

What is to be Done with the Surplus Women After the War?



By the Duke of Manchester

WHAT is going to be done about the excess of English women after the war?

Already before the war the excess amounted to some 2,000,000, and was increasing steadily. We have already 130,000 men dead from the flower of the nation and about 130,000 permanently disabled, and I fear before all is over that we must face the loss of nearly a million and a half of British breadwinners and potential fathers.

What is going to be the result after the war?

There are two principal effects that have to be considered. The future generation and work. It is almost impossible to consider these questions separately, for in these days they are absolutely interdependent, and yet all conditions will have changed so much after the war that we must examine the new factors in each question before coming to the joint future.

What is going to happen?

Some three million men are going to return, after months of open-air life, in a condition of physical fitness which they did not know was possible; with an outlook broadened to an incredible extent, with minds that have been toned and tuned by constantly facing death.

Is the clerk going back to toil with bent shoulders on an office stool for a pittance, after, perhaps, leading a platoon or a company in the field? Is the sergeant going back to be an agricultural laborer? the lieutenant or company sergeant-major a domestic servant? or the victorious soldier to the factory or mine?

Some trades and professions, of course, they will go back to, but the conditions of all forms of work will have to be materially changed, although there are going to be thousands who will seek a different form of employment with more responsibility and more freedom.

And women in the meanwhile are working. They have found that there is practically no form of wage-earning that they cannot do, and do satisfactorily. Will those who have just made this discovery go willingly to rearing children in cramped and cheerless quarters? Some may, but most will not.

Yet the wastage of lives must and will be replaced, and the enormous increase of our trade after the war must be seen to. Women will undoubtedly, in enormously increasing numbers, continue to be wage-earners; men and women must earn higher wages, have a higher standard of living and enjoyment, and yet child-bearing must increase and infant mortality must decrease.

How is it to be done? How are women to rear children, feed children, husband and themselves, and yet keep their jobs in factory and office.

The answer seems to be of necessity one word—co-operation. The co-operative dining room, the co-operative nursery. Think what a difference to the bulk of the population just these two things would make. The clean, wholesome food in light, clean, bright rooms, prepared by trained cooks, instead of badly cooked, badly served scraps in a dingy kitchen. And then the saving of expense in the buying of large quantities instead of in ha'porths, in the fuel, in the preparation and in the productive force of the workers properly fed instead of starved or stodged.

Then the children, what it will mean to the rate of infant mortality to have the babies hygienically looked after and fed is incalculable, and that is an enormous gain to the country, when we pause to think that more babies die every year than the total of our killed in the war to date.

Add to these co-operative laundries, and you have broken the back of domestic work, and if, as is sure to come in time, we have proper dwellings in towns for working people—not the dirty, gloomy tenement of former days, but bright, clean, tasteful flats, with hot water and heating from a central furnace, and electric light, which, on the co-operative plan, could easily be run at a price to suit modern wages, and domestic drudgery would be practically done away with.

You have the foundation here of clean, wholesome,

useful lives, and a possibility of a decent balancing of work, sleep and recreation, which lead to health and consequent efficiency. It will seem to old-fashioned people a crime to suggest that surroundings and comfort should be weighed, should be allowed to weigh, against the bearing of children; but it is so, and everybody who does not wilfully shut their eyes must know it.

In every rank of life, practically, children are limited to the amount that allows of the most comfort to the parents, from the fishermen and factory hands, to whom children are an asset and a necessary provision for the future, and who, therefore, eliminate the possibility of a childless marriage beforehand, at one end of the scale, to the other end of the scale where they have no children at all because it is too much trouble.

There is a great and increasing body of people who either avoid marriage altogether or limit their families with an absolute view to attainment or maintenance of some luxury or comfort, and the worst of it is that the class that have most children are those least able to provide for the children on arrival with healthful, happy and comfortable surroundings under the old conditions.

Now, as we all know, men and women are an asset of the highest value to a nation, and after the devastating war everything will have to be done to make up the wastage.

But what is it going to be? I have heard polygamy very seriously discussed as a probability, but I don't suppose we shall really come to that in the near future.

I suppose, also there will be no softening of the savage illegitimacy laws, although, undoubtedly, when women have the vote, as they surely will, some of the flagrant unfairness to women of those laws will be made more equal of incidence; but at least without any moral revolution we could offer to the fathers and mothers the maximum of facilities and inducements.

The lessons of the past show that nature does her best to restore the balance when war has decimated the manhood of a country, and though, I believe, for physiological reasons that will not be so obvious after this war, still, it is sure to take place.

No to counteract the excess of women make the next generation as large as possible.

Next Week the Duke of Manchester Will Contribute Another Article in His Interesting Series.



Frenchwomen Loading Coal on a Train in the Absence of Men. Will They Do This Work After the War?



Englishwomen Now Working as Fire-Fighters. They Expect to Continue This Hard Duty After the War, and on the Right, Miss Betty Wilson, an Englishwoman Serving as Sergeant in a Home Defence Cavalry Corps.



Does Yellow Make You Feel Like Laughing?

AT a Chromo-therapy Congress, recently held in Tokio, announcement was made of the result of a series of experiments made on persons afflicted with mental and nervous diseases, and on persons in the hypnotic state. It was found that by far the largest number of people responded to yellow and red lights, and the classification was so astonishingly exact as almost to afford a new diagnosis for disease.

Of the persons who were above the normal sensitiveness to light rays, it was found that more than 70 per cent were easily excited to laughter under a brilliant yellow light, that under a violet light 72 per cent were found easily responsive to sympathy and many wept; and that 93 per cent were conscious of bodily stimulation under a scarlet glow. A certain small proportion, less than 5 per cent, were made scornful and irritated by the crimson light, but these could not be stirred to sympathy by any phase of color.

The color of brown conveyed to most of the patients the sense of fear, and vivid blue caused the effect of nervousness and perplexity. The greens operated in very curious manner, the light apple green being restful, the vivid greens causing irritation and a sense of annoyance. A powerful absolutely white light increased energy, and a rose-pink light gave the feeling of indolence.

When, however, the question of translating feelings into color was tried, the results did not tally. Still, 41 per cent stated that when they were merry they thought of yellow, and 40 per cent declared that a love poem conveyed to them the color of red. A highly nervous person, therefore, especially if melan-choly, is apt to feel more contented under lamps with orange shades. The yellow light of candles is more conducive to merriment than the blue-white light of electricity.

In a hypnotic trance, the lights operated most powerfully. Extremes of opposite emotions were caused by the mere changing of lights, and the passage from pleasure to terror was induced by the whirling of a colored lensless screen before the powerful calcium light that was used for the experiments. It has been known for some time that certain rays of light, the ultra-violet, for example, are very helpful in curing certain forms of skin disease, but the value of light and color in mental diseases is a field as yet comparatively little known.