

Chapter Thirty-one

GREAT HEIGHTS ARE HAZARDOUS

*"Professor East, though you may try,
You fail to rouse my fears,
For I don't dream that even I
Will live a hundred years,
But do not think I view with mirth
Five billion folk (assorted)
Five billion tightly packed on earth
Who cannot be supported"*
(South African Review)



AT the conclusion of the New York Conference I thought that I was never going to have anything to do with organizing another. But hardly more than a few months had gone by before my mind was dwelling on one to be centered around overpopulation as a cause of war. From the statements of Keynes and the specialists of the League of Nations, and from the status of the countries of Europe, it was inferred that international peace could in no way be made secure until measures had been put into effect to deal with explosive populations.

Between 1800 and 1900 the inhabitants of the world doubled in spite of bloody wars, thus proving they were only temporary checks. For every hundred thousand babies who died between dawn and dawn, Professor East estimated that one hundred and fifty thousand were born. These fifty thousand survivors contributed to the globe in twenty years a horde almost equal to India's three hundred and seventy-five million.

In the United States, numerically speaking, overpopulation was not of apparent importance, we still had unoccupied lands. But evidence that we were beginning to consider the quality of our citizens as well as the quantity was shown in our immigration laws. In 1907 we had

barred aliens with mental, physical, communicable, or loathsome diseases, and also illiterate paupers, prostitutes, criminals, and the feeble-minded. Had these precautions been taken earlier our institutions would not now be crowded with moronic mothers, daughters, and grand-daughters—three generations at a time, all of whom have to be supported by tax-payers who shut their eyes to this condition, admittedly detrimental to the blood stream of the race.

Then our sudden closing of the doors in 1924 by placing the world on a quota, threw Europe's surplus population back on herself. Italy had to face this problem as Germany had had to do in 1914. At the Institute of Politics in Williamstown, Massachusetts, in the summer of 1925, Count Antonio Cippico, Fascist Senator, virtually demanded that, to make room for her "explosive expansion," Italy be allowed to export her half-million annual increase to foreign lands. Professor East answered him, asking Italy first to put her house in order, and setting forth with clarity the inexorable results of "spawning children on the world with haphazard recklessness." But she had no intention of doing so. Shortly afterwards Mussolini outlined his plan: "If Italy is to amount to anything it must enter into the second half of this century with at least sixty million."

Japan and Germany as well as Italy were already called danger spots in 1925. Japan's goal was a hundred million. Goring was soon to say, "The territory in which the Germans live is too small for our sixty-six million inhabitants and will be too small for the ninety million which we want to become." The three military countries were pleading with their women to bear more children, offering as inducements medals, money, lands. They claimed the right of expansion because they were too crowded at home, and were at the same time increasing their peoples in order to promote successful wars.

Populations can fall into a semi-starved state of inertia, such as that of India or China, unless they are aggressive. They have a choice of three courses: to lower the standards of living to the bare subsistence level, to control the birth rate, or to reach out for colonies as Great Britain has done.

While we had been holding our conference in London in 1922 I had met at one of Major Putnam's luncheons the Very Reverend "gloomy" Dean Inge, except that he was not gloomy at all, he was full of mis-

chief. In his late fifties, tall, thin as an exclamation point, quite deaf, he reminded me of a Dickens character. He had commented in his usual pungent style on the real meaning of the right to expand.

It is a pleasant prospect if every nation with a high birth rate has a "right" to exterminate its neighbors. The supposed duty of multiplication, and the alleged right to expand, are among the chief causes of modern war, and I repeat that if they justify war, it must be a war of extermination, since mere conquest does nothing to solve the problem.

I was still of the opinion in 1925 that the League of Nations should include birth control in its program and proclaim that increase in numbers was not to be regarded as a justifiable reason for national expansion, but that each nation should limit its inhabitants to its resources as a fundamental principle of international peace.

On the other hand, it was all very well to say, "Cut down your numbers," but how could this be done if scientific and medical development lagged so far behind that few knew how to do it? Building up huge populations by following the way of nature was fairly simple, but it was by no means simple to reduce them again voluntarily. No long-range program was possible until economists, sociologists, and biologists alike should garner and contribute facts to the solution. Therefore the occasion was now ripe for the attention of the scientific world to be focused on the population question. I planned to bring them together at Geneva, the logical meeting place.

Dr. Little, who had accepted the presidency for the next international birth control conference, had gone to the University of Michigan as its President. He had no time for organizing, raising money, getting speakers, if this lengthy job of organizing the World Population Conference were to be done. I should have to do it.

So great was the competition between the League of Nations and other groups desiring to hold conventions at Geneva during its sessions that you had to book an auditorium and rooms for delegates practically twelve months ahead. Consequently, towards the end of 1926 I went to Geneva to make arrangements for an expected three hundred guests. I had previously become acquainted with several Genevese. William Rappard, then a professor at the university there, consented to go

on our committee and advise me on social details with which only a native would be familiar

More vital to me was the Labor Office of the League, where it was not a matter of politics but of industrial problems thrashed out by people chosen for their special knowledge. Here I met Albert Thomas, a strange-looking person, short, stocky, with black beard sprouting over his face, very talkative, amazing in his energy, traveling over Europe by night, arriving in Geneva in the morning, conducting his business affairs, making speeches. But with all this activity he managed to spare hours enough to help me immeasurably when I consulted him on subjects, persons, locations, and dates.

The Salle Centrale was engaged for three days, August 30th to September 2nd of the next year, 1927. Back I went to London to enlist an English committee. Clinton Chance became my husband's assistant in supervising finances, and also provided London headquarters in his offices, supplying stenographers and secretaries. Edith How-Martyn joined us and I secured the invaluable aid of Julian Huxley, brother of Aldous, a brilliant, young, enthusiastic scientist, alive and having a mind that not only took things in, but gave them out. The Conference owed much to his fair and just opinions and the fine supporters he rounded up. Together we went over names and names and names, trying to choose a chairman of sufficient distinction around whom European scientists would rally. Professor A. M. Carr-Saunders at first accepted, but a month and a half later informed me his other obligations were so heavy he would have to limit his participation to membership on the Council.

After weeks of uncertainty, interviews, and rejections, we selected Sir Bernard Mallet, K. C. B., once of the Foreign Office, Treasury, Board of Inland Revenue, later Registrar General of Births, Deaths, and Marriages, and President of the Royal Statistical Society. Although very English, he was not too conservative. He knew well Sir Eric Drummond, then head of the League of Nations, and also had many friends on the Continent, particularly in Italy. He was typical of an individual who had climbed far, who knew where he was going and the road by which he should travel. Bored at being now in retirement, he accepted our offer willingly because, although no salary was attached, it would give him a position and an interest, and keep him

socially in touch with noteworthy figures Lady Mallet's previous experience as lady-in-waiting to Queen Victoria made her an expert hostess, and this too we needed

Once I had to make an expedition all the way to Edinburgh to seek out Dr F A E Crew, a shining light among the younger biologists, who was making hens crow and roosters lay eggs He readily agreed to come to the Conference and during the two days I visited him helped me build up my program

I also wanted a paper read by André Siegfried, author of *America Comes of Age*, written after journeying some six weeks through the United States When he invited me to tea at his home in Paris, I found him in appearance more like a mixture of American and English than French But you could feel from his attitude and deduce from his conversation that he really envied, despised, hated Americans, by invading France with our "wealth and vulgarity," we had utterly spoiled it for his compatriots Appreciating good food, which we never had at home, we squandered enormously, four or five times what they did The same was true of wine, we were drinking their best, paying high for it without being able to tell the difference when we were given cheap vintages Consequently, the Parisians were being shut out of Paris because they could not afford the prices

"I don't see how you can blame the Americans for coming over and paying what you French ask," I replied "You might have a complaint perhaps if we tried to undersell you or refused to buy But it seems to me you are profiting considerably by this 'outrageous intrusion of the American dollar' "

Although we did not get on very well and although he would not read a paper, he consented to attend

Some of the preliminaries having been set, my husband took a villa at Cap d'Ail between Nice and Monte Carlo and near enough to Geneva, Paris, and London for trips whenever necessary From my room the sunrise was incredibly vivid—reds and yellows mixed with the glorious blue of the Mediterranean But it was not warm H G, who had a villa at Grasse, said the Riviera reputation for summer heat in wintertide was a fraud We used to drive up to see him, the flowers for the perfume manufactories grew thick on the hillsides, so thick that the air for miles around was fragrant Occasionally we picnicked in

the tiny village on top of the mountain of Ez, a favorite haunt of artists. Once the old castle had belonged to robber barons, who could see for miles the approach of a ship, now the elder Mrs. O. P. Belmont had a palatial residence there.

The Riviera was always a Mecca for English people wanting to escape their own cold and fog and damp, and our eight guest rooms were full most of the time. It was quite novel for me to manage a household in French. We had the traditional bad luck of Americans, the maids stole from the guests and the hot water boiler only held ten gallons—not a person could have a good bath until a modern one was installed. My first cook was an expert in her field, but I soon found she was running over in her bills, even allowing for the customary perquisite of a sou for each franc she spent with the butcher and the greengrocer. Eggs and butter were on the list every day, but never how many eggs nor how much butter. I laid the responsibility on my own bad French, before I discovered it was her understanding of Americans. Then and there I told her she had to leave the following day immediately after breakfast. She received this ultimatum with tears and wailing. Somewhat uneasy I rose early at seven only to find she had gone late the preceding night, taking with her every scrap of food in the pantry and storeroom except the salt.

On one of my frequent flittings to London I went to a hairdressers' shop, unfamiliar to me but carrying the insignia of reliability, "By Appointment to Her Majesty." I was to return to Cap d'Ail in a few days and wished to appear with a wave in my hair, which I wore Mid-Victorian, very sweet and simple. After washing it, the coiffeur put an iron on a little gas arrangement in the window near by and left the room while it was drying, floating out in the wind.

Meanwhile I meditated on the subject of hair. The story of Samson seemed to have been more than an allegorical tale. I could tell from the way mine acted on being brushed in the morning how I myself was going to be. If it were strong and electric, then I was full of vitality. When slumped over my forehead so that it had to be tied down, then I dragged about spiritlessly.

It was also interesting to analyze why a woman should wear her hair in a certain style. I knew some who, at the age of sixty, curled theirs in baby ringlets, doubtless something within them wanted never

to grow up Women who had gone into the underground movement in Russia took the shears to theirs so that nothing should divert the attention to feminine appeal I was not enough of a Feminist to sacrifice mine, but I had once come to the conclusion that the triumph of life would be to push it straight back from my forehead and tie it in a knot behind, because that was how people thought I looked But I could not do it No matter what was said about your feet or your figure, you could at least show your hair—in front of hats, down your back, everywhere, and so I had clung tenaciously to my long locks

At this point in my musings I smelled something burning and turned around to find half my hair singed off to my ear I gave one shriek, and the whole staff rushed in But it was too late, it all had to be cut short and I actually wept

As soon as I reached Paris I had what was left done up like a switch so that I could put it on if I felt too badly I kept it in a box, all ready in case my husband did not want me without my hair Eventually I had to face his disapproval I appeared for dinner Nothing was said Although internally amused the guests maintained grave faces, waiting for him to notice it, not until next morning did he do so My own attitude had changed overnight, never did I want to return to long hair

During early spring, just when it was beginning to be most beautiful, I could spend little time at Cap d'Ail Permanent headquarters were established in April at Geneva—four airy, spacious rooms up two flights I had expected Edith How-Martyn to be with me, but she came down with scarlet fever in London It was a complication to do without her until Mrs Marjorie Martin, who had organized a pool of stenographers, secretaries, and typists at the Labor Bureau, furnished us with a most competent and experienced office staff of seventeen

At four-thirty our large reception room was transformed into a living room where all the employees and volunteers gathered Each in turn provided cakes, brewed the tea, and washed up afterwards One evening at a quarter to seven some good American stopped in and, seeing everybody smiling and cheerful though still at work, asked, "Will you tell me what magic you women use to create this atmosphere? You've been at it since seven this morning"

The answer was—tea at four-thirty

I liked being in Geneva, neat and clean and filled with watch shops I did not even mind the great numbers of people in solemn, black clothes If anyone died in this Calvinist city, the family wore full mourning for one year, and half for the following—in large families the process became almost perpetual

I was not stimulated by the League sittings There was much reading of papers and a lot of noise, but no breathless excitement during the debates Instead, the members talked in small groups, looking very bored The big things, just as in Washington, were done behind the scenes, at dinner tables, and in private conferences The general meetings were merely sounding boards for public opinion One of the most interesting features was the way a delegate could make a speech in his own language and others at their desks could plug in earphones and hear it simultaneously in theirs, coming from booths off stage

Delegates to our Conference were all asking whether their papers were to be given in their respective tongues I came to one swift decision—to adopt the bilingual League precedent of French and English It was simple enough to secure interpreters who were familiar with political terminology, because they swarmed at Geneva, but to find those who understood scientific terms in German, Italian, Hungarian, Scandinavian, Portuguese, Greek, Spanish, Japanese, and Chinese was quite another affair We tried to catch as many as we could passing through Geneva and hold them over during the time we needed their services

In order to facilitate matters my husband generously financed the morning journal to be delivered on the breakfast tray of every person registered at the Conference, and also to members of the League of Nations It was printed in English and French in parallel columns, containing the papers, the discussions, and any news items that might concern the delegates

Entertainment was an important feature A series of luncheons was to be held at the Restaurant Besson, with a host at each table, and daily the seating was to be rearranged so that each guest might be placed between those who spoke his own language or languages M Rappard was to give a reception M Fatio invited us on board the *Montreux* to visit Mme de Staël's former home at Coppet The chief social event was the reception and dinner at Mrs Stanley McCormick's Fifteenth

Century Château de Prangins at Nyon She herself could not be there, but sent a representative from America to open it, equip it with servants, and make everything ready

Adequate handling of publicity was essential, and Albin Johnson, correspondent of the *New York World*, did this for me He knew who was who, whom to avoid, and what persons would put the proper emphasis on what He volunteered his services, but some of his assistants had to be paid

We offered expenses to all speakers and certain visitors who might later be influential in their own communities The outpouring of money was constant and I was not getting enough by soliciting from wealthy individuals Consequently, giving up the villa in May, I came back to the United States to secure some from a foundation

By now I knew I should be gone for at least another year, and someone had to take charge during my absence The woman on our Board of Directors who seemed to be the most selflessly devoted, giving time and effort without stint, able to speak and to direct, was Mrs F Robertson-Jones She went to meetings in blizzard or rainstorm, by subway or on foot if necessary No dressmaker, no friend dropping in to lunch kept her from her job But she differed from me in one respect She could not run things unless she felt secure, she wanted a definite signing on the dotted line for so much annually instead of voluntary contributions of what people felt they could afford when they could afford it This was quite against the spirit on which the movement had always proceeded, but I was willing to compromise I did not then realize how serious it was going to prove in the future to have ceded this fundamental precept She accepted the temporary presidency and I sailed back, reaching Geneva in July

I was surprised at the rising tide of international solidarity which, in this non-industrial city, evidenced itself in astonishing fashion the night Sacco and Vanzetti were to be electrocuted I had been working late at the office and when I came out towards midnight the crowds in the streets were so dense I could hardly move As soon as word came in the early morning that the execution had not been stayed, they shouted reproaches before the houses of Americans, smashed the windows of the United States Consulate, and some in the League building

Even in front of the Hôtel des Bergues, where we were stopping, they clamored their protests

The great Dr William Welch of Johns Hopkins was in Geneva at this time, a cheerful person, roly-poly, abounding in fun and sly, acute remarks To listen to his unimpressive conversation you would never suspect that here was one whose name was known around the world We had lunch together one noon He knew how much I was depending on the Conference, how much I was hoping that the population aspect of birth control should be started in the right direction and under the right auspices He walked a little way with me and then, putting his arm across my shoulders, said, "Perhaps you think your battles are over, but they aren't "

I felt he was trying to prepare me for something having gone wrong, though I could not imagine what it was From then on I was aware of an unpleasant subterranean mystery insidiously disturbing the previous harmony But nobody talked openly

During my absence in the United States, Sir Bernard had been collecting his European friends Not only was Italy intent on increasing her population, but the reactionary element of France also had formed a society to combat birth control We had invited the Italians, Guglielmo Ferrero and Gaetano Salvemini, but Sir Bernard had been induced to accept as a substitute Corrado Gini, who, dark, swarthy, highly egotistical, speaking English painfully, was the perfect mirror of Mussolini's sentiments, and turned out to be a most tiresome speaker and a general nuisance

The delegates, Gini among the first, began to gather late in August The storm broke the Friday before our scheduled opening Tuesday, August 31st Proofs of the official program had just come to me for my approval Sir Bernard came into my office and looked at them "Well, we'll just cross these off," he said, drawing his pencil through my name and those of my assistants

"Why are you doing that?"

"The names of the workers should not be included on scientific programs "

"These people are different," I objected "In their particular lines they are as much experts as the scientists "

"It doesn't matter They can't go on Out of the question It's not done "

A long cry of dismay went up from the staff They considered the action reprehensible and petty The young woman who was to deliver the program to the printers would not do so Saturday morning, secretaries and typists—twenty-one altogether—struck in a body, and without them the Conference could not proceed successfully

While Dr Little was trying his powers of persuasion on them, I reported the situation to Sir Bernard, saying that in justice to the women who had given so generously of their time and effort, who had raised the money, issued the invitations, paid the delegates' expenses, they should be given proper credit All the latter had had to do was walk in at the last moment, present their papers, and take part in the social life planned for them

Having registered my sentiments, I spent most of Sunday convincing the members of the staff that the Conference was bigger than their own hurt feelings and making them promise to return, Edith How-Martyn, however, who had joined me some time before, refused to continue because the hard labor of the workers was not to be acknowledged

Though suspecting that the elimination of my name was the crux of the matter, I was still at a loss to know the exact reason back of this tempest until one of the delegates told me the story Sir Eric Drummond had warned Sir Bernard that these distinguished scientists would be the laughing stock of all Europe if it were known that a woman had brought them together Hence, in order to influence Italian and French delegates to attend, Sir Bernard had secretly pledged that I was not to be a party to the Conference and no discussion of birth control or Malthusianism would be allowed He had hoped that the whole thing might be muddled through, and, when the delegates had come drifting in, had gone from one to another to urge, "I ask you to stand by me, do not let me down "

Only our young English friends had held out for the recognition of the women I was not surprised at the Europeans, but it was difficult to comprehend the American attitude on this point Perhaps Professor Pearl and Dr Little, in agreeing to support Sir Bernard, had not realized the unfairness of the action, Clarence Little was as honest a human

being as you could find, but sometimes I thought his personal allegiances obstructed his vision, he used his intelligence to make up arguments on the side of loyalty rather than on the side of principles

At the hour designated the first meeting opened in the Salle Centrale. Each delegate had a number of extra tickets, and with the German, Belgian, and French contingents came several gentlemen with large silver crosses hanging down outside their coats. In the lobby a Genevese book concern had been permitted to set up a table for the sale of volumes by delegates. These guests immediately demanded of Sir Bernard that a certain one, of which they disapproved, be banished. Sir Bernard trotted to me and said he wished no trouble, there seemed to be some controversy. Would I have the offending books taken away?

I approached the strangers and asked who they were. They vociferated in various languages, shaking the book under my nose, getting red in the face, looking as though apoplexy might smite them. I sent for an interpreter and instructed him to say, "The hall will be for rent next Monday. Meantime, I have paid for it and will suffer no dictation from anybody as to what shall be done here."

The disturbers did not depart, and the excitement around the bookstand was so considerable that the volumes were sold out and more had to be ordered.

During the course of the Conference the Americans, British, and Scandinavians admitted the need for limiting population, the Germans and Czechs concurred, although with less assurance, the Italian and Slav voices were definitely opposed, the French, who practiced it at home, preached against it publicly. The papers of Professors East and Fairchild came perilously near mentioning the forbidden word Malthusianism, but as for birth control, it was edged about like a bomb which might explode any moment.

At the close of the three days a permanent population union was formed which is still meeting—the only international group dealing with the problem.

All the brilliant committee now took trains and steamed off for home, leaving me with the bills, the clearing up, and, most important of all, the editing of the proceedings. After a rest at a sanatorium at Glion in Switzerland I set to work, and by the end of November they

had gone to press I wanted to visit India but had to think of this trip in terms of physical fitness and, consequently, was obliged to forego it. Instead, I accepted an invitation sent me by Agnes Smedley on behalf of the Association of German Medical Women to lecture in Germany in December.

The Berlin of 1927 was far different from that of 1920. Food was plentiful, if expensive, the Adlon and other restaurants were crowded, a stirring of life and nationalism was everywhere to be sensed. At the appearance of a Zeppelin in the skies, men in the streets took off their hats as though it had been a god.

When I spoke in the Town Hall of Charlottenburg-Berlin I was reminded of the birth strike German women had been carrying on when I had last been there. German men seemed to have remembered little of this, still thinking they could keep their wives to childbearing, "their race function," as it was called. But the women had now definitely directed their thoughts from race preservation to self-preservation. As I said to my audience, "Birth control has always been practiced, beginning with infanticide, which is abhorred, and then by abortion, nearly as bad. Contraception, on the other hand, is harmless."

Almost before I had finished Dr. Alfred Grotjahn, Professor of Social Hygiene at the University of Berlin, who was seeking to present the picture of Germany's future greatness in terms of numbers, shouted out that every woman ought to have three children before she should be allowed contraceptive information. No sooner had he resumed his seat than several women were demanding recognition. I was told one of them was Dr. Marthe Ruben-Wolf. "She's a Communist. What she's saying is all on your side, but it won't do any good, because nobody has ever been able to cope with Grotjahn." Nevertheless, she answered him figure for figure, fact for fact, each based on her experience, adding that his patriotism was only skin deep. He might as well bury himself now, he would soon be buried by the rising generation and forgotten.

Then a huge shape arose, garbed in uniform and bonnet. I thought she must be a deaconess, but she turned out to be President of the Midwives Association. She bellowed in tones even louder than those of Grotjahn, putting herself on record against birth control. She could

not be stopped, she would not sit down even when the bell was rung. Others answered her—the debate developed into a regular bear garden before the contestants were separated and removed.

As a result of the meeting some twenty women physicians gathered at my hotel two evenings later. Clinics were to be established at Neukölln under Dr. Kurt Bendix, the health administrator of the section, for the first time in history a government agency was actually sanctioning birth control. I promised fifty dollars a month for three years towards supplies, the doctors agreed to furnish rooms and medical services. They had a more Feminist point of view than ours in the United States, Ellen Key's liberal influence had seeped through from Scandinavia. Nevertheless, I was astonished that in the very country where we were purchasing our contraceptives, these outstanding members of their profession knew practically nothing about them. The original clinic was opened the following May and for five years contraceptive information was given in a dozen places under medical supervision. Then the Nazis came into power, they were closed, and Dr. Bendix committed suicide.

Towards the middle of the month I went to Frankfurt-am-Main where Dr. Herthe Riese was managing one of the largest of the marriage advice bureaus, of which there were about fifteen hundred in Germany. Anyone could apply to these for legal information and, for example, receive enlightenment as to who should have custody of a child if illegitimate, the amount of alimony to be paid by the husband in case of divorce, the nationality of a child if the father were a foreigner, the effect of sterilization, the results of the marriage of cousins, or any problem, including homosexuality and inversion, feeble-mindedness and abortion.

In this period of great unemployment, bearing particularly heavily upon families with many children, Dr. Riese had gone to the officers of one of the big health insurance companies and persuaded them that it would be economical for them to underwrite sterilization of women carrying health insurance if this were advised by a doctor. I saw her order seventy-five of these major operations one evening between six o'clock and eight-thirty in her own clinic. Professor Grotjahn had created almost a slogan by his demand that in order to bolster up the falling birth rate every wife have three children. But the women had

a counter slogan, they came in saying, "I've had my three I want an operation" I saw also some who had returned from the hospital to report They appeared happy and proud and pleased with themselves Their ten days or two weeks in bed had meant food and much-needed rest

After Germany I went vacationing to St Moritz, to play, to skate, to ski, in that glorious high altitude It was transcendently beautiful I used to get up in the morning and listen to the sleighs coming up the hill with their tinkling bells, and look out at the scintillating snow, every twig of every tree was encased in ice on which the sun glistened without melting it The scene was a white etching

St Moritz was much frequented by nobility and royalty on holiday Whenever one of them arrived, like a flock of birds the hangers-on winged their way thither, settled down in all the hotels so that ordinary folk could scarcely find room

Almost the first person I met was Lady Astor, more British than the British themselves, the Southern accent entirely gone Her blond hair was turned sand-colored, her blue eyes were always gay, her tanned and rugged features sharp, mouth and jaw firm set, neck clean cut She was quick-tempered and frank, and ready to take fire easily Lord Astor, who was devoted to his wife, was much more politically astute, and usually went campaigning with her He sat directly behind her, and, when the heckling began or a question was posed which might involve her in difficulties, he called out in a stage whisper, "Don't be drawn, Nancy, don't be drawn!"

During one House of Commons debate, Lady Astor had attempted to drive home a point by stating she was the mother of five children and therefore ought to know

Her opponent, taking issue with her, had jumped up, saying his word should carry more weight on the subject because he was the father of seven

Lady Astor then retorted, "But I haven't finished yet"

The British professed to be horrified at this—so vulgar and American!

Once after Lady Astor had been off sking all day, I joined her in her room shortly before dinner She was sitting up in bed, the windows wide open, cold cream smeared over her sunburned face, her glasses

on her nose, reading *Science and Health* with the Bible near by She had not quite ended her day's lesson

Almost wherever I am, the subject of birth control comes up sooner or later, and it did on this occasion Lady Astor seemed to think her religion forbade her believing in it "If they want babies, let them have babies If they don't want them, let them practice continence "

"Even accepting that continence is the ultimate ideal," I replied, "wouldn't you agree that contraception as an immediate necessity to help millions of women is of equal importance with wearing glasses to read the Bible? As a good Christian Scientist you should not use them Until you get enough faith to go without, don't you think it better to read Mary Baker Eddy through some such means as glasses than not at all?"

In one second she beamed "You're perfectly right That's only reasonable "

If you present common-sense people with the premise that birth control is common sense, they will always react in a common-sense way Lady Astor was a practical person, and from that time on she has been a friend of the movement