BIRTH-RATE AND EMPIRE

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649074655

Birth-Rate and Empire by James Marchant

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

www.triestepublishing.com

JAMES MARCHANT

BIRTH-RATE AND EMPIRE

Trieste

WORKS BY THE SAME AUTHOR

ALFRED RUSSEL WALLACE. LETTERS AND REMINISCENCES. Two Vols.

THE MEMOIRS OF DR. BARNARDO.

DR. PATON—EDUCATIONAL AND SOCIAL PIONEER.

THE MASTER PROBLEM.

CRADLES OR COFFINS?

REMINISCENCES OF RAPHAEL MELDOLA (EDITED BY).

ETC.

BIRTH-RATE AND EMPIRE

BY

JAMES MARCHANT

Secretary of the National Birth-Rate Commission, and The Cinema Inquiry, Director of the National Council for the Promotion of Race-Regeneration, etc.

LONDON

WILLIAMS AND NORGATE

1917

PREFACE

THIS book attempts to deal with various aspects of the most complex problem of our corporate life. That problem is to find some remedy for the persistently diminishing birth-rate of our growing Empire and the serious decrease of men of ability born to the better-educated classes, a deficiency in quantity and of quality which has been accentuated by the irreparable losses of hundreds of thousands of promising lives in this world-war, and which must impoverish and may imperil the future of the race. The problem is rendered more acute by the increasing practice of deliberate birth restriction amongst the very classes where it ought not to be encouraged, a practice which is now being advocated at street corners as the latest remedy for almost all our ills. It would be foolish to seem to propose a solution of these tremendous questions within the compass of this small book, even were the requisite knowledge available. All we are able to do is to examine some of the causes and effects of the rise and fall of life in various classes, the nature and influence of the environment in which millions of our fellow-citizens live and die, and the shocking but preventable results of our

industrial conditions upon child life. Some consideration is given to the allegation that predominant and immutable race and class distinctions are fixed by heredity, which is now being used to destroy the doctrine of the brotherhood of man. Some practical proposals are made towards relieving parenthood of financial burdens imposed by the State and for dealing with the development of the sex instinct amongst young people. The need for organised pre-natal and post-natal care of maternity by a Ministry of Health is insisted on, especially in view of the permanent demand of women for the immediate realisation of a life as full and free as that enjoyed by men. A section is devoted to the question of the better redistribution of our surplus female population in our Colonies; and in several chapters will be found an examination of the arguments in favour of a low birth-rate and the difficulties of adjusting the size of the family to the means of the parents, the health of the mother, the claims of the moral law, and the growing and imperative demands of our Empire and posterity. The attitude of the Churches towards the use of Malthusian devices for birth-control is also considered at some length. These are the aspects of the problem of race-renewal which are approached in this book, which closes with a few reflections upon the old but always fresh question—What is the purpose of human life?

My cordial thanks are due to Dr. T. H. C. Stevenson, Superintendent of Statistics, and to Sir A. Newsholme, who have read various portions of the proofs, and to whom I have long been indebted for manifold kindnesses; and to Dr. Maxwell Williamson, Medical Officer of Health for Edinburgh, who has kindly checked the statistics for Scotland. Dr. J. W. Ballantyne read the MS., giving special attention to that part dealing with ante-natal questions, in which he is an expert; and my esteemed co-workers, the Rev. F. B. Meyer, D.D., Rabbi Prof. Hermann Gollancz, D.Lit., Dr. C. W. Saleeby, and the Rev. Principal A. E. Garvie, D.D., have placed me under additional obligations for like services always graciously rendered. In recording my unstinted thankfulness to these friends for their assistance I owe it to them to add that I am entirely responsible for this book and for the views herein expressed.

October, 1917.