "ambitions de toilettes" are cited as being particularly important in this connection.

(3.) *The desire for greater well-being.*—The richest parts of France have the lowest birth-rate.

(4.) *The parents' desire to improve the position of their children.*—This puts a limit on the number of children.

(5.) *The influence of periods of prosperity and adversity.*—The evidence of this influence is difficult to determine.

(6.) *The lowering of the interest on capital.*—This has produced the "crise du revenu" and "crise de la dot," which is one of the great causes of the declining birth-rate in France. It is necessary to put away double the amount of capital that was required thirty years ago to obtain a given amount of income; and as "on ne vit pas avec son capital mais avec son revenu," the necessity for a reduced family has forced itself upon the careful parent! As M. E. Cheysson puts it, "il mesure sa progéniture à la hauteur de son égoïsme." As

³ On this point M. Neymark waxes eloquent on the increasing fiscal charges and the expanding "flore fiscale" which develops and increases year by year. He also speaks of progressively increasing budgets, though exact comparative figures are not given.

the income derived from capital has become halved, so likewise has the number of children per family become halved.

In ascribing the fall of the French birth-rate to the above cause, M. Neymarck alludes to the doubt as to the international applicability of his explanation. He affirms that neither in Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, nor in the United States, has the revenue from capital fallen so low as in France, largely owing to the fact that the French wish for absolute security in their investments, and will not risk their money in concerns which would bring a higher rate of interest.

(7.) *The increase of "féminisme."*—The "active" female population is as numerous, if not more numerous, than the "active" male population of France. This leads to a voluntary control of the birth-rate. This voluntary control is the undoubted means lying behind all the economic causes mentioned above. As Dr. Richet puts it, "*nous savons tous parfaitement que le hasard n'y est pour rien : c'est la volonté même des parents qui détermine le nombre de leurs enfants.*" Returning to the economic factors, M. Neymarck quotes with approval M. E. Levasseur, who says: "those who desire to increase the population of France should remove all the obstacles to the free entry of cheap foods; for if they wish that the population of France should increase on its own territory, which at present does not suffice to feed the present population, it is necessary to avoid anything which increases the price of foreign food." Here again we see the difficulties of forming valid conclusions when too "parochial" a view is taken. England with free imports is following rapidly in the path of France, and in Australasia even further progress has been made in the same path of declining birth-rate. A.N.

VI.—*Rapport sur les Causes Professionnelles de Dépopulation.* Par M. Lucien March. (Commission de la Dépopulation. Sous-Commission de la Natalité.) 136 pp. Melun, 1905.

M. March divides his research into two parts: (1) Influence of occupation on the marriage and birth-rates and on the size of families; (2) Changes in means of production, machinery, displacement of workmen, rest.

Under the first head he deals first with the employment of women, and comes to the important conclusion that, comparing the French populations in 1866 and 1896, there is nothing to justify the conclusion that, taking the whole of the "active" population together, the proportion of women in it has increased. He then attempts to make a comparison as regards the employment of women in other countries than France; but this is very difficult owing to insufficiency of detail and non-conformity of classifications. Taking ten main groups of industries, the number of women to 100 men was 25 in Germany, 33 in Belgium, and 51 in France. The excess in France over Germany is mainly due to the greater development of its silk industry, which occupies women to the number of two and a-half times the number of men, and to the corresponding excess of women who are engaged in dressmaking and allied industries.