

Katharine M. Rogers

## THE CONTEXT OF ARNOLD'S PLEA FOR BIRTH CONTROL IN *CULTURE AND ANARCHY*

### 1

A man's children are not really *sent*, any more than the pictures upon his wall, or the horses in his stable are *sent*; and . . . to bring people into the world, when one cannot afford to keep them and oneself decently and not too precariously, or to bring more of them into the world than one can afford to keep thus, is . . . just as wrong, just as contrary to reason and the will of God, as for a man to have horses, or carriages, or pictures, when he cannot afford them. . . .

The only absolute good, the only absolute and eternal object prescribed to us by God's law, or the divine order of things, is the progress towards perfection,—our own progress towards it and the progress of humanity. And therefore, for every individual man, and for every society of men, the possession and multiplication of children . . . is to be accounted good or bad, not in itself, but with reference to this object and the progress towards it. And as no man is to be excused in having horses or pictures, if his having them hinders his own or others' progress towards perfection and makes them lead a servile and ignoble life, so is no man to be excused for having children if his having them makes him or others lead this.

This emphatic outburst comes as a shock in the last chapter of Matthew Arnold's *Culture and Anarchy*, where it climaxes his Hellenic criticism of Liberal panaceas for the ills of society. It startles not only by its completely modern tone—Arnold has no patience with those who do not know about and practise birth control—but by its unexpectedness, since it does not follow closely from his argument. His aim in this chapter was to show that the measures for human betterment on which the Liberals currently prided themselves, and which they expected every humane person to support, were ill-considered and

ineffectual: the only way really to advance human welfare was to think more radically than the Liberal politicians were prepared to do. For example, their Real Estate Intestacy Bill, which provided that the land of a man dying intestate would be divided equally among his children, was both pointless and ill-advised. Rather than forcibly strip the land-owning aristocratic class of an insignificant prerogative, it would be better to examine them with disinterested intelligence; this would show that they are now socially outdated and should be induced voluntarily to give up their privileged position altogether.

As a climax Arnold attacked the efficacy of the reform on which the Liberals most prided themselves: free trade. He had in mind the constant boasts of Liberal politicians, such as John Bright, that the Repeal of the Corn Laws made it possible to feed an ever-increasing population. Before Repeal, in a speech of 1845, Bright had implied that freeing the trade in wheat was all that was needed to relieve poverty in the working class; large numbers of children were a problem only because bread was unnecessarily expensive:

Every man who marries is considered an enemy to the parish; every child who is born into the world, instead of being a subject of rejoicing to its parents and to the community, is considered as an intruder come to compete for the little work and the small quantity of food which is left to the population.

Only because of the Corn Laws is it "altogether unavoidable that these industrious and deserving men should be brought down to so helpless and despairing a condition." Bright constantly proclaimed that the Liberal legislative program would bring about a millenium of prosperity and equality in Great Britain.

Arnold, on the contrary, realized that, since resources are ultimately limited, free trade can do no more than alleviate shortages. Though legal reforms could cheapen the food supply or equalize distribution, they could not eliminate poverty. He agreed with the Malthusians that, as long as the working class reproduced without limit, there would be savage competition for food and gainful work. Though free trade temporarily increased resources by expanding employment and lowering the price of food, in the long run it aggravated the problem by making it possible for more people to grow up and live on a subsistence level. Arnold recognized that "the untaxing of the poor man's bread has . . . been used not so much to make the existing poor man's bread cheaper or more abundant, but rather to create more poor men to eat it." Only by preventing a rise in population could the poor man's standard of living be raised.

Arnold was disgusted by the characteristically Philistine (middle-class) assumption that quantity was in itself a good, revealed for example in Bright's self-congratulatory speech of 1876 on the increased numbers as well as better feeding of the people: "I suppose at this moment if all the working men and their families could be put in the scales they would weigh some thousands of tons more than they would have done thirty years ago." Arnold insisted that the multiplication of stunted, miserable human beings is an unmitigated evil, delaying the progress of the whole race toward "perfection."

Having disposed of the idea that free trade can solve the problem of poverty, Arnold closed in on what appears to be his main target; the complacently religious people who oppose birth control because they refuse to see the misery of the poor, or think it can be cured with pious good will. He derided the fatuous idealism of Robert Buchanan, who rhapsodized that Life is intrinsically so good that to think of limiting it when it does not seem to be a blessing is an affront to the divine philoprogenitiveness. And he exposed the inadequacy of traditional Hebraism—of conventional piety—to solve the problem. Ever-increasing masses of underfed, neglected children cannot be helped by missionaries preaching that they should help one another. Furthermore, Hebraism has actually aggravated the situation by clinging to the Biblical injunction to "Be fruitful and multiply." The Hebraists do at least recognize that something must be done to help the poor, but what is needed is not pious good feeling but knowledge of family limitation.

The fact that Arnold thrust this impassioned argument for population control into his general attack on Liberal measures not directly related to it indicates its prominence in his mind. Almost all Victorian social thinkers took a stand on this issue, though it was the political economists who, especially concerned with the relationship of population to resources, were the most organized advocates of birth control. John Stuart Mill, writing in more detail than Arnold, may well have inspired his views. Mill had insisted that expansion of the economy or the population was not in itself good: what is important is the standard of living of the existing population, which cannot be permanently improved unless they limit their numbers. Like Arnold, Mill severely censured the man who reproduces beyond his means: "Who meets with the smallest condemnation, or rather, who does not meet with sympathy and benevolence, for any amount of evil which he may have brought upon himself or those dependent on him, by this species of incontinence?"<sup>1</sup>

Unfortunately, politicians sympathetic to working people tended to look on any attempt to limit their numbers as an attack on the working class, partly

because Thomas Malthus, who had originally popularized the theory that the poor were poor because they reproduced too much, actually disapproved of helping poor people in any way, on the grounds that this would encourage them to reproduce more. Subsequently, advocates of birth control were suspected of offering it as an exclusive solution to the problem of poverty, a way to avoid helping the poor by charity or legal reforms. This attitude is found in Thomas Carlyle, for example, who sardonically equated limiting births with providing the unemployed poor with free arsenic.

It was the Church, however, rather than any political party, which campaigned against population control, preaching that it was both self-indulgent and disobedient to the will of God. Some Churchmen, including Charles Kingsley, condemned any attempt to limit the numbers of human beings as an aspersion on the divine goodness.<sup>2</sup> Almost all agreed that to enjoy sexual pleasure while avoiding the responsibility of children was unnatural vice. It was the clergy, Mill declared, who should particularly be blamed for methodically encouraging "the multiplication of the species, so it be but in wedlock" and for teaching that "it impugns the wisdom of Providence to suppose that misery can result from the operation of a natural propensity:" Because religious orthodoxy blocked efforts at population control far more purposely than any political party, I suspect that Arnold was really more concerned with religious than with political "Hebraists".

Probably Arnold, feeling it would be more prudent to attack particular politicians than to attack the religious establishment, used his political argument as an opportunity to present his case for birth control. Certainly his argument against free trade is in striking contrast to his closely reasoned refutations of other Liberal measures: there is really not much connection between free trade and birth control. Arnold seems to have slipped in the latter subject in such a way as to de-emphasize it and to camouflage his real object of attack. His censure of those who reproduce irresponsibly is uncompromising, but there is an undertone of caution in his diatribe.

That the idea of population control was generally acceptable in 1869, though a direct attack on orthodox religious attitudes would probably not have been, is borne out by the critical reception of *Culture and Anarchy*. The original reviews, whether favorable or unfavorable, expressed no horror at Arnold's condemnation of improvident parents. In a long and hostile notice, *The Saturday Review* belabored Arnold's argument against the Real Estate Intestacy Bill, but made no mention of his argument for population control. Surely it would have seized upon this had the subject been considered indelicate

or immoral. The single reviewer who mentioned Arnold's Malthusian argument was critical but not emotional: he calmly argued that the "necessary tendency" of free trade "is to diminish pauperism, as Mr. Arnold will see it has done, if he only reads the accounts of popular distress which was so appalling before the free-trade time," and that the restriction of family size will have little effect unless people learn to be more thrifty and industrious.<sup>3</sup>

## 2

For the Victorians, population control was a means of improving the condition of the poor: all serious social thinkers of the time recognized that something must be done about the depressed masses, though they differed on whether the means should be legislative reform (Bright), a general change of heart (John Ruskin and Kingsley), emigration (Kingsley and Carlyle), or limitation of births (Mill and Arnold). Whenever Arnold spoke for birth control he was thinking in terms of relieving the misery of the poor, realizing the ideal of equality, or eliminating the degrading industrial slums.<sup>4</sup>

Although the proponents of family planning emphasized the situation of the poor, who faced starvation if they multiplied excessively, they believed it should be practiced by the upper classes as well. Arnold made a point of including "[us] Philistines of the middle class" among those who must learn to abstain from having children they cannot support; the middle class, too, would make better progress toward perfection if they did not devote so much of their energy to reproducing themselves. (His ideal family, however, was evidently larger than ours: though he sneered at the Philistine with twelve children, he had six of his own.) Similarly, when Walter Bagehot lamented in *Physics and Politics* over the creative imagination dissipated by the cares of supporting a large family, he must have been thinking of the middle rather than the poor class. Apart from the prudential motive of saving themselves financial anxiety, the middle class have a duty to limit their families in order to set the poor an example. If they fail to put their knowledge into practice, said Arnold, "how little is it likely to penetrate among the poor and struggling masses." Little self-restraint can be expected from the poor, Mill caustically noted, "while the aristocracy and clergy are foremost to set the example of this kind of incontinence."

Arnold's accusing tone implies that there was some knowledge of contraception among the more educated classes in England at this time. Apparently it was practiced by some, but by no means the majority. The Frenchman Hippolyte Taine constantly remarked on the great size of English families—six to twelve or even more children—among all classes. Yet magazine writers

cited as an obvious fact the lower reproduction rates of upper-class English women as contrasted with peasants.<sup>5</sup> Anthony Trollope, whose novels show much preoccupation with the difficulties of raising a large family on a limited middle-class income, almost certainly used some method of birth control since, marrying at twenty-nine, he had two children in five years and none thereafter. However, the statistics (which unfortunately are not very reliable for class differentials in rates of reproduction) do not indicate a significant difference between middle and lower-class birth rates until the mid 1870s. As would be expected from the concern expressed in the Malthusian propaganda, the motive was apparently financial. When the economy took a downturn in 1874, the Philistines were faced with a choice between limiting their families or lowering their standards of living.<sup>6</sup>

Yet this knowledge could not have been universal even among the educated class, since in *The Principles of Biology* Herbert Spencer gravely attributed the difference in fertility between the upper and lower classes to the greater mental strain (*sic*) among upper class women. Other writers justified themselves for mentioning specific methods of contraception on the grounds that this vital information was not generally available. Montague Cookson, writing in *The Fortnightly Review* in 1872, said contraceptive methods were "comparatively unknown" among the lower classes and "almost wholly unrecognized" among the higher. (Although the latter phrase might be interpreted "known but not mentioned," he was writing to inform a middle-class audience.) Annie Besant, who was publicly vilified for publishing manuals of contraception in 1877, declared that "It is clearly useless to preach the limitation of the family, and to conceal the means whereby such limitation can be effected." She took pride in the letters she received "from thousands of poor married women—many from the wives of country clergymen and poor curates—thanking and blessing me for showing them how to escape from the veritable hell in which they lived."<sup>7</sup>

## 3

This widespread ignorance was only to be expected, since the very middle-class men who exhorted people to limit their families withheld any hint how they might do so. Though it was perfectly acceptable to present family limitation as a solution to the poverty problem, no writer who hoped to maintain a respectable reputation dared specify any method but postponement of marriage. Malthus had offered the poor only this or chaste celibacy as alternatives to multiplying and starving. One might argue that Arnold's treatment of birth control was too brief to allow him to go into methods, but his intoler-

ance of those who did not limit their families seems cruelly disingenuous in view of the fact that he must have been aware how few people knew how to go about it. That Arnold was not dealing as openly with his readers as he seemed to be is borne out by the more extensive treatments of this subject by contemporaries who shared his views.

Victorian writers constantly berated poor people for improvident reproduction, implying that they could live comfortably if they would only abstain from marrying without adequate means. "The poor have taken advantage of increased wages," scolded *The Saturday Review* of January 16, 1869, "by increasing their families instead of raising their standard of comfort . . . when more money has come to them, they have spent it in eating and drinking, or in marrying and giving in marriage, instead of spending it in the endeavour to be a little more beforehand with the world." Even Mill, one of the most courageous writers on birth control, discussed the subject at length without giving useful information, although he did deplore the prudery which made this necessary. The only specific method he mentioned—and he described this in much detail—was to restrain or discourage couples from marrying until they could support a family comfortably. That no method of birth control would be used after marriage was implied both negatively, by the omission of any other expedients, and positively: if birth control was possible for married people, then there would be no need to postpone marriage in the first place.

Apparently working men were taken in by the middle-class teaching that the class differential in reproductive rates resulted entirely from less marital intercourse, though their interpretation of this would have mortified Arnold. As late as 1913, propagandists for the Malthusian League found that many working people in London thought the middle class had smaller families because husband and wife commonly lived apart, while the husband took care of his sexual needs outside of marriage.

Everyone professed to believe that, if the workingman would only postpone his marriage, he would never find himself with children that he could not support. No one, apparently, calculated that even if a man waited until he was thirty, he could still beget ten or twelve children. No one calculated that a nineteenth-century wage-earner could not possibly accumulate enough capital before marriage to be sure of maintaining an indeterminable number of children. And almost everyone appeared to be totally unaware of the sexual strain which continence until early middle age would impose upon a man. Carlyle is one of the few Victorians to admit the difficulty of waiting for sexual consummation until one has attained a solid financial position: "How often have we read



in Malthusian benefactors of the species: "The working people have their condition in their own hands; let them diminish the supply of laborers, and of course the demand and the remuneration will increase!" But "Smart Sally in our alley proves all too fascinating to brisk Tom in yours: can Tom be called on to make pause, and calculate the demand for labor in the British Empire first?" How can we expect Tom to "renounce his highest blessedness of life, and struggle and conquer like a St. Francis of Assisi?"

Although late marriage was the only method for limiting births which could be plainly stated, many writers hinted that prudence could limit them thereafter. Just as Arnold declared that children are not "sent" (even to married people), Mill derided those who seemed to believe "that children were rained down upon married people, direct from heaven, without their being art or part in the matter; that it was really . . . God's will, and not their own, which decided the numbers of their offspring." The *Nation* writer already quoted openly admitted that there were ways in which married people could avoid "charging themselves with the burden of large families," but he did not feel free to indicate what these were.

What Arnold and Mill had in mind, presumably, was *coitus interruptus*. This method was well known at the time and could, theoretically, be practiced by anyone. It is very effective for those men who are psychologically and physiologically suited for it. And—a further advantage from the Victorian point of view—its practice entails self-control. It could thus save a man like Arnold from conscientious qualms at enjoying sexual pleasure while avoiding the responsibilities of procreation. Arnold's reference to "the simplest law of prudence" and Mill's attribution of irresponsible reproduction to "a degrading slavery to a brute instinct" in man are consistent with this interpretation, as is the characteristic assumption by Victorian writers that birth control is the responsibility of the man. A man who could practice *coitus interruptus* successfully would be confident that it was an easy and practical solution to an urgent problem; such a man, at this period, would not be likely to realize that it does not work for everybody. But of course no respectable Victorian could refer publicly to *coitus interruptus*, for no sufficiently delicate terms could be found for even the most indirect allusion. Moreover, it had long been strongly and specifically condemned as the sin of onanism by the Church, abetted by doctors who attributed to its practice every disease from galloping cancer to mental decay.

Although the rhythm method did not have such an unsavory reputation, it had to be referred to in terms of extreme caution, even in a rather radical



magazine. Montague Cookson devoted almost all of his *Fortnightly Review* article on "The Morality of Married Life" to an eloquent plea for limitation of family size, along the lines already developed by Arnold and Mill. At length, after apologies for his indelicacy and a caveat that "Many will probably think the conclusion to which I point, wilder than anything that Malthus ever dreamt," he came to his point, first justifying himself with the argument that if everyone is too delicate to communicate what he knows, the human race will fail to advance "in this all-important department of knowledge . . . for want of the power of transmission." Only in his final paragraph did Cookson dare to reveal his solution, if "reveal" may describe so veiled a reference: "the limitation of the number of the family by obedience to natural laws, which all may discover and verify if they will." Rhythm, however, was probably less commonly used than *coitus interruptus*, because it is a less obvious method of contraception and because it places primary responsibility for birth control on the woman, whom most Victorians felt should not concern herself with such things.

Anyone who taught contraceptive methods at all directly, especially those using mechanical means (condoms, vaginal sponges, or syringes) rather than self-control, ran a serious risk. One reason for Mill's reticence in the *Principles of Political Economy* was his experience in 1823 when, as an idealistic youth of seventeen, he had distributed Francis Place's contraceptive pamphlet *To Married Working People* among young women in London. He was promptly arrested for corrupting morals and, though soon released because of his social position, felt it necessary to conceal this episode sedulously in later life. In 1868, though Mill privately admitted that doctors should give contraceptive advice to married people, he would not go so far as to advise the author of a pamphlet on contraception to circulate it, however quietly.

Only people who spurned convention entirely, such as the atheist Charles Bradlaugh, were willing to provide practical details about contraception. When Bradlaugh, along with Annie Besant, was prosecuted in 1877 for publishing a contraceptive manual, they were found guilty of publishing a book "calculated to deprave public morals," though exonerated from corrupt intentions. Although *The Saturday Review* endorsed the principle of family limitation, it declared that this "obscene book" would cause "every misery and impropriety of conduct." The judge who subsequently deprived Mrs. Besant of the custody of her three-year-old daughter justified his decision on the grounds that the book she published was "abhorrent, to the feelings of the great majority of decent Englishmen and Englishwomen."<sup>8</sup> Despite his per-

empty recommendation of birth control in *Culture and Anarchy*, Arnold recorded no statement of support when Bradlaugh and Besant were prosecuted for teaching people how to practise it.

Contraceptive methods could not be discussed in polite circles not only because of the sexual explicitness involved, but because they were familiar as an added titillation in pornographic literature. For example Eliza, a knowledgeable young lady in *Rosa Fielding* (1867), asks her lover to visit her, bringing "a dozen preventatives in the shape of French letters [condoms] in your pocket" and urges him to cover his "beautiful instrument," since she has "no notion of having a pretty white belly bow-windowed before marriage!—indeed I shan't particularly care about it after marriage!" Most Victorians firmly associated mechanical contraceptives with women like Eliza; they simply could not believe that a decent married woman might use them to avoid having children. However strongly Arnold endorsed the principle of family planning, he was too sexually fastidious to associate himself in the remotest degree with a subject for lubricious books.<sup>9</sup>

Arnold's diatribe in *Culture and Anarchy* is typical of the era before the Bradlaugh-Besant trial, when enlightened people recognized the need for birth control, particularly as the only means to eliminate pauperism, yet recoiled from making practical suggestions. Ironically, the prosecution of Bradlaugh and Besant caused contraceptive methods to be publicized as never before. It made the general public aware of the information which had long been available, as well as impressing on them the fact that many educated and distinguished people approved of family limitation. As people ceased to stigmatize the subject as obscene, and as married women became increasingly interested in careers, the feminists took up the cause of birth control.

Although it remained necessary to use caution in giving contraceptive advice, which the Church of England and the British Medical Association continued for many years to oppose,<sup>10</sup> information was evidently spreading. In the 1870s the English birth rate began to decline steadily, from 35.2 per 1000 of the total population in 1870-72, to 28.7 in 1900-2, to 15.8 in 1930-32. However, there was an increasing class differential in family size. Professional people, including doctors and clergymen, had the smallest families; businessmen, almost equally small. Working class families were significantly larger. The East End paupers, who had occasioned Arnold's outburst, evidently remained unenlightened. Thus the prudery which restrained nineteenth-century social thinkers from speaking openly defeated their primary aim—for all had

agreed that the most severe problem of excess reproduction was in the potential pauper class.

Reading Arnold on birth control, one is both impressed and discouraged. Arnold's contempt for the Hebraism which would have men blindly follow tradition regardless of human welfare, his realization that simple good will cannot solve the problems of an overcrowded society, his sneer at people who "talk of our large English families in quite a solemn strain, as if they" were intrinsically "beautiful, elevating, and meritorious," (*Culture and Anarchy*, Chapter 1) and above all his insistence that what counts is the quality, not the quantity, of life, are as vital as they were when he wrote one hundred years ago. Yet at the same time that he proved so incisively the need for family limitation, he and his contemporaries shrank in prudery or cowardice from spreading the necessary information. Because they would not defy the Hebraism of entrenched moral and religious opinion by teaching people in a practical way, birth control spread slowly in the middle class, and even more slowly in the lower class, where it was most needed.

What is more discouraging is that even today Arnold's argument is not sufficiently heeded. Present-day Philistines have thirteen children and proudly call themselves Leading Families of America. The potential pauper class is still largely uninformed about the need and methods of birth control. Public opinion is not yet entirely convinced that it is wrong to bring children into the world who are unwanted and have no chance for a decent life. Arnold's argument not only remains true today; it still needs to be reiterated because its truth is not fully recognized.

#### NOTES

1. Mill's discussion of birth control is found in *Principles of Political Economy*, ed. Robson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965), pp. 158-59, 291, 352, 368-69, 372-73, 756, 758, 765-66.
2. Carlyle's criticism of birth control is found in "Chartism," *Complete Works* (New York: Kelmscott Society, 1869), XVI, 113-14; Kingsley's, in "The Massacre of the Innocents," *Works* (London: Macmillan, 1880), XVIII, 257-59 and Parson Lot's "The Church Against Malthus," quoted in Stanley E. Baldwin, *Charles Kingsley* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1934), p. 60. Cf. John Ruskin, *Unto This Last and Munera Pulveris* (London: George Allen, 1911), pp. 110, 200, 286.
3. *Saturday Review*, XXVII (March 6, 1869), 318-19; *Spectator*, LXII (March 6, 1869), 296.
4. Arnold's other references to birth control are in a review of Obermann, *Essays, Letters, and Reviews by Matthew Arnold*, ed. Neiman (Cambridge:

Harvard University Press, 1960), p. 160, and in "The Future of Liberalism," *Mixed Essays, Irish Essays, and Others* (New York: Macmillan, 1924), pp. 389-90.

Only Mill recognized other reasons for limiting births. He foresaw the danger of global over-population and was also the only Victorian to make what seems to us the obvious connection between birth control and emancipation of women, though his omission of the subject from *The Subjection of Women* shows that he did not see it as an important feminist goal.

5. Hippolyte Taine, *Notes on England*, trans. Hyams (London: Thames and Hudson, 1957), pp. 5, 45, 60, 152-53, 201, 228, 292; *The Nation*, VI (April 9, 1868), 286. Cf. *Saturday Review*, XXVII (Jan. 16, 1869), 73 and XLIII (April 21, 1877), 483-84, and *The Nation*, VIII (June 3, 1869), 430.
6. This thesis is convincingly proved in J. A. Banks, *Prosperity and Parenthood*, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1954). Banks discusses Trollope in "The Way They Lived Then: Anthony Trollope and the 1870s," *Victorian Studies*, XII (December, 1968).
7. Walter L. Arnstein, *The Bradlaugh Case* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1965), p. 22; D. V. Glass, *Population Policies and Movements in Europe* (London: Frank Cass, 1967), p. 56.
8. Arnstein, *Bradlaugh Case*, p. 22; "The Besant Case," *Saturday Review*, XLV (May 25, 1878), 650; J. A. and Olive Banks, *Feminism and Family Planning in Victorian England* (New York: Schocken Books, 1964), p. 89.
9. Eliza is quoted from Steven Marcus, *The Other Victorians* (New York: Basic Books, 1966), pp. 219, 234. That Arnold was rather prudish is shown by his particular loathing for the "great goddess Lubricity" ("Numbers"), and even more strikingly by his impassioned defence of the obviously outdated law against marrying one's deceased wife's sister, which he persisted in regarding as a salutary restraint upon man's sexual appetite, or at least his indelicacy. In *Culture and Anarchy* he presented the bill to repeal this law as the first step toward complete laxity in love and marriage. He went so far as to declare that the Bible, which would allow such a marriage, is not a fit guide in sexual matters because of the coarseness of the Oriental, polygamous Hebrews (Chapter 6). Cf. *Mixed Essays*, p. 403.
10. In 1908 the Bishops of the Church of England passed a resolution that contraception was "demoralizing to character and hostile to national welfare," though in 1914 they grudgingly accepted the rhythm method, because "natural" and using "self-denial and not self-indulgence". *The British Medical Journal* wrote, in 1901, that "The medical profession as a whole" opposed contraceptive practices as "unnatural and degrading in their mental effect, and often times injurious to both husband and wife in their physical results". It took pride in the fact that people had learned about preventing conception more from pamphlets and advertisements than from doctors. See Banks, *Prosperity*, p. 160, and *Feminism*, pp. 98, 100.