

WHEN the CRADLE is EMPTY NATIONS FEAR

Alarm in France and England Over Lowering Birth Rate



With Such as This Youngster Rest British Hopes.



Too Few Like This in Bonny France.



A Sturdy German Baby.

WITHIN the short period of five years the scornful pity vouchsafed by Europe's leading nations to the United States for this country's neglect of the prime duty of a people—race propagation—has changed to a sudden, desperate searching of hearts and statistics on their own account.

It is no longer, "The shameful race suicide of the Americans." It is, "Why are our own cradles empty?"

The empty cradle! In teeming Europe that vacant nest is now appalling governments, while whole peoples stand aghast at dwindling numbers, even as a generation ago they stood dismayed in the presence of too many.

Germany alone sees her cradles full. She stands, a growing giant, among neighbors who dread her in the process of their dwindling.

Russia, starving amid the smouldering fires of her slumbering revolution, sees innumerable sickly infants born and perish. Her uncounted millions take no census of them beyond the surmise that they vanish as the herds do from the steppes. Where there is too little food there is ever too little life.

Italy, in the south, perceives her children born and sees the cradle robbed by disease that ample nourishment could amply balk.

England, from having taken huge pride in her virtue as a welcoming parent, is crying out in horror of infanticide and is questioning "infant insurance" as though it were a babe-devouring Moloch; yet her true weakness is identical with that of France.

France is held up, by her own legislators in her own eyes, as the horrible example, out of all the world, in race suicide.

Is it to be a childless or a Teutonic Europe?

VAST throngs assembled. Men and women, for the most part middle-aged, struggled toward the church steps. Mad with excitement, frenzied with this contagious curiosity, they beat one another with their clenched fists, striving to fight to the center. "It is the aged Dreyfus again being assassinated!" I asked the muscular butcher beside me. He spoke not, but hit me between the eyes with the butt of his fist. It was his reply to the question that had cost him a forward step. I dug an elbow into his abdomen. I did not turn to see him sink under the disabling stroke. The frenzy had seized upon me. Kicking, striking, rending, I forced my way into the heart of a group of impromptu allies who, cohering, crashed onward to the very doors of the edifice. There we beheld the marvel which all blame Paris had heaped to see. It was a real French baby.—From the French of Philippe Camille.

FRENCHMEN of today perceive no exaggeration in that graphic sketch of the imaginary future. They read it and remark, thoughtfully: "It is possible—perhaps even probable."

Publication of the vital statistics of the nation during 1907 has left France worse than worried. She is despairing.

There were only 774,000 births last year. There were 793,000 deaths. For seven years the French birthrate has decreased at the rate of 12,000 a year.

In 1907 it decreased 33,000, nearly three times as many.

Within a century the births in the French nation have fallen from 1,007,000 a year to less than three-fourths the rate that let her conquer Europe.

France gazes at her Paris, with its fashions that dominate the world, its art which gives the tone to all judgments of the beautiful, its saturnalia of liaisons and of wit; France gazes at her provinces, with their shrewdly tilled acreage and their comfortable wealth; France gazes abroad at her possessions; and France winces in apprehension amid every glance of pride.

For how shall she remain supreme in art, retain her colonies, or even stay strong enough to keep her acres from following Alsace and Lorraine into some hungry foreign maw, unless she produce the babes who, in the darkening future, are destined to be herself.

The France of today beholds herself weak; she sees the France of tomorrow weaker; but the France of the future she sees unborn.

It needed a startling sermon, from the lips of the American who instantly commands the attention of civilized peoples, to direct public scrutiny to the national evasion of racial duty; and, what with the land's drawing advantages of

resources and government, its surmounting of the best populations the Old World has still to spare, suffices to maintain a growth that remains the envy of the nations.

With France only the bare figures and the bare, abortive remedies proposed have edged beyond the reserve of a people unanimous in their endeavor to conceal their recreancy. But that has been enough.

Confessed before the world, brilliant, audacious, economical, prudent France stands exposed in the nakedness of its cradles, furnished with all the essentials of a powerfully develop-

ing race, from layettes to nourishment, unfurnished with that one essential which is indispensable, the baby.

And always, at her very door, thrives the dreaded menace of the ancient and steadily expanding foe, Germany. The land of the kaiser takes in her statistics of population a pride equal to the humiliation with which France contemplates hers. She announces them with haughty superiority.

The German empire, at the time of its formation, had 40,000,000 inhabitants. France, at the time, had between 35,000,000 and 39,000,000, a difference which, for all practical purposes, was actual equality.

In 1905 the population of Germany had increased to more than 60,000,000. At the beginning of 1907 it had reached 61,500,000. In the fifteen years between 1890 and 1905 Germany added to her population 11,000,000 human beings.

France, within the same period, had advanced only a puny million. The German ratio of increase was more than a dozen times that of the French.

Now the German empire has 22,000,000 more than France, an advance of 60 per cent. A dozen years, and the relative rates of increase will have given Germany a preponderance amounting to 30,000,000—perhaps more than that, for the French net total of population, now made public, shows that the deaths are at last coming to exceed the births; that the nation, like a plant, for years able to maintain

barely its original numbers, is dying out with the generation that was originally too weak to increase and thrive.

"A little further on," the German publicists boast, "say, twenty-five years hence, the German population will be double that of France; for every passing year the figures of population change to the greater advantage of the German empire."

"In France," they declare, with all truth, "there is a remarkable lack of soldiers and laborers. Although the requirements of the military service have been considerably modified from time to time, it is increasingly difficult to fill the regular quota of the army on a peace footing. In a few years it will be wholly impossible."

"Only that nation whose population is on the increase will be able, in decades to come, to hold its own in the universal competition for political and economical influence."

The analysis of French society, last made upon the basis of the exact count of the population as being 38,350,733, afforded some striking hints of the causes that are operating for the elimination of the French from among the world's peoples. Females are markedly in excess of males, numbering 19,533,899 as against 18,816,899. Widows and divorced women constitute an army of 2,384,897; divorced men and widowers are less than half the number, only 1,005,884. There are 9,781,117 families; but 1,314,733 of those "families" are without children, while 2,249,337 have but one child and 2,018,665 have the two that, apparently sufficient to maintain the normal of population, are in reality absolutely inadequate, because a large percentage of children perish before reaching the stage of reproduction in their turn. Among two-thirds of the French families the average number of children does not exceed three; and even that does not suffice to maintain the standard; this year's returns show deaths 19,000 in excess of births. Sociologists, studying these figures: in their quest after the secret cause, have discovered it in the strangest of all anomalies. Upon France, nearly a century after his terrible activities ceased in their exercise, rests the crushing curse of her worshiped Napoleon. Creating an empire by a series of conflicts which drained the land of all the strongest virility that remained to it after the sensualities of its nobles and the oppression of its peasants, he sought to perpetuate it by plagiarizing from Montesquieu an idea of government which was destined inevitably to deprive the conquerors of the very warriors they needed to hold in subjection the kingdoms they had acquired. It was as though, having rounded up a den of tigers, he had planned to reduce the number of keepers until none should be left to wield the whip of government. Into the fundamental law of France he injected the requirement of a division of the property of the parents, at death, among all their children. It seemed to mean complete equality of all in the family in their start in the race for fortune. The real effect became apparent within two generations. A paternal inheritance sufficient for one heir was poverty for many heirs. The couple who could discern no reasonable hope of

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