

FORD HALL FOLKS

A MAGAZINE OF NEIGHBORLINESS

EDITED BY THOMAS DREIER

Entered as Second-Class Matter October 18, 1914, at the Post Office at Boston, Mass., under the Act of March 3, 1879.

VOLUME IV NUMBER 10

DECEMBER 19, 1915

PRICE FIVE CENTS

SHALL BIRTH CONTROL BE DISCUSSED?*

BY NORMAN HAPGOOD

It is to the audience that first honors of this "Birth Control" meeting should be awarded. Not even Mr. Hapgood's address, thoughtful, earnest and arresting though it was, nor Dr. Eliza Taylor Ransom's deeply sincere contribution, out of the depths of her own life experience, to the wisdom of the evening, was so marvellous, so impressive a thing as the essential decency of these men and women who attend Ford Hall as reflected in the questions they asked concerning this most difficult and delicate of subjects. Of course there was nervous tension in the crowd, this, and not mirth, it was which occasioned the somewhat hysterical reception of the first question or two. But, after that, the Ford Hall Folks struck their gait and demonstrated a reverence for consecrated Motherhood no less noble than that which inspired the wonderful Rauschenbush prayer with which the meeting opened.



LECTOR HUGO prefaces one of his books with the statement: "This book is more than a fact; it is a necessity." I think that is the case with our subject tonight. We are discussing it because it is unavoidable. It is a great economic fact. I am not approaching it as a Socialist. The pressure of population, the question of subsistence, which are the great questions of our day, do not give us any choice. We must face it.

This era, like every era, has its own big dream. We are making our poetry, and our

religion out of our dream of some day abolishing poverty. We believe that some day everybody in this world may be relieved of the grinding kind of poverty, that it will be possible for everybody to have sufficient clothing, sufficient food, sufficient shelter, sufficient

leisure, sufficient time to read and to realize something of the things that illumine existence. Some of us believe that this abolition of poverty is absolutely impossible until human beings are allowed to exercise choice in one of the things that do most to determine economic conditions in the family—the birth rate.

We cannot approach this subject from the old-fashioned standpoint of abstract morals, independent of economic and social conditions. We must consider it in terms of our own environment. We must remember that the greatest moral Book in existence was written under very different conditions. Moses had an advantage over us today. When he looked about him and decided that such and such things were good for the children of Israel, all he had to do was to go away for a little while, and reappear with the statement that the Lord said so and so unto

Moses. That was all there was to it. Among the things urged by the Bible as a duty is that of populating the earth. Under the conditions of those days that was sound advice. The Israelites had a large and thinly populated country, ready to be tilled, subject to incursions from the surrounding barbarians. Speaking in terms of the Israelites' environment, it was a duty to multiply. Speaking in terms of the United States of 1915, it may not be.

There is an amazing amount of superstition on the subject of population. It is generally held that a country which is increasing in population must be full of all the greatest human virtues, and that a country which has a stationary birth rate must be on the decline. I have asked many people what grounds they had for maintaining this view; none of them has been able to give any reason. Yet you find the idea prevalent everywhere. If this war could teach us anything, it ought to have taught us the invalidity of such a view. We have all been filled with admiration for the splendid deeds of France; and yet we have been accustomed to regard her as a declining nation because her birth rate was declining. She has shown herself not only the least vicious of the nations, but she has shown that she possesses the early primitive virtues that come into being when a nation is facing a death struggle such as she is facing now.

If we will look at this question without superstition, we will see that there are a number of distinctions that we will want to make at once. For instance, what is a large family? We have come to estimate a family's size by the number of children who are born into it. A more sensible way to estimate it would be by the number of children who grow up in it. One woman may have twelve children, of whom three live to the age of ten years; and another woman may have only three children, all of whom live to the age of ten years. The second woman at the end of the ten years has as large a family as the first, and at far less cost to herself, the family and the children themselves.

Let us consider for a moment how the ordinary working man's family lives. We sometimes speak of the work of the mother as an evil only when she is taken out of the home and away from her children to work

in a shop or factory and subjected to the nervous strain of machinery, until just before her child is born, and returns too soon afterward. Suppose she does not go into the shop, but remains at home to do all the work of caring for the children, washing, ironing, scrubbing, and all the heavy tasks of the household. The strain of that labor is equally deteriorating to her physical health and that of her unborn child. If the best possible children are to be born into the world, it is clear that the mother must have the opportunity to lay up her strength.

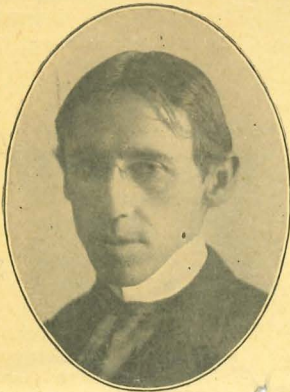
Then there is the relation of the later born children to the earlier ones. The first child receives the best care, and usually is allowed to live the best possible life for a working man's child. There is another. Conditions are about the same, and so with the third. But if there are later children they are not only handicapped because they are born of a worn-out mother, but they crowd in on the earlier children. There is less sleeping room, less food, less care for the first, second and third child.

The Rich Already Have Birth Control.

Let us take another picture, for the sake of fairness. Imagine another home on Fifth Avenue, or near it. This family has far more income than it needs. Life is made up of a great mass of cumbersome devices provided and operated by many people that the husband and wife may be comfortable. You find many of these families childless, many with one child or two, some with three or four. These people with, say, an income of \$150,000 a year, and with a spacious house, could have a family as large as nature permits without overtaxing their resources. Yet they do not want children. It would interfere with their plans. It would involve a little physical pain. It would not leave them free to be entirely and completely useless. Surely there is no more awful picture than that.

Logically, that does not come into our problem. These people already have birth control. We can change the laws as much as we please, but it does not effect them. They already know how. We leave them free to limit the size of their families as they please, and deny the same freedom to the only classes that have real need of limitation.

*Speech and questions and answers reported by Sara H. Birchall.



Our laws are almost barbaric on this subject. I have a friend in the United States Court. The laws in the district to which I refer make it a crime for a druggist to sell certain devices for the prevention of conception.

"What do you do in such cases?" I asked him.

"Well," he said, "if I find a druggist living within two blocks of Fifth Avenue I exact a pretty heavy penalty; but if I find a druggist living over on the East Side, I say 'Good boy, go to it.'"

Of course there are certain dangers connected with any reform. It would be a very foolish thing to make a campaign of this kind to put mechanical devices into the hands of the people without proper advice. People taking advantage of methods of this kind ought to be in close consultation with a physician. Handled ignorantly, it may result seriously. There is another real difficulty. The time at which regulation takes place is a very important thing. Regulation of this process at one period of a woman's life is entirely different from that at another. It seems to be agreed among physicians that if a check is put upon the process of nature at the beginning of a woman's sex life it is likely to result in barrenness the rest of her life. The best time is after two or three children have been born, or when the family seems as large as it should justly be.

Concerning the Families of College Bred Women.

Now there is another line of thought that bothers a good many people rather unnecessarily. It is that education and high standards of living will have a tendency to lower the birth rate. It is feared that women who go to college and become reflective thinking animals instead of helpless pawns on Nature's chessboard will be unwilling to have a good sized family. Statistics, so far as we can gather them, do not bear this out. The college-bred woman, again, is often selected to contrast with the average woman. That is misleading. The college-bred woman should be compared only with the non-college-bred woman in the same economic circumstances. Bryn Mawr graduates, for instance, during a fair period of test subsequent to graduation have averaged 2.7 children each. I believe that while the college-bred women of the last generation over-emphasized this new right of liberty and freedom of choice too much, as we are apt to over-emphasize a new idea when we first seize it, the college-bred women of the next generation, realizing the glory of giving and the honor of being builders of the race, will show a decidedly higher birth rate.

Let me quote some statistics bearing on mortality in the working man's family. These are from the Children's Bureau at Washington, presided over by Miss Lathrop.

In families having an income of under \$625 a year, 213 per 1,000. In families having an income of under \$899 a year, 122 per 1,000. In families having an income of over \$900 a year, 96 per 1,000.

Families with one and two children have a mortality of 108½ per 1,000. Families with three and four children, 126 per 1,000. Families with five and six children, 152 per 1,000. Families with seven and eight children, 176 per 1,000. Families with nine or more children, 191 per 1,000.

In both tables you will note the steps are marked. There was an interesting comparison between literate and illiterate families. The literate families had a mortality of 148 the illiterate of 214. Another set of interesting figures are taken from Saxony, and deal

with mortality of children in relation to primogeniture.

First-born children, 229 per 1,000; second and third children, 204 per 1,000; fourth children, 212 per 1,000; twelfth and subsequent children, 597 per 1,000.

Let us take another great economic question, that of child labor. What is the central cause of child labor? It is the over-large family. The workingman with one child seldom sends it into the mill. He wants it to grow up with a better chance than he had, and he sends it to school. So with the second and third child. If he has seven or eight children, he is desperate. All of them probably go to the mill. Not only are the descendants of that individual man stunted mentally and physically, but all of their descendants in turn are deteriorated because the original individual had too large a family to support.

Now American laws and lawmakers have dealt with this question of birth control not as if it were an economic and industrial question, but as if it were purely a moral question—a matter to blush about and consider indecent. Do not confuse the laws governing illegal operations with the subject we are discussing. We are not discussing the right of anybody to take life. That is an entirely different matter. We are not concerned with life after it is created; we are dealing with the right of people to decide how large a family they can in justice have.

There has been growing up a different feeling about certain phases of this problem,—about sterilization of the unfit for instance. That used to be considered wicked and indecent, too. But boards of health and physicians and judges have decided that criminals could not be allowed to reproduce themselves without a disastrous result to the community. Degenerates, physically and mentally deficient people, the insane, the idiotic, all come under this judgment; and in some states there is legal provision for the sterilization of criminals and other unfit people if the criminal himself is willing. It would seem only a short step from that to the subject we are discussing tonight.

We have been talking about the concrete results of disseminating among the poor information as to how to regulate the family. In conclusion I want to say that in my own case there is another reason why I believe in birth control, or voluntary motherhood. Not only because you can readily pick out the industrial and economic evils due to involuntary motherhood—overcrowding, child labor, and the others we have been discussing—but because it is part of the whole democratic theory of life. Under that theory we believe that people are able to determine, and organize, and carry through their individual lives. Therefore I may say that behind any specific reason and behind any specific study of the facts I believe in voluntary motherhood because as a believer in democracy I believe that everything in life as far as possible ought to be voluntary.

A Word on the Negative Side.

By Dr. Eliza Taylor Ransom.

I want to begin where Mr. Hapgood left off and say frankly and emphatically that I do not believe that any man or woman is capable of saying whether he or she shall have one child or ten. Furthermore I want to say that no girl of sixteen or eighteen or twenty or twenty-five, with all the allurements of life before her, or any young man of the same age, ought to be expected to form judgments in the matter. Pleasure and enjoyment bulk larger than duty at that age.

I have the distinction of being a mother. I was married in 1893. I am sorry and ashamed to say that I have only two children, and that I am myself to blame for it. I should have ten, and if it were in my power today I would have them. I was married eleven years before I had a child. I have twice been pregnant and have two children.

From the medical standpoint, the physician is very limited in his speech. Often I have been besieged at my office by newspaper representatives and urged to discuss this very subject for publication. I have never done it, because I hardly know what I think or what I believe.

Now what are we men and women in the world for? To carry on the race—to reproduce ourselves. That is why I am ashamed that I have only two children. Why have I only two? Because my mother and my father, who were intellectual people, never put into my mind the reason why I was born—the great reason in the mind of the Divine. Men and women I now see are here to reproduce themselves.

Because certain economic, religious, educational and political principles are kept before us, we sometimes lose sight of the fact that the great initial reason why so many men and women are brought together here is that we may reproduce our kind.

Now I notice that when young people are married and they have a child, and they think there is no way to take care of that child, they always find a way to do it without killing the child. And I cannot understand why we are not to consider the case of the child that is unborn and yet killed. The young woman who does not want a family of ten children can have preventatives. She can have birth control. But the woman who does not know how to prevent conception and finds herself pregnant and does not want a child goes to a physician or a midwife, or somebody else, and gets birth control. She kills her child. If that is not birth control, I don't know what is. And if birth control does not mean birth control, what is the use of talking about it?

If the middle class people would educate their sons and daughters as well as the poor people do—if they would teach them that it is right to reproduce their kind—we would have just as large families in the middle classes as we do in the poorer classes. And if the poorer classes have families larger than they can support, it should be a taxed duty of the rich people to protect and care for and educate those children, and see that they do not die for lack of care.

One of the most important things for us to do, if you are seeking happiness, is to find that happiness in using the things we have to work with now. I don't know anything more foolish than for a man to make himself miserable because he cannot work with the tools which some other man is using. Make the best use of what you have where you are, and you'll have all the happiness you can use.

I like to think of Robert Louis Stevenson, who faced death daily for fifteen or twenty years, but who always faced it with a smile on his face. His stories, essays and poems have added much to the happiness of the world. It isn't what you have that counts, but the use you make of what you have.

The hunger for goodness is as powerful as the hunger for bread. To those who feed the bodies come no adventures greater than those which come to men who create sustenance for hungry minds and souls.

THE QUESTIONS

Q: Do you not think that every mother would be better off and the families would be better supported if she had no more than two children?

A: I do not think a fixed limit can be set. It depends on health, on economic conditions and other questions.

Q: If a man makes \$15 a week, has two children, loses his job, and his wife goes into the factory to support the family; and if during that time a third child comes, is that kind of a family desirable to society?

A: Presumably not.

Q. (Mr. Browne): In comparing the chances of the first and second children for life, is it not possible that the family during the interval may have developed financially and can provide better conditions for the later children?

A: Yes.

Q: How would you treat the case of men who are willing to rear a family but who on account of economic conditions do not do it?

A: That is one of the strong arguments for birth control.

Q: Do not preventatives do more harm to the mother than having a large family?

A: No, I think not.

Q: Is not abortion due rather to ignorance of birth control than knowledge of it?

A: It might be. I think abortion would be decreased by it and many women's lives saved.

Q. (Mr. Roberts): If you were writing a twentieth century Bible, would you substitute birth control for the control mentioned in the Mosaic Scriptures?

A: If I were to write such a Bible it would be brief, but I would hope to find room in it for both those kinds of control.

Q: What actual results would follow if the race were allowed to die out?

A: That is a matter of personal taste. I am enough of an optimist to believe that the result would be undesirable.

Q: Is not birth control common in some parts of the world, such as France, and has it not been prophesied that within a certain term of years the French nation would cease to exist?

A: I suppose somebody has prophesied that.

Q: Would it not be better if the government did not interfere with birth control?

A: I think it ought not to interfere in the way it does. I should not say that there ought to be no interference.

Q: Why did you not discuss the subject of birth control from the moral as well as the economic and industrial sides?

A: I thought I explained that the morals of it as laid down by Moses did not interest me so much.

Q: Granting that we should consider reproduction a duty, but admitting that some of us have instead come to regard it as an evil for us, why should we not have the right to prevent it?

A. (Dr. Ransom): So long as there is no legislation, I suppose we can all do as we choose about it?

Q: Statistics show that two children must be born to replace one death by the time those children have reached the age

of 30. In view of the fact that it takes four children to continue the lives of two parents, and in view of the fact that the average family has only three children, do you not think that birth control would be a danger to society?

A: I think the problems of the future may be left to the future. The problem of subsistence, of child labor, of the pressure of population is here now.

Q: Which is more humane, to bring children into the world and leave them to charity, or not to bring them into the world at all?

A. (Dr. Ransom): I think that is a matter of choice.

Q: How do you account for the fact that most of our men of genius and our famous pugilists and strong men came from large families and were often the fifth or sixth child?

A: I don't believe it.

Q: If we compelled the rich to pay through taxation for the nourishment and education of the children of the poor, would that do away with poverty?

A. (Dr. Ransom): We would have to try it and see.

Q: How do you account for the fact that Germany, which has the highest birthrate, has also the greatest efficiency as a nation?

A: Germany has a wonderful record in taking care that grinding poverty should not exist. The more you abolish that kind of poverty, the more desirable will be a rising birthrate.

Q. (Miss Crawford): Would you be willing to tell what worked the change in your point of view towards the size of family in your own case?

A. (Dr. Ransom): Simply that we live and learn through years of experience what we should have been taught in our youth.

Q: (Mrs. Blanchard): Why is it not better to attempt to adjust economic conditions than to attempt to deal with difficult phases of the question, such as birth control?

A: Why not do both?

Q. (Mr. Meltzer, Jr.): Would not the discussion of birth control be very undesirable in view of the militaristic program to which this country seems to be already partly committed?

A: Yes.

Q: Do you think the mentally deficient and insane should be allowed the choice of regulating their families?

A. (Dr. Ransom): I don't know.

Q: What do you think of the letter to "Everybody's," quoted in Ford Hall Folks?

A. (Mr. Hapgood): I should teach that woman birth control. I do not know what Dr. Ransom would do. (Dr. Ransom): I would let her have her choice.

Q: When you speak of later children in a family being more likely to be deficient mentally and physically, how do you account for the Franklin family, and what number in it would you give Benjamin?

A: The case of the Franklin family is different. The poverty they had to face was not the grinding kind; it was a good and wholesome thing, not the sort that stunts the development of the children.

Q. (Mr. Kaufmann): If instead of discussing birth control and various other indirect means of making a better social condition, would it not be better if we concentrated our attention on the fundamental thing that needs change.

A: Yes, if you can find the one thing to concentrate on. I do not think any one thing will do it.

Q. (Mr. Ciampa): In view of the fact that Dr. Ransom thinks that it is the duty of all people to reproduce themselves in as large numbers as possible, do you not think it is the duty of society to give families such living conditions as will enable them to keep their families alive and healthy?

A. (Dr. Ransom): Certainly.

Q: Do you not think that the teaching of control and morality on the part of the men will largely solve the difficulty we have been discussing tonight?

A. (Dr. Ransom): No, I don't. I think that if we teach the girls and women the proper attitude towards the facts of life the men's side will take care of itself.

VOLUNTARY MATERNITY.*

By Alletta H. Jacobs, M.D.

First Woman Physician of Holland and a Pioneer in the Dutch Movement for Control of Births.

For the cause I have propagated in my own country during many, many years with good results, I prefer the words "voluntary maternity" to the words "limitation of the birth-rate," because they express better my view of this question and they really do not reach farther than I am able to defend.

Being not a political economist, I do not know whether it is preferable for society to increase or to decrease the population of the world; whether it is good for a country to have a dense population and to spread the surplus of it all over the world, as the Chinese and the Germans do, or to have a limited population and keep it within the borders of their own country, as the French do.

I am a medical doctor, and from a medical point of view I have studied the question of childbirth thoroughly. And through that study I know that it is not an advantage for the child, or for the parents or for society that a child be born whose existence is not wished. If we only consider—and this is not questionable—that the state of mind of the mother during her pregnancy is of the greatest influence upon body and mind of the child that is to be born, then we must admit that the chances for a child to be bodily and mentally healthy are greater when the mother looks forward with delight to the day when it shall come into existence than if she, during her pregnancy, constantly is preoccupied how to get rid of it.

The reasons why parents do not wish to have children or why they do not wish to have more children, are numerous. Very often there are economical reasons; other times there are hereditary diseases in the family; sometimes the mother is bodily unable to bring a living child or a child that will live long, into the world; sometimes husband and wife, or one of them hate children. The last reason is seldom expressed, but it exists, and we may call such a woman who hates to have a child unwomanly. It does not make it desirable that such a woman should become a mother. In some cases, man and wife wish to have children, but knowing that there is a great chance that their children, for different reasons, will become a burden for society, from a feeling of high social responsibility, they avoid parenthood.

*From The Survey of November 6, 1915.

AS IT LOOKS TO ME

By GEORGE W. COLEMAN

✱ We have been anxious to know whether our book, "Democracy in the Making," would prove interesting reading matter to a person in no way connected with our work and not especially interested in the open forum idea. That question was satisfactorily answered the other day when Councillor Hagan told me that he picked up the book one evening and found it so interesting he continued through chapter after chapter until three o'clock in the morning.

Miss Blanche Watson, the magazine writer, found the contents of the book so engaging that she read it through at one sitting and immediately sat down and wrote a long letter to one of our critics, urging him to put himself in possession of the facts which this book contains.

Mr. E. J. Lindsay, a leading wholesale merchant in Milwaukee, was so much pleased with the book that he ordered ten copies for distribution among his friends.

† † †

✱ Generous pledges for the deficit in our treasury have been coming in from our friends in the Ford Hall audience and the Baptist Social Union. More than half of the amount has already been subscribed. Some Sunday evening soon we shall give everyone a chance to make a pledge. The words of encouragement and appreciation that have come with the gifts have been worth as much as the money itself.

† † †

✱ My friend, Clarence H. Howard of St. Louis, the big steel manufacturer, recently entertained 1700 of his friends in that city in the most delightful fashion. Dr. John W. Ruskin, a descendant of the famous English writer, has expended a quarter of a million dollars in making motion pictures of wild animal life, showing quadrupeds, birds and fish as found in their natural haunts all over the world. This exhibit was given in a local theatre where the audience was so small that Mr. Howard, who was present, thought it was a shame not to have such a wonderful display witnessed by a larger company, so he invited newsboys, children from an orphans' home, pupils from the public schools, practically all of the public school principals in St. Louis and several hundred of his own employees of different nationalities, besides a few representative business men, bankers and railroad officials, to an exhibition of these motion pictures given in the Victoria Theatre, the whole house being reserved for Mr. Howard's use. Mr. Howard was in the lobby and personally greeted his friends as they came in. Mayor Kiel presided over the occasion, and before the evening was over Mr. Howard himself was obliged to present himself and make a little speech.

Mr. Howard is the gentleman who made such a deep impression on me when I was in St. Louis last summer as Mayor Kiel's guest. The next time he comes to Boston he is planning to spend a Sunday evening with us at Ford Hall.

† † †

✱ Mr. Fred F. Squire, who volunteered to get five new subscribers for this little magazine, has more than made good on his promise, having already secured seven. He does not understand why there are not scores of others in the audience who would be willing to make the same effort in the interest of our work.

✱ The Open Forum under the auspices of the Sunday Evening Club in Toledo is progressing very satisfactorily. The meeting in November had for its topic "What Toledo Really Needs," with various local speakers taking up the question of Health, Education, Art, Parks and Playgrounds, and Religious Co-operation. These five sub-divisions of the topic were each assigned ten minutes, all of which was followed by a general discussion through the question method. The program lasted two hours and a half, and although the people were given a chance to withdraw at the end of the speaking they could not be driven away. Allen A. Stockdale, in whose church this Forum has been organized, feels that it was an epoch-making meeting for Toledo. He says: "Never before had anything like it happened either in or out of a church, and we consider the open forum idea one of great value to the city and community and believe it can be applied with redeeming effect to church situations all over the country."

This Open Forum in the First Congregational Church, Toledo, occurs on Sunday evenings only once a month, but Rev. Mr. Stockdale on the other Sundays in his pulpit has been discussing prominent books and giving an opportunity after his address for the audience to ask questions in the same manner as if they were present at the Forum. On a recent evening he discussed the morality play called "Experience."

† † †

✱ A Neighborhood Forum, standing for Truth, Justice and Good Will, has been inaugurated in the Bulfinch Place Church in the West End of Boston. A series of four consecutive Sunday evening programs has been announced, beginning tonight, December 19. Rev. Christopher R. Eliot is chiefly responsible for this enterprising experiment, and those who are disappointed in not finding themselves able to get into Ford Hall will not have far to go to the Bulfinch Place Church, where they will be most welcome.

† † †

✱ Of course there was more than the usual great crowd last Sunday evening. The lines outside had grown so long that the doors were opened ten minutes ahead of time, and before seven o'clock people were being turned away for lack of even standing room anywhere in the hall. A hundred or more waited on the outside two hours and came in at the close of the lecture to take the places of some who went out before the question period began. Our two speakers expressed opinions on the subject under discussion in flat contradiction of each other, which under all the circumstances was as it should be. It was not an easy subject to discuss in a mixed popular audience, especially when every person present was free to ask a question. The audience listened intently throughout both addresses and, although the question period did not amount to as much as usual, it was maintained throughout on a high plane of frankness and earnestness. The young man in the right gallery created almost uncontrollable merriment through his difficulty in speaking English and his determination to elaborate his question. The audience was under just sufficient strain to welcome the least occasion for a relieving burst of laughter, but it presently gathered itself together and the young foreigner finished his question, which was

not so very pointed after all our trouble in getting hold of it.

Both Mr. Hapgood and Dr. Ransom were almost monosyllabic in their answers to many of the questions. Whether this was due to the inadequacy of the questions or to a disinclination on the part of the speakers to elaborate their themes, it is not easy to say.

Mr. and Mrs. Charles Edward Russell of New York were seated on the stairs in the right-hand gallery, refusing an invitation to come to the platform. Messrs. Stevens, Perry, Philbrick, Harbour and Lathrop of the Baptist Social Union were also in attendance.

† † †

✱ The *East Boston Argus-Advocate* prints a glowing account, nearly a column in length, of the initiation of the new East Boston Forum in the Assembly Hall of the High School on Wednesday evening, December 8. The establishment of this Forum was conceived in the mind of Mr. Ira M. Huggan, manager of the *East Boston High School Centre*, and he has associated with him in the enterprise a splendid body of representative citizens, who occupied the platform at the opening meeting. I had the honor of serving as the speaker of the evening, and found the audience deeply interested in an exposition of the principles underlying the open forum idea and in a delineation of the process by which that idea has been worked out at Ford Hall. Mr. Joseph B. Maccabe, the editor of the *Argus-Advocate*, presided most delightfully and gave the movement his thorough-going approval. There were present in the audience a number of our well-known Ford Hall people, including Mrs. Atwood, Mr. Ballou and Mr. Hogan. Dr. J. Danforth Taylor, as chairman of the forum committee, announced that Miss Lotta Clark of the Boston Normal School would be the speaker at their next meeting, January 12. Noticing that I had selected as my topic, "Getting Together," Miss Clark is to talk about "Getting Somewhere."

VOLUNTARY MATERNITY.

(Continued from page 3.)

From a medical point of view, there is one reason more that ought to be mentioned, for which the childbirth ought to be controlled: If parents are healthy, if they are economically able to sustain a large family, and if they wish to have many children, the mother ought not to have a child every year. The best for mother and child is to have a difference of about three years between each child. The first year the child takes the mother entirely. If she becomes pregnant from another one during that time, she cannot devote herself entirely to the born one. The second year the mother must use to regain her physical strength and her interest in social life, in order to remain healthy in body and mind before the next pregnancy starts. The third year she can have the next child.

For all such reasons, women must know how to prevent pregnancy.

A lot of people acknowledge these reasons for controlling childbirth, but they differ entirely in the methods to be used to arrive at the desired effect. Moralists are of opinion that women who do not wish or who ought not to become pregnant must abstain from sexual intercourse. This is really the most secure way to avoid pregnancy. However, is it practicable and is it for society desirable? To both these questions must the answer be, "In many cases, no."

When I was a medical student in Amsterdam, during the years 1871-1879, it struck me daily how many children were born in the town hospital of whom the mother till the last moment uttered the wish that the child might be born dead, or of whom the doctors and the students concluded that it would have been better for society if it had not come into existence.

Why are such children born, was the question I asked myself often. Must the child be a punishment for the sexual action of the parents, a punishment for the parents, a greater one for society, but the greatest one for the innocent, unwished child itself? That seems to me the greatest absurdity possible. Afterwards I learned to know that it was only because women did not know how to prevent pregnancy, that such children were born.

After I had finished my medical education and began my medical practice in Amsterdam, I soon made it public that all women who wished not to have or who ought not to have more children could become instructed by me how to prevent pregnancy. At the same time I opened for the poor women a locality in the middle of the Yordaan (the poorest district of Amsterdam) where they could consult me for this purpose, free of charge, of course, twice a week.

Nearly at the same time a Malthusian League was formed in Holland, of which C. V. Gerritsen, who later became my husband, was the president, and of which many influential men, influential in political and social life, became members. Some of those men became later cabinet ministers or leaders of political parties.

I never was a member of that league, because it was based on economic principles which I felt not able to judge. But notwithstanding my name has been constantly connected with that league, as well in my own country as abroad. I believe Holland was the first country in which prevention of pregnancy was openly discussed and propagated, and in which advice in this direction, unhindered by law, was given to the women.

Since five or six years, however, this freedom is taken from us. From 1909-1913 Holland was governed by a conservative majority and by a cabinet which consists of five Calvinists and four Roman Catholic ministers. The most conservative, narrow-minded Calvinist was the premier. During the period of their power, the most reactionary measures became law. One of them was that propaganda and open discussion of how to prevent pregnancy was not longer allowed; and only women who for medical reasons ought to prevent pregnancy, might be advised by a doctor if they asked for advice.

The propaganda among the poor is therefore greatly hindered; but members of the Malthusian League are waiting for the right moment to get this law revised. Holland is a liberal and an anti-military country; therefore we need not to be afraid that before long my country-people will have regained their freedom to discuss and to propagate what they believe is good in principle and in results.

EDUCATION FOR PEACE.

We are hearing a great deal just now to the effect that it is our duty to get ready for war; little if anything about getting ready for peace. Next Sunday night, however, when the Birthday of the Prince of Peace is uppermost in all our minds, that Ford Hall favorite, Prof. Charles Zueblin, will discuss "Education for Peace," and we shall sing a new peace song just fresh from the presses.

AT THE ITALIAN FORUM

By CONSTANTINO CIAMPA

Dr. Molinari's lecture on "Socialism and the War" at the "Foro Italiano" in Ford Hall, Sunday afternoon, Dec. 5th, proved to be a very interesting talk. For while almost everybody is piling up words of condemnation for the Socialists of Europe because of their failure to stop the war, Dr. Molinari explained and justified their participation in the present conflict.

"It is perfectly true," he declared, "that the Socialists of Europe are killing each other in the trenches in spite of their theoretical opposition to war. And while you may think that there is a contradiction between the abstract theory preached by the socialists and their concrete action of participation in the war, there is no such contradiction if you examine closely what has taken place since the first of the war in July, 1914.

"Europe was on fire in no time. Only one short week intervened between the first talk of a conflict and the actual declaration of hostilities. During that week all the socialists of Europe, the German socialists in particular, did everything in their power to prevent the bloody conflict. Jean Jaures died while he was trying to accomplish what he knew only a miracle could accomplish, prevent the war. The socialists simply were not strong enough in numbers for their task. And besides, mass action cannot be had instantly if an emergency requires it. The declaration of war brought with it martial law, suppressing every trace of opposition to the powers that be. Every nation either actually was, or was made to believe it was, in danger of invasion. Everybody thought that the invader should be kept out of his country, the result being that all took up arms, socialists not excepted.

"The International Socialist Party has always recognized the necessity of independent nations. To have allowed one nation to conquer another would have been to go back fifty years at least, and ultimately to struggle for the freedom of the subjugated one. It was the duty of the socialists of every land to fight for the preservation of their national integrity and for their political freedom if they did not want to go down with the ship of the nation on fire."

The different conditions under which the various nations found themselves at the beginning of the war, Dr. Molinari said, compelled the socialists of those countries to adopt different courses in dealing with war problems. Belgium and France were invaded and their socialists were unanimous in favor of war. Germany was in danger of being invaded and a large minority of her socialists were opposed to war. England has never been in danger of invasion, no more than Russia has, and the socialists of these two countries have been more opposed to war than the people of any other country on the continent. But if the Germans were to enter London tomorrow the attitude of the English socialists would be entirely changed.

The speaker explained at length the theory that wars are a result of the present system of production for private profit, and declared that the necessity of finding a market for the surplus value means in turn occasional conflicts for the control of the world's market. Abolish the profit system and you will have no more wars, Dr. Molinari said.

"Armed peace, so called, has never been

(Continued on page 5.)

La conferenza del Dr. Molinari al Foro Italiano nella Ford Hall, domenica 5 Dicembre, riuscì di grande interesse, perché mentre molti biasimano i socialisti europei per non aver prevenuta la guerra, il Dr. Molinari spiego' e giustifico' la loro partecipazione nel presente conflitto.

"E' perfettamente vero," egli disse, che i socialisti di Europa si uccidono a vicenda nelle trincee ad onta della loro opposizione teorica contro la guerra. E mentre si puo' credere che esiste una contraddizione tra la teoria astratta predicata dai socialisti e il fatto concreto della partecipazione alla guerra, pure non vi e' contraddizione, se si esaminano attentamente i fatti svoltisi dal momento che si comincio' a parlare di guerra nel Luglio 1914 in poi.

"L'Europa fu in fiamme in brevissimo tempo. Dal momento che si comincio' a parlare di conflitto, armato alla formale dichiarazione di guerra, trascorse una breve settimana. Durante quel periodo di tempo i socialisti di Europa, ed i tedeschi specialmente, fecero tutto cio' che potettero per prevenire il sanguinoso conflitto. Jean Jaures morì mentre cercava di compiere cio' che egli sapeva che solo ad un miracolo era possibile di fare, cioe' prevenire la guerra. I socialisti non erano numericamente forti, non solo, ma quanto la massa non si muove istantaneamente quando la necessita' lo richiede. La dichiarazione di guerra porto' con se' lo proclamazione della legge marziale, che sopprime ogni vestigio di opposizione alla classe governante. Ciascuna nazione si credette, e effettivamente era, in pericolo di essere invasa. Tutti pensarono che l'invasore dovesse esser tenuto a bada, col risultato che tutti impugnarono le armi, non escluso i socialisti.

"Il Partito Socialista Internazionale ha sempre riconosciuto necessario il principio della indipendenza nazionale. Il permettere ad una nazione di conquistarne un'altra ammonterebbe all'andare indietro di cinquant'anni e lottare per la indipendenza della nazione soggiogata. Era quindi dovere dei socialisti di lottare per preservare la integrita' nazionale e la loro liberta' politica, se non avessero voluto affondare con la nave della nazione in fiamma.

"Le condizioni locali di ciascun paese in rispetto alla guerra determinarono l'atteggiamento dei socialisti in merito ad essa. L'invasione del Belgio e della Francia rese possibile l'unanimita' dei socialisti di quei due paesi in favore della guerra. Il pericolo della Germania di essere invasa fece sì che solo una grande minoranza dei socialisti fosse opposta alla guerra. L'Inghilterra e la Russia non hanno mai corso il pericolo di una invasione, ed i socialisti di questi due paesi sono stati i piu' accaniti oppositori della guerra. Ma se i tedeschi domani entrassero in Londra i socialisti inglesi muterebbero interamente la loro tattica, disse il Dr. Molinari.

Egli spiego' minutamente che le guerre sono il prodotto naturale del presente sistema di produzione per profitto privato, che deve trovare un mercato per il *surplus valore*, che a sua volta si risolve in conflitto armato per il controllo dei mercati del mondo.

"Abolite il presente sistema di produzione per profitto e voi non avrete piu' guerre, esclamo' il Dr. Molinari.

"La pace armata non e' stata mai una assicurazione contro la guerra, ma al contrario le ha spianata sempre la via. Se il falli-

(Continued on page 5.)

SQUARE PEGS AND ROUND HOLES

By ALFRIEDA M. MOSHER

SUNSHINE AND SHADOW OF "HOLIDAY BUSINESS."

Rita has been having a hard time to make ends meet ever since she went to work as saleslady in a candy store last summer. The pay was seven dollars a week, and commission, but try as hard as she would she never could make big enough sales to get hold of any of that commission. And the seven dollars were really not sufficient to keep her properly provided for, as any member of the Minimum Wage Board could demonstrate. She held on to the place because it was that much better than nothing; and then there was always the possibility of that commission to lure her on.

Now, with the wave of holiday trade that commission is being realized. "Three dollars on top of my regular wages week before last," she said to us with her face fairly beaming, "and four dollars last week, and this week it'll most likely be five. And money for overtime besides. Ain't that great? I can go down to Filene's basement and get enough clothes to last me clear through till summer. I tell you this holiday business is making both ends meet just fine for me."

For Lucile Xmas Spells Dangerous Overstrain.

Lucile is a stenographer. She has been in her position four years. Last spring we thought she looked a little run-down, but she came back from her vacation in fine shape, and all through the fall she has been telling us she never felt better in her life. But when we saw her the other day we were quite shocked at her appearance. She was pale and thin, and, to quote her own words, "nervous as a witch." We asked her what the trouble was.

"Holiday business," she answered laconically. "You know we are in the toy business, and this is our time of the year to make hay. Every one at our place is just working like mad and I'm going to do my part. They've always done the square thing by me, and I'm going to do it by them. Yes, I know, it's telling on me. I've lost sixteen pounds trying to get toys out to make children happy on Christmas. I can't sleep the few hours I do get a chance to stay in bed, and I'm just keeping up on strong coffee. It will take me a good part of the winter to get over this, and I suppose I'll have to spend more on doctors' bills than I make. Funny, isn't it, that some of us have to get so miserable to make others have a good time?"

She rushed back to her task, leaving us more determined than ever to do whatever might lie in our power to distribute holiday business and holiday happiness more equitably.

A "Christmas Present Money" Girl.

The girl working for "pin and new-hat money" has received a certain amount of our attention. The "Christmas present money" girl belongs to the same class. Jennie and Mrs. X. are typical of the motive and the attitude of the "Christmas present money" girl.

Jennie appeared the day after Thanksgiving. She was a big overgrown freckled-faced girl, probably about eighteen years old. She stood with arms akimbo, chewing gum, "first on one foot, and then on 'tother," while she stated her case.

"Say, look, my mother keeps a lodging house here in the South End, and I help; but she don't give me no money, and I want to give some Christmas presents, and Miss A——, she rooms to our house, and she's got a job out of here to sell in a store. Well, she says if I want to have some money to buy presents, why, this is the place to come."

We assured her that we had no money to distribute for such purposes.

She rolled her gum around in amazement at our lack of understanding. "Aw, that ain't it. I don't want no money given me. I want to earn some, doing something that I'll get paid for. My mother'll let me off from the room-work till after Christmas, and I'll give her some kind of a present. Say, what would you give her? Something that don't cost too much, you know."

We suggested a pretty dish. And she thought she might get one at the ten-cent store, "because," she explained, while she chewed vigorously, "I'll want to get a box of chocolates for the lady that told me to come here, and then," she stopped, and looked conscious and giggled, "I've got a friend, a man friend, you know, and I want to get him something just swell."

We sent her to "assemble" iron toys at four dollars a week.

Reminiscent of An O. Henry Story.

Mrs. X. came the following Monday. She had on a stylish winter suit, nice fur, and led by the hand a cherub of a child.

"May I speak to you privately?" she asked.

I am accustomed to being called to give help in matrimonial difficulties, and my blood was instantly boiling at the idea of a marital infelicity which would involve that darling of a child. I beckoned the lady into the corner which our good friend, Miriam deFord Collier, was once pleased to christen my "confessional."

But the "confession" was not at all what I was expecting. It was "holiday business." She had a good husband. He did everything for her and the baby, and she wanted to do something for him at Christmas. She hadn't any money of her own, and she wanted some way to earn some that would be truly hers to spend for him.

I knew of another mother, called suddenly away from home by sickness in her own family and distressed about making a suitable provision for her own little one whom she did not dare to take into the country in the winter. I asked Mrs. X. if she would like to earn her Christmas money by taking this other baby home with her for a few days.

The arrangement was quickly made, and that husband's Christmas gift provided for. This last little tale only proves, like that charming Xmas story of O. Henry, that love is never more lovely than at this happiest season in all the year.

SOCIALISM AND THE WAR.

(Continued from page 5.)

an insurance against war," he concluded. "On the contrary, it has always paved the way for it. If the failure of the European nations to maintain peace, while armed to the teeth, does not conclusively prove this, nothing else will prove it.

"An immediate and pernicious effect of the European war on America is the present propaganda of the ruling class to embark on a military program of such a magnitude as America never dreamed of. And this is absolutely inexcusable. Just think that to invade this country at least an army of four million men would be required with all necessary arms, ammunitions and provisions. Bear in mind that on one side we have the Atlantic ocean four thousand miles wide; and our nearest neighbor on the other side, Japan, is five thousand miles away from us. The allies, with all these long years of military preparation to their credit, can only transport four thousand men a day to Salonica, which is only a few miles away. In view of these facts, where is the country strong enough to attempt to invade us?"

"England once held America as a colony, but in 1776, in spite of her military and naval power, was not strong enough to hold us down. Then the population of this country was only about fifty millions, with undeveloped natural resources and no industries to speak of. Today we are a nation of ninety million people, having plenty of developed natural resources, up-to-date industries, and the most modern means of communication and distribution. Consequently we are a great deal stronger than we were in 1776. Is it possible to conquer us now any easier than in 1776? And furthermore, why should any nation attempt to invade this country? Here we have no markets to be exploited. The American capitalists have pretty well cleaned everything in sight.

"The present talk of preparedness is simply a scheme to pave the way for big profits out of armaments.

IL SOCIALISMO E LA GUERRA.

mento delle nazioni europee di mantenere la pace mentre tutte erano armate fino ai denti non dimostra chiaramente la mia asserzione, nessun' altro fatto ve lo potrà dimostrare.

"L'effetto immediato della guerra sugli Stati Uniti e' la pernicioso propaganda della classe dominante in favore di un programma di militarismo, di tale grandezza, che il popolo americano non ha mai sognato, non avendo alcuna ragione di essere. Pensate che per invadere questo paese e' necessaria un' armata almeno di quattro milioni di uomini, oltre ad armi, munizioni e provvigioni. Ricordate che da un lato abbiamo l'oceano Atlantico quattro mila miglia largo, e all' altro lato abbiamo il Giappone, lontano da noi cinque mila miglia. Ricordate che gli alleati, dopo tutti questi lunghi anni di preparazione militare al loro attivo, possono trasportare solamente quattro mila soldati al giorno a Salonica, che travasi poi tanto vicina. In vista di cio' dove e' la nazione forte abbastanza da tentare la nostra invasione?"

"L'America fu ad un tempo una colonia inglese, ma nel 1776 ad onta della forza militare e navale inglese, si libero' da quel giogo. La popolazione di questo paese allora era solamente di circa cinquanta milioni, con molte risorse naturali non sviluppate e pochissime industrie organizzate. Oggi noi contiamo 90 milioni di abitanti, abbiamo sviluppate le nostre risorse naturali abbiamo moderne industrie, mezzi di comunicazione e di scambio, e di conseguenza siamo molto piu' forti del 1776. E' forse oggi piu' facile del 1776 di conquistarci? E perche' si dovrebbe cercare di invaderci? Noi non abbiamo qui mercati da poter'essere sfruttati, perche' i capitalisti americani hanno gia' sfruttato tutto.

"L'attuale propaganda per la preparazione militare e' semplicemente un mezzo per spianare la strada per fare enormi profitti sugli armamenti.