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Race Hygiene in Germany

The semi-official "Deutsche Zentralstelle für Volkswohlfahrt," corresponding to the United Charities in America, held a three days' meeting in the parliament in Berlin from October 26 to 28, 1915, with about 1,000 delegates attending. The conference was called "Tagung für die Erhaltung und Mehrung der deutschen Volkskraft," with the purpose to find ways and means against the evil consequences of war and modern civilization which menace the vitality of the race. The war kills the best, the bravest, the healthiest, eradicating once for all the finest strains in the race; and city life with all its attendances causes a declining birth rate. The discussion was marked by a unanimity seldom seen in such a large audience. The dominating undertone was race hygiene. Whereas eugenics in America has a restrictive tendency, seeking to check the propagation of the unfit, race hygiene in Germany always was a positive conception aiming at the multiplication of the fit. Thus the conference laid much stress upon everything which may elevate the birth rate of the best in the nation, but thought the introduction of sterilization of defectives or of marriage certificates untimely as yet. Simplicity in customs and mode of life, a full understanding of individual duty towards society, a high valuation of family life, inner colonization ("back to the farm" movement), the system of one-family houses, garden cities, and chiefly the assistance of large healthy families in every way; these were the main remedies proposed, the details of which were fully discussed but cannot be enumerated in a short review. A standing committee representing all societies concerned is now in formation with the view to see the propositions worked out in practice.

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An Important Character in Grains

Certain varieties of wheats, oats and barleys are characterized by fragile articulations, so that the ripe grains easily fall from the head, thus causing a considerable loss of grain before threshing. In crosses, such a defect not infrequently manifests itself, and it would be of great advantage to the breeder to know how to avoid it. G. von Ubisch has been investigating this character in barley and states his conclusion in the *Zeitschrift für induktive Abstammungs- und Vererbungslehre*, July, 1915, that it depends on two Mendelian factors, both of which must be present to produce this effect. If his conclusions are sustained, they will be of great value to breeders of cereals.