such a plan may seem attractive to those who consider it certain that their own descendants would not be included in any such caste. Slavery is now condemned because it is always demoralizing to the slave owner, as well as being generally cruel to the slave. The endeavour to create inferior and docile human breeds is to be condemned on like grounds.

Our object should be, therefore, to improve the breed of the whole nation. And in this endeavour we should not attempt to lay down a single standard of excellence, with the object of preventing or discouraging parenthood in all who fall below that standard. Such a standard would have to take into account bodily fitness, intellect, and temperament or character; and as regards none of these attributes have we at present sufficiently reliable methods of measurement for such a purpose.

The most practical way of judging grown men is by seeing how they are fulfilling the duties of the positions which they actually hold. If all who are now winning good wages by doing good work were to have rather more than enough children to fill their places when they will be gone, the ranks of such well-paid occupations would thus be kept full, with some to spare. If all doing ill-paid work were to have families so small that their numbers would not be maintained in the next generation, there would come to be fewer applicants for such labour. If this went on for long, the result would be that either wages would rise, or that this ill-paid work would have to be done in some other way. If the unemployed had few children, this would in like manner lessen unemployment in the future, with all its attendant misery. In these rather rough-and-ready ways the needs of the nation as regards the number of its people would best be met.

The point here is, however, that by thus regulating the size of families the breed of the nation would also be improved. Men differ greatly amongst themselves, and so do the qualities demanded by the different kinds of work which have to be done. If all men honourably employed

at high wages had families of sufficient size, the appearance in the coming generations of good qualities of every variety would be promoted. On the other hand, a proportion—often but a small proportion—of those winning low wages, or failing or not trying to get work of any kind, are thus situated because of some natural defect of body, mind, or character. If all such as these were to have few children, though it would be an unmerited privation to many, yet the result would be a lessening in the future of all natural defects leading to low wages or unemployment. Some suffering in this generation would thus be caused; but it would lead to an immense saving of suffering in the future. What has been said is perhaps enough to show that advantages of many kinds would result from the size of families being dependent on the positions held by the parents, and that thus to advance on a wide front is the best eugenic policy. This difficult subject will, it is hoped, be made more clear in a later chapter, when it will be seen how very far we now are from any such ideal condition of things.

What would occur when the natural qualities of a nation were being slowly improved in the ways above suggested may be roughly illustrated by the following analogy. When packs of cards are being dealt out at a whist drive, good hands appear fairly frequently and very good hands at rarer intervals. In somewhat the same way, the coming together by chance of a number of good qualities in the same individual before his birth results in the appearance of superior individuals at frequent intervals, and of men of genius much more rarely. Much the same might be said as to the way in which inferior and very inferior individuals make their appearance at intervals. Now, if some of the very low cards were to be removed altogether from all the packs, the differences between the hands as dealt out would become somewhat less marked. In the same way, if all the above-mentioned very defective types of individuals were to have no children, there would in future generations come to be somewhat less natural inequality between human beings. This would be an advantage as far as it went;

because, amongst other things, it would tend to lessen social and political discontent.

To illustrate by this analogy how an actual improvement in the breed of a nation takes place, we must imagine as well as we can that all the cards in all the packs are being increased in value. We must also try to imagine that, in consequence, the value of every hand as dealt out is thus increased. Good hands would become better, whilst bad hands would become less bad. But the difference between different hands would not necessarily be affected by any general increase in the value of the individual cards. And by this analogy we see that, though the natural inequality between men would be somewhat lessened by the elimination of all the very inferior types, yet that, as far as we can now see, this inequality is a fact with which human beings will have to reckon for ever.

The main point to be learnt from what has just been said is, however, that an improvement in the breed of a nation would result in the appearance of more men capable of filling every post needing useful qualities of any kind, whilst the greatest men in the land would be even greater than the greatest of to-day. Such a general improvement in breed should, therefore, be the main aim of eugenics.

CHAPTER VII

Inferior Stocks

IT has been seen that the future welfare of our nation might be greatly improved by attention now being paid to the breed of the coming generations. This could be done by making either superior stock leave more or inferior stock leave fewer descendants behind them. The methods of dealing with inferior stocks will first be considered.

A foolish argument against all attempts to lessen the number of children produced by persons marked by any serious natural inferiority may here be mentioned; because it is commonly met with. It has been said that men of genius are often unhealthy, and that, as the aim of eugenics is to get rid of all who are sickly, eugenic reform would prevent the appearance in the future of many such admirable persons. To this contention there are several answers. In the first place, the ill-health of remarkable men has been greatly exaggerated. In the second place, it would only be if some of the *ancestors* of the great men of the past had been very defective that eugenic reform would have prevented their appearance on earth; and it is not asserted that this was the case. Moreover, the suffering genius himself would not be interfered with, because eugenics does not propose to kill off all invalids. Lastly, if in the future the appearance of a weakly child could really be foretold, would it not also be possible to prophesy the appearance of a genius? And such an event no one would try to prevent. The argument fails all along the line.

The aim of eugenics is, on the contrary, to promote the appearance of all manner of men likely to benefit their fellow creatures. How is this to be done? If we could

trace our family histories far enough back into the past, we should all find that we are descended from one or more half-witted ancestors, or from some persons who certainly ought not to have become parents. If the reforms here advocated had been adopted in the past, these ancestors of ours would not have married, and, in a sense, no one of us would have come into existence. But the nation would have continued to exist all the same. Moreover, its citizens, being all without any defective ancestors, would, in consequence, have given birth to eminent men more often than at present. Here is a highly beneficial result to be expected from the prevention of parenthood amongst defective persons.

There are two ways of acting when the aim is the production of smaller families by persons of bad stock; and these are persuasion and compulsion. Persuasion is always to be preferred to compulsion, if the end desired can thus be obtained. Let us, therefore, begin by considering what can be done by persuasion.

To ask a man not to marry, or, if he does marry, to have no children, is to ask a great deal. But self-sacrifice is the very foundation of our ideas of what is noble in human conduct. If the world of the future would be benefited by a man refraining from parenthood, surely it must be right for him so to refrain. We should all do what we can to help to ascertain when such conduct would be right; and, when right, to encourage those called on to make such sacrifices to follow the dictates of their consciences. Those who think that little good could be done by such persuasion should, nevertheless, do all they can in this direction. It can, however, hardly be doubted that, if these ideas as to our duties were to become part of our everyday religious thought, the conduct of many persons would thus be affected.

The first question to be answered is, Who should voluntarily refrain from parenthood? In some cases there is no doubt. For example, no one should have a child who is suffering from one of those rare diseases or deformities,

including some kinds of blindness and deafness, which cause great suffering when they appear, and which are apt to reappear in the same family for many generations. Many of these maladies could undoubtedly be stamped out in time if the persons so afflicted would make the noble sacrifice of refraining from parenthood. This is, however, a matter too technical here to be discussed at length. All that need be said is that all deformed or diseased persons should certainly consult a doctor before marriage. Indeed, all persons without exception had better do so.

Some forms of insanity are said to be hereditary, and others not to be so; though this is hardly a logical distinction. It is true that insanity is sometimes the direct result of a contagious disease. In such cases the descendants of the insane and diseased man will not be more likely to become insane in consequence of their ancestor's disease; and his insanity may, therefore, be said to be not hereditary. If a person becomes insane, it is more often, however, because he has a certain predisposition to this disease. This predisposition may be strong or weak. If it is very weak, insanity may be avoided, or what is called cured, by leading a careful life. Now such a predisposition, whether strong or weak, is likely to be passed on to succeeding generations. Even if a person inherits a strong predisposition to insanity, it is not certain that he will become insane. But if he does become insane, then his insanity will often be described as being hereditary. It should be for the doctor to decide in any case of insanity whether the predisposition was strong or not. And, if strong, the person so suffering certainly ought not to become a parent. Those who act thus will be happier in the end for so doing. If they have children, they will keep anxiously wondering whether their malady will reappear in those they love so much. And if it does reappear, they will have the agony of feeling that it is their own fault.

As long as a person is in an institution for the insane, no question as to parenthood can arise. As to those who have been insane, and who are described as cured, there is often

a considerable chance that the malady will reappear in succeeding generations. But even if the possibility of the disease thus reappearing is left out of consideration, we may yet ask whether these unfortunate individuals ought to have any more children. If all the trouble in the household due to insanity, including the loss of the capacity to win wages and to look after the children, is held in view, surely it seems that no persons liable to a second attack should add to the size of their families. And as there are not many cases of insanity which do not make a second attack more probable, all who have once been thus afflicted would do well to make this sacrifice in regard to parenthood. In this way alone can the person who has recovered from insanity lessen the chances of the reappearance amongst his descendants of an ailment which causes the most intense suffering to all concerned.

Epilepsy is another bad disease which often runs in families. Consequently, no one who has had unmistakable epileptic fits should become a parent. The word "epilepsy," however, probably covers a wide range of diseases. All that can here be said for certain is that a doctor should be consulted before marriage when epilepsy is suspected.

The tendency to suffer from consumption seems also to run in families. In any case those afflicted with definite and pronounced consumption will be unlikely in the future to be able to do their duties as parents in an efficient manner. Consequently those at this stage of the disease should have no more children. This conduct, if widely adopted, would probably make future generations suffer less from this disease; for the hereditary predisposition to catch it might thus in a measure be weeded out.

The most difficult decisions in regard to the renunciation of parenthood arise when an individual, though apparently sound in mind and body, has many defective relatives. Here again all that can be said is, "Consult your doctor." A medical adviser ought to be able to take a more impartial and just view of the whole situation than the patient can possibly do himself. Unfortunately, at present very few

doctors have given careful thought to such questions. If more people would ask advice as to whether or not they ought to have children, more doctors would study the problems of heredity so as to be able to give a sound opinion in regard to parenthood.

In giving such advice, the doctor ought to bear many things in mind. A point often forgotten is that good qualities must always be weighed in the balance against the bad. When the relatives of a diseased person are generally high-minded and healthy, this fact should tell in favour of parenthood being justifiable in his case. Even to think of making the necessary sacrifice is an indication of the possession of a high character. Definite defects should appear in several near relatives, and should, as far as can be judged, not be such as are directly due to external conditions, if a person sound in mind and body is to be asked to make this great sacrifice. If the doctor is in doubt, it may be right to recommend a marriage which should result in no more than one or two children.

When eugenics comes to be more studied, it will be possible to give advice with greater confidence than at present on some of the points considered in this chapter. Even with our present knowledge it is, however, unquestionable that great benefits might be conferred on future generations by the voluntary renunciation of parenthood by the diseased and by such as are very likely to be the carriers of the hidden seeds of disease.

CHAPTER VIII

Birth Control

WE have seen that persons either endowed with bad hereditary qualities, or having many defective relatives, may be advised either to have no children, or that their families should be very small. But by what means ought these results to be brought about? The final decision on this question ought always to rest with the couple concerned. What is here said is only with the object of facilitating such decisions.

Some methods of preventing a too rapid increase of population must have been in operation in all ages. Animals in a state of nature always produce so many offspring that, if all of their young were to survive, the numbers of their kind would increase with enormous rapidity. The same would be true of man if he were to take nature as his guide in these matters. The number of the people has, however, of necessity always been kept down in one harmful way or another. The checks which have been most commonly operative in the past have been war, famine, disease, especially amongst the young, the deliberate destruction of little children, and the practice of abortion.

We all condemn war, at all events with our mouths. Happily it is no longer necessary to argue against the murder of infants or in favour of paying attention to their health. The cure of disease amongst persons of all ages, and its prevention by means of precautions taken in advance, meet with universal approval. Thus we see that we are now striving and are bound to strive against all those methods of keeping down numbers which have been most effective in past ages. Looking to the future, the increase in supplies of all kinds could not keep pace with such an

increase in numbers as would take place in the absence of all these checks. If over-population is permitted in the future, it will inevitably result at first in much unemployment, then in increasing poverty and disease, and finally in actual starvation. If this is not sooner or later to be our fate, some means of checking the growth of the population must always be kept actively at work.

Moreover, if we consider each family separately, we shall see that it is often highly desirable that it should not be too large. In the first place, the probable effects on the mother's health must be held in consideration. For this reason, and also for the sake of the children, births should at all events never follow each other too rapidly. Lastly, parents ought not to bring more children into the world than they can reasonably hope to bring up in accordance with a certain standard of living; and this standard as regards all higher things should not in any case be below that which they themselves have been accustomed to. The misery, pauperism, and even crime, resulting from overcrowded houses could certainly be lessened or obviated by forethought as to the size of the family. In fact, others besides those of bad stock ought often to refrain from parenthood.

Thus, whether we are looking to each family considered separately or to the nation taken as a whole, we see that some means of keeping a check on the population will always be necessary. Putting aside all the harmful methods above mentioned, there remain only two alternatives which have to be considered—namely, continence and birth control. It is true that both have been criticized on the ground that they are injurious to health. Neither of them is, however, necessarily injurious. Moreover, even if slightly injurious, this would certainly not be a conclusive argument against either of them. We often have to make a choice between two evils, and the harm done by over-population would far outweigh any minor evils which might attend whatever way was selected of keeping the number of the people within bounds. Details of the methods of birth control