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What of the Ages ?

Do you realize where this animal, man, will be in 4000 years hence, if the peace theorists have their way?

A man said to me once that it made no difference to us what was to be 2000 years hence.

True, as to you and me, as individuals. But we are not talking about individuals, we are considering man in the aggregate, in the broader aspect and for the ages, - as a race or type of animal life in this world-story. In that phase a few years, or a few centuries, are scarcely important. This world came out of the mists of long ago; how long ago, we know not, and it presumably will be here, doing business in the same old way, with the same ages-old natural laws we have now, when every phase of organized life we have today has died utterly and disappeared; when man, as we know him, will, with the dog, the horse, the ox, have been so lost in the then distant past as to have left not a mark that he or they ever existed. But for ages to come we may count upon the continued persistence of man as one of the dominant forms of animal life on earth. We have no rational right to assume that he will be an exception to a law that has written practical extinction upon so many forms of life. The Dinosaurs, the Ichthyosaurus, the Diplodocus, and all those swarming throngs of the old geologic ages have left to us only a few fragments of bones preserved by the ~~impervious~~ chemical formations that wrapped them about.

Every reason that tells us that the day will come when man will have disappeared and the strong succeeding forms of life will gaze on a discovered skeleton of a man and wonder what kind of a

bird it was in life. And while that day seems to be, and no doubt is, millions of ages yet to come, we do not know but that it is much nearer. We do not wish, and should not wish, to hasten that hour when the last human being will lay down the burden and the race shall sleep extinct with the ages.

It is said that the population of the earth at the birth of Christ was 54,000,000. It is now 1,520,150,000. This is an increase of 1,466,150,000 in the 1900 years. This came about during the period of man's existence when the wastage of life was at its highest. Pestilences and wars stalked through every known land during most of these 1900 years. The elements, untamed and wild, worked their unvexed processes on the race. There was no science to stay the hand of pestilence as it ^{swept} stalked up and down the earth, claiming its victims by the millions. Disease, not understood and untamed, wrote its story of havoc and death unvexed all down those ages, while the selfish ambition of rulers threw generation after generation into the flaming vortex of war until almost every foot of the habitable world has had its baptism of human blood.

Yet with all this the increase of the race has been 1.4288 per cent per annum during these 1900 years.

Now figure out on the basis of that per cent how many people will be on earth ~~19~~ 1900 years hence. That same rate will then give us a world population in the year 3900 of 42,783,744,000-

Take the whole land surface of the earth and you will find it to be 56,000,000 square miles. This will give to each square mile in that day a population of 764 -. The estimated population now of Belgium, the most densely settled country on earth, is 622 persons per square mile. And they are so thick

in that land that the generations, as they come to the age of efficiency, leave for other countries where there is more room for life. They are like the swarming of bees, every swarm goes out to find its new home because the home of its birth is too crowded. *And Belgium is the most fruitful of lands -*

In that year, instead of only 622 to the square mile, we will have ~~nearly~~ 704 for every square mile ^{of land} on the earth. And this counting every waste place and ice-capped foot of land, the sands of Sahara and Gobi and the ice lands of the Arctic and Antarctic. From pole to pole every foot of land ~~will~~ ^{would}, with an equal distribution, be occupied by these swarming thousands. Every square mile ~~will~~ ^{would} have its squirming mass of 764 people struggling with each other and with nature for maintenance for life.

That is, if the population were equally distributed. This, however, would not be the case. It is estimated that 9,068,800 square miles, or one-~~third~~ ^{third} of the land on the earth's surface is absolutely unfit for human habitation. This portion being removed from the problem, the population would necessarily be concentrated on the other two-thirds that much more, thus making the number for each square mile of habitable land 912.

Where, under that condition, would be the wheat and the ^{rice} ~~corn~~ and the potatoes and the cotton fields? Where space for the vine and the hop?

With the present conditions of human life such a state of affairs would be simply impossible. In fact it could never be reached. Starvation would be inevitable long before that density of population had been reached. Even though conditions of life had been changed by science and stress of supply and demand from

what we now have; even though an acre of land was made to yield many times what it does now, still before that density of population had been reached nature would lay her hand upon the race and in some way stay the progress of numbers. Science may prevent epidemics and pestilences, but cannot stay hunger. Man must eat or die. That is the fundamental law of life, and to it there is no exception and from it no escape.

Again, scientists have largely eradicated pestilences and deceases and the life of the individual man is much longer than it was only a few years ago! No longer is it possible, as we see conditions, for whole nations to be descimated by a scourge. Such a scourge as that of the "Black Death" in China in 1841 that carried 25,000,000 to the grave in one year, is not now possible. Malaria, yellow fever, smallpox and other deseases that formerly swept hundreds of thousands from life every year do not now exist except in a few localities where population is scarce. The doctors have bridled many of these scourges and this work has gone into the sum total of that future day when the world will stand face to face with hunger -- an enemy no science can master.

Now, let us add to this the realization of the peace-dream of these theorists who are talking of abolishing war. Suppose they do abolish it. They can't; but suppose they should, what then? With epidemics and pestilences so largely reduced; and war abolish-
ed, the rate of increase of the human family ^{would} ~~will~~ be enormously accelerated, and the day when over-population ^{would} ~~will~~ write the doom of the race greatly hastened. Under such conditions the end of the race would be inevitable. The physical conditions would render that end as certain as anything of that nature can be.

I can concieve of only two things to justify the creation

of conditions that would lead to such a result. That is the coming of the Millenium, or the destined end of the world. If the world is to end before that time the creation of conditions so dire to the race would be justified in the increase of happiness for the individual while the race lives. But of that we are not, and can not be sure. Rather can we be more logically persuaded to believe such a thing as the end of the world or that of the millennial-dream will not cut any figure whatever in this problem. They are no doubt, myths.

Suppose we could put into operation the peace dream of the theorists with the codfish. What would be the result? The rate of increase of that fish can be ascertained with reasonable accuracy, when violent deaths have been eliminated, and a little mathematics will demonstrate that under such conditions within a very few years the codfish would fill up the seas and be stacked up all over the earth.

The same may be affirmed of almost every living specie. Eliminate what corresponds to them with war to us and they would soon take the earth. This is perhaps without exception true.

And all this is the product of natural causes; it is the law of their lives. That law is from the Creator. Finding it here, operating as it does along natural lines, being a part of the Great Machinery, of earth-life, are we not illogical, to say the least, in supposing that a radical overthrow of it to avoid a harsh result even if possible, would^{not} produce another result equally harsh in the other direction? It may be asserted that the laws of nature will not be denied. They persist to a logical end. As in the case of such overproduction as we have referred to, while millions of human lives would be saved in the immediate present,

and in the near future, millions of other lives would have to give place correspondingly in the end. The earth's capacity for life is limited. It can sustain so much life and no more. Where there are too many lives starvation restores the equipoise. With horses, with dogs, and with all other dumb brutes it may be said that starvation would only thin them down to a number maintainable by their envioning conditions. But as to man this would scarcely be satisfactory. The deterioration of the individual during the long period of increassing pressure from growing numbers would be so marked and permanent that those individuals left in the final process of elimination would be but poor specimens of the present strong and mental race. Long before the final thinning by starvation the individual would be reduced along all lines, a half-starved runt unfit to survive.

The great trouble with Jordan, Bryan and their fellow advocates of peace, is that they are thinking along mental lines from a present hope towards an illogical and impossible dream. The reason why so many follow them is because the dream is of a condition of the highest ideal to the present individual; a sweet, fascinating dream, full of love, kindness and peace. If possible; yes, let us have it. In the name of suffering humanity, let us have it. But this old earth is not a dream, nor are its laws easy and kindly. They often strike brutal blows on the dreams of equality, love and peace. Blood; the blood of lust, hate and ambition has bathed every foot of earth's surface perhaps a thousand times since the first day. Blood; the blood of God's creatures slain before their time, has washed every grain of sand on this old earth. Since the earliest dawn of time it has been so; the process, the springs of life as God set them going, are still going the same

way. In the air above, in the water below, on earth everywhere the brutal slaying goes on. When did it begin? We do not know. Yet we, in our want of knowledge are justified in supposing it was so from the first. Can it be stopped? Yes, by "Him who lives above the cedars and the stars", but by Him alone. Nor does He need the assistance of man. He who made, alone can unmake. He who made can unmake when He pleases. When His good time to unmake comes He will unmake, and not before. The puny strength of men can't make, can't unmake, can't create and can't stop the process of this old earth. They can't even change the least of God's laws that He wove into the loom of this earth-life. We must, if we are logical, believe things as He made them are for the best. We may not see now that they are the best ^{or how}. We are often told by those who assume to stand for Him here, when storms pull and strain the heart-strings, that it is for the best, that He knows, that He does all things in wisdom. With this we may not quarrel though it be ever so hard to realize. In our hours of stress and suffering we can't see it. Perhaps it is in wisdom that we are so created. Sure it is that the Creator made us; made us unable to see that, to see its reason, its full bearing. All that is too deep in the mystery for any of us to understand.

And on this problem of which we are talking it is the same. We do not know why our race was so made; why such are made the inexorable laws of our lives, and we may not criticize them until we can see the why and wherefore of this life-system. A strange thing is that these idealists who would thus reverse the laws of nature by stopping war because it is wrong, as they say, will say in the next breath that the pain you suffer is for some wise purpose of God. They thus affirm of all human pain and suffering,

while talking of religion; but with an inconsistency that would be startling if not so common, in the next breath they will tell us that war is morally wrong, because it causes human suffering. They ignore the fact that what God does through His laws of nature cannot be morally wrong. That is a fundamental truth, growing conspicuously out of the plainest elements of life and reason.

We are told in the Bible that God ordered His chosen people, time and time again, to wage war on other peoples. His laws, His code of morals must be today the same as then; now and forever the same. He would not have so ordered had it been a moral wrong. That He did so order, is to acquit war of a violation of the laws He made for the government of this old world which He created.

Everywhere we see war. The first we know of man he was wielding a club and slaying. He has come down the ages with fire and sword, burning and slaying. The fishes of the sea wage eternal war; the birds of the air fight a battle that never ends; from the smallest infusoria to the largest animal it is all one story, red war, fighting and death. All nature seems driven by this law, that makes of this earth a bloody shamble.

Why? We do not know. We do know but for that, or some other thing to kill off in its place, that over-population would soon end every form of known life. That may be the reason for it; we cannot determine why this is, but it is sufficient for us to know that this is the law of earth-life. And knowing that, why try to revise it? Why try to do that which would be Creation^e--a thing beyond man's power. We may with reason try to avert the harshness of life from the individual, but how far may we hope to go with that? Certainly not to the point of eliminating the process of Nature's fundamental laws.

So it is, puzzle on puzzle, mystery on mystery. We see the many reasons that we can grasp weaving in and out with each other through and through all this misty maze of human life until we are bewildered, and at last in our hopelessness we are driven to the inevitable conclusion that what God put on earth is part of His design, and so let it stand.

James W. Oates.

March 1914.

Note.

Since the above was written many world-wide things have transpired.

As a thunderbolt out of a clear sky, a war has sprung up unparalleled in the story of earth. The old lust of passion, of hate, of greed, has again deluged the earth with blood. A fair and prosperous land, teeming with wealth, health, industry, happiness and human love, has been, because it lacked the mere brute power of effective protest, torn, ravished, burned, the old and young, the aged and helpless, women and children, have been done to death by fire and sword. And all this in the name of God and His mercies. Why? Ask of the eternal mysteries of natural forces.

Today 10,000,000 armed men face each other in a conflict bloody and deadly beyond the nightmare vision of nerveless cowardice. When and how it will end we may guess, but we may not know. The fool's guess is as good as the deduction of the sage.

Is it that same old thinning process known so well to the ages?

James W. Oates.

December 30th, 1914.