

## Chapter 8: Dangers of Cradle Competition

We should not minimize the great outstanding service of Eugenics for critical and diagnostic investigations. It demonstrates, not in terms of glittering generalization but in statistical studies of investigations reduced to measurement and number, that uncontrolled fertility is universally correlated with disease, poverty, overcrowding and the transmission of hereditary taints. Professor Pearson and his associates show us that "if fertility be correlated with anti-social hereditary characters, a population will inevitably degenerate." This degeneration has already begun. Eugenists demonstrate that two-thirds of our manhood of military age are physically too unfit to shoulder a rifle; that the feeble-minded, the syphilitic, the irresponsible and the defective breed unhindered; that women are driven into factories and shops on day-shift and night-shift; that children, frail carriers of the torch of life, are put to work at an early age; that society at large is breeding an ever-increasing army of under-sized, stunted and dehumanized slaves; that the vicious circle of mental and physical defect, delinquency and beggary is encouraged, by the unseeing and unthinking sentimentality of our age, to populate asylum, hospital and prison.

All these things the Eugenists sees and points out with a courage entirely admirable. But as a positive program of redemption, orthodox Eugenics can offer nothing more "constructive" than a renewed "cradle competition" between the "fit" and the "unfit." It sees that the most responsible and most intelligent members of society are the less fertile; that the feeble-minded are the more fertile. Herein lies the unbalance, the great biological menace to the future of civilization. Are we heading to biological destruction, toward the gradual but certain attack upon the stocks of intelligence and racial health by the sinister forces of the hordes of irresponsibility and imbecility? This is not such a remote danger as the optimistic Eugenist might suppose. The mating of the moron with a person of sound stock may, as Dr. Tredgold points out, gradually disseminate this trait far and wide until it undermines the vigor and efficiency of an entire nation and an entire race. This is no idle fancy. We must take it into account if we wish to escape the fate that has befallen so many civilizations in the past.