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## EDITORIAL DEPARTMENT

SOUTHERN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION  
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### RACE SUICIDE, ANCIENT AND MODERN

In 1909, the Obstetrical Society of France made the declaration that according to the most recent statistics of maternity hospitals in the great cities of that country, one-third of the children conceived were destroyed by abortion.

#### GREEK AND ROMAN IDEA OF MARRIAGE

As Dr. Sedley L. Ware, of the University of the South, Sewanee, Tenn., says, with the ancients, woman was either an instrument of lust, or at best, a relaxation from business and domestic cares. The best educated women of the Greeks and Romans were generally courtesans. The part a decent woman had to play in the world was propagator of the species and guardian of the nursery. As long as the old belief in the Lares and Penates, who guarded the hearth, lasted, it was imperative for every Greek and every Roman to have heirs who could sacrifice to the family gods. To die childless was to extinguish the family worship as well as the family name. No greater calamity could befall a man than lack of heirs. With the

corruption and fall of the Greek Republics, with the incorporation within the Roman State of a vast empire of many races and many religions, both Greeks and Romans ceased to believe in, and honor, the family.

The influence upon family life was simply withering. At best, marriage among the Pagan ancients was somewhat animal-like in its conception. Betrothal of the bride took place at so early an age that there could be no question of marital love in our sense of the term but only of a mating based upon expediency. Love marriages were few, and took place only with widows or with divorced women. When the Greeks and Romans became corrupted skeptics, the mating, robbed of its solemnity and sacred character, was merely repulsive. The philosopher, Seneca, who died in the year 65 of our era, gives this advice to the wise man:

"Love thy wife with thy head, not with thy heart, for nothing is more hateful than to love one's wife as one loves one's mistress."

Rome's decline is to be traced to this decline in family life. Women would no longer submit to the burdens and responsibility of child-bearing. All the arts of birth-prevention, including abortion, were freely practiced, not principally among fashionable women, as we see them today, but among the lowest classes of Romans. They, too, no longer had any real family life. The emperors, to make their despotism acceptable, fed the masses upon bread and amused them with shows. The sexual instincts, which the poor today gratify with their lawful wives, the poor at that time could gratify with a vast swarming class of prostitutes who, as one historian puts it, "were direfully inexpensive." Thus the old Romans literally committed race suicide. It was not that the sturdy and prolific German barbarians invaded and conquered Rome, but

that Rome kept up her population by importing the barbarians in greater and greater numbers, until the Germans took possession of their master's house.

#### POPULATION IN THE MIDDLE AGES

There could be no question of race suicide or birth-control on a vast scale in the Middle Ages. As the ascetic and celibate life was the most perfect form of Christian life, hundreds of thousands of both sexes adopted the monastic life, and the secular clergy (men who were forbidden to marry) comprised many thousands more. But above all, the terrible famines, made so devastating by lack of transportation, as in Russia today; the awful feudal and private wars; the serfdom and the economic misery of the masses, kept population well-nigh stationary in all countries.

#### ENGLISH POPULATION

With the rise of the great industrial and mechanical revolution in England in the latter half of the Eighteenth Century, the pressure of population upon subsistence (England doubled her population in fifty years) became the question of the day. The Reverend Robert Malthus, a clergyman of the Church of England, wrote, in 1798, the first edition of his famous book, "An Essay on the Principle of Population as It Affects the Future Improvement of Society." Malthus said that wars, famines, misery and vice did at any rate some good, in that they checked the excessive growth of population. Population grew in geometrical ratio, while the food supply increased in arithmetical ratio. There was no question of birth-control in this edition of his book. In a later edition, after many misgivings for fear of being misunderstood, Malthus said that if the working classes did not practice some form of "moral restraint" they could

never hope to better their condition, their wages and their standards of life.

Economists seized upon this, enlarged and distorted it, and spoke of a fixed law of wages which could never be increased, — Carlyle's "Dismal Science." Then finally came a school of sociologists and economists with John Stuart Mill, Annie Besant, and others at its head, who have founded what is called "Neo-Malthusianism."

In England in very recent years (and doubtless today) literature and "rubber goods" for birth-control were found everywhere openly displayed in shop windows. Neo-Malthusianism has made tremendous strides, in France in particular, in comparatively recent years. Birth-control is more or less under the protection of the state in Holland and in Japan. In the United States to disseminate information upon the subject is punishable by imprisonment. Abortion is not included under the term birth-control, as it is commonly used.

#### POPULATION IN FRANCE

Mr. Herbert Adams Gibbons in his recent book, "France and Ourselves," makes the following statement:

"Mr. Paul Bureau, of the Catholic University of Paris, declares that unless there is a sudden and sweeping change in the demographic charts, the French nation is doomed to destruction. The famous Dr. Bertillon, who has worked for twenty years to arouse the French to the breakers ahead, insists that the crisis is of recent origin. From 1856-1866, France averaged one million births a year. In proportion to other countries she ought to have had 1,400,000. From 1867-1888, the annual increase fluctuated between one million and 900,000. The fall in the succeeding decades of the Third Republic was rapid,—800,000, 700,000, 600,000.

"We are falling behind now about 500,000 births per year in proportion to other countries," says Dr. Bertillon. "Our death-rate is increasing: each year 300,000 above fifty years are dying. If the birth-rate continues to fall in the same degree, in eighty years there will be no France. Reducing the infant mortality is a drop in the bucket. In 1913, only 33,000 babies died. The best of care and skill could hardly have saved a quarter of these. The only remedy for France is to have as many births as other nations."

Hersch, Professor of Statistics in the University of Geneva, thinks Dr. Bertillon guilty of exaggeration. He points out that if the French could only lower their death-rate to that of the Germans, France would have 82,270 more inhabitants every year. Better still, if France could lower her death-rate to that of England, she would add 176,000 people yearly to her numbers, and in eight or ten years get back the million and a half men she lost in the war.

Professor Hersch says that the lowering of the percentage of births is an absolutely universal phenomenon: that France need not fear an enormous German natality. He takes the German kingdom of Saxony and shows that in 1896 that country had 40 births per 1000 inhabitants. In 1913, the Saxon birth-rate had fallen to 24.8 per thousand. It took France a century to attain such a fall. That Neo-Malthusianism has apparently spread to the United States is shown by the fact that the birth-rate in New England today is actually lower than that in France.

France is said to be a country of bachelors. Just before the World War, M. Klotz, a French cabinet minister, estimated the number of bachelors over thirty years of age in France at 1,350,000. It is this French old bachelor class who are perpetually chasing young women in the streets, and have made French towns unsafe for decent girls.

"It is a rule of nature," says Montesquieu, "that the fewer the marriages in a country, the more corrupt married life is apt to be. The fewer married people there are, the less faithful married people are to each other, for the more thieves there are the more thefts are apt to be committed."

Abortion has been condemned so far and wide that little remains to be said against it. The chief argument is that the prevention of abortion is a part of preventive medicine. A large number of abortions result in serious illness to the wo-

men. It is said that in this country the well to do woman can purchase what information she wishes regarding contraceptive measures, and that this information is inaccessible only to the poor. Certainly contraceptive "instruments" may be purchased fairly readily, and are frequently taken from house to house by agents.

The question of death-rate is one upon which the doctors may take their stand. Infant mortality is something which they can control, under favorable circumstances, as they can nothing else with which they deal. Infant mortality is dependent to a very great extent upon prenatal care of the mother, education of the mother, and preventive work with the child from the time it is born. To say that 83,000 babies die in any country in a year and that the best of care and skill could hardly have saved a quarter of these, and to pass this over as unimportant, shows a cynicism not warranted by public health work and preventive medicine of today.

### THE MENACE OF THE "CHIRO-QUACK-TORS"

*Leslie's Weekly* deserves the gratitude of the public as well as of the medical profession for its exposition of the "chiro-quacktic" fraud. It had the courage to publish, in a series of four articles by Severance Johnson, some facts regarding "chiroquacktic" methods that should be known to the hundreds of thousands of sufferers who have been duped by this widespread form of charlatanism.

Mr. Johnson shows that chiropraxis was born of quackery, its first exponent having been a "mesmeric healer," one D. D. Palmer, of Davenport, Iowa. This man's son, B. J. Palmer, has made Davenport infamous by establishing there the greatest school of humbuggery that ex-