

A DEFECTIVE CENSUS.

THE Constitution requires Congress to provide for a decennial enumeration of the people of the United States. It was not intended thus to make a vain show of our national strength, but solely to secure to the people of each State their proportionate representation as stipulated in the organic law. When the population has been correctly ascertained and returned, it is the duty of Congress to apportion representatives among the several States according to the numbers so returned. If the return does not include "the whole number of persons in each State, excluding Indians not taxed," the right of representation, to the extent of the omission, is confiscated and lost. That right is the right preservative of all rights, and unless it is secured, every other is beyond the protecting power of the citizen. Under a free government no right should be more jealously guarded, none should be more firmly supported, and encroachment upon none should be more universally condemned. If any considerable number of persons is omitted from the return, and if that number is sufficiently large to be entitled to one representative, the wrong should be exposed and the proper correction should be made. Where the false return affects only a few small localities, the injury is comparatively insignificant; but when, either by negligence or by design, it extends so far as to decrease the number of the majority party and to increase the number of the minority party until they seem to have exchanged positions, then the wrong transfers the governing power from the majority to the minority and affects the entire people.

Since the advent to power of the present administration, a suspicion has been entertained by many that the eleventh census would prove to be a partisan raid on the right of representation. The official report of the census bureau, now made public, has not entirely removed all cause for that suspicion. The announcement that our population is only 62,662,250 was a genuine

surprise, not only to those who looked for the dark side of the picture, but also to those whose faith in the administration and its census bureau had never for a moment wavered. The census of 1880 gave us 50,155,783. The present returns give us an increase of 12,466,467, which is at the rate of 24.86 per cent. That this number is not even approximately correct, may be seen by comparing the increase in this decade with the gains in others which have preceded it. It will not satisfy the candid mind to say that this is the actual enumeration; and that it cannot be impeached by comparison with those of other decades or with the estimates of experts. Any alleged fact that is without the pale of probability, stands impeached at the very threshold of the inquiry, and must be verified by competent evidence. If the census returns had stated that a million of our people exceed twenty feet in height, or that one half of them have red eyes and the other half blue hair, no one would have believed the report. If they had shown that our population had decreased during the decade, that statement would have been equally incredible. None of these reports would have been credited, because all of them would have been beyond the boundaries of probability. Any statement reported to be true, in order to receive credence must be in harmony with things that we know to be true.

It is improbable that our population does not exceed the number reported. The report is out of harmony with those of every other decade of our history, except that of the civil war. From 1810 to 1860 our decennial increase ranged between 36.38 and 35.58 per cent. At no period outside the war period has our increase been so low as 24.86 per cent. Nothing short of war, pestilence, or famine could account for such an extraordinary fall in the rate of increase. Mr. Porter says that the general law governing the increase of population is that "it goes on at a constantly-diminishing rate." That is true generally, but not universally. From 1790 to 1800 the percentage was 35.10; in the next decade it was 36.38. Here was an increasing rate, not a diminishing one. From 1810 to 1820 it was 33.07 per cent. Here was a diminishing rate, but it did not continue to fall, for from 1820 to 1830 it was 33.55 per cent. From 1830 to 1840 it was 32.67 per cent., but from 1840 to 1850 it

was 35.87 per cent. These fluctuations were caused by the introduction of the factor of immigration. In decades where the immigration is larger, the percentage of increase is larger, and where it is smaller, the reverse is true. If additions and subtractions by immigration, wars, pestilences, and famines are left out of the computation, the rate of increase of population is found to be constantly diminishing; but the diminution is gradual and steady; it is not volcanic or spasmodic in its movements, as the report of the eleventh census would show it to be.

In order to get nearer to the law that governs the increase of population, we should eliminate immigration from our estimates. Its presence tends only to obscure the problem and to make it more difficult of solution. In the decade from 1840 to 1850, when we had 35.87 per cent. increase, we had more than a million of immigrants in excess of those of the preceding decades, and from 1850 to 1860, when we had 35.58 per cent. increase, we again had a million more immigrants than in the decade immediately preceding. But from 1860 to 1870, when our increase was at the rate of 22.63 per cent., we had a decrease of immigration as well as a tremendous civil war. From 1870 to 1880, when our increase was at the rate of 30.08 per cent., the lowest we had ever had outside of the war period, our immigration exceeded that of the preceding decade by only 420,000. Our immigration from 1880 to 1890 was 5,246,613, without including accessions from Mexico, and from the British possessions since 1885, which the bureau of statistics estimates, from Canadian records, at 540,000, making the total of immigrants for the decade 5,786,613. This number is more than twice as large as that of any former decade, and yet the percentage of increase falls from 30.08 to 24.86! Where does this enormous shrinkage come from? Certainly not from wars, pestilences, and famines, for we have not been visited by any of these scourges during the last ten years. By subtracting from the total population the number of immigrants received in each decade, we can ascertain the rate of natural increase in each. From 1820 to the present we have official reports of the numbers of immigrants, and subtracting these from the totals in each decade, we find that the rates of increase have been as follows:

From 1820 to 1830,.....	31.65 per cent.	
“ 1830 “ 1840,.....	28.01	“
“ 1840 “ 1850,.....	25.83	“
“ 1850 “ 1860,.....	24.45	“
“ 1860 “ 1870,.....	15.38	“
“ 1870 “ 1880,.....	22.78	“
“ 1880 “ 1890,.....	13.32	“

If we do not subtract the estimated immigration from Canada, the last rate becomes 14.39 per cent.

Here we see Mr. Porter's law of the diminishing ratio, and observe how closely the successive falls approach one another. In the decade from 1860 to 1870, we see an abnormal depression from 24.45 per cent. to 15.38 per cent. It ended before the next decade began, and the rate of increase took its normal place in line at 22.78. From 1880 to 1890 it should have been close to 20 per cent.; but the census report tells us that it was 13.32—lower than during the war decade. An increase of 20 per cent. would have brought us in the neighborhood of the estimates of the experts of the Treasury Department. Professor Elliot, actuary of the Treasury Department, estimated the population for 1888 at 62,728,000, and that for 1889 at 64,554,000. He did not carry forward his calculations to 1890; but if he had done so, using the same ratio of increase, he would have estimated our population in 1890 at more than 66,200,000. Mr. McCoy, his successor, estimated our population for 1888 at 62,621,000, for 1889 at 64,403,000, and for 1890 at 66,236,000. Both of them adopted the actual returns made in 1880 as the basis of their estimates, and, judging by Mr. Porter's report, both aimed wide of the mark. To impair the value of Professor Elliot's estimates, it is asserted that he put our population for 1880 at 50,858,000, while the actual count showed it to be 50,155,000. That is true. He made this estimate in 1874, and doubtless took into account the large influx of population that had been for five years pouring upon our shores. Unhappily for his prediction, it began to fall off, and continued to fall till 1879, when it began to revive again. During the last half of the decade the annual decrease was more than 100,000 below the average of the five preceding years. When proper allowance has been made

for this, his figures for 1880 will be found to be in the neighborhood of those obtained by the enumerators.

The actual numbers returned for the years 1870, 1880, and 1890 show that 38,558,371 people made a larger natural increase from 1870 to 1880, than 50,155,783 people did from 1880 to 1890. Deducting the immigrants from the figures of both periods, the increase in 1870-80 is found to have been 8,785,121, and that in 1880-90 to have been 7,219,854. Can it be seriously contended that 38,000,000 people increased 1,000,000 more than 50,000,000 of the same people did? The census report declares that startling fact, but the Superintendent asks the people to believe only one half of it. He sees the palpable absurdity of such a statement, and to escape it plunges into a worse one. He assails the census of 1870, and says that it should have shown 39,818,449 people instead of 38,558,371, and that the increase in the previous decade should have been 26.6 per cent. instead of 22.63. To make his logic fit the situation, he adds 1,260,078 to the returns of 1870. This addition makes the percentage of increase from 1870 to 1880 25.9 instead of 30.08 per cent. Is it possible that Mr. Porter can be serious when he says that our population increased during the war decade faster than in the peace decade following? Does he ignore the fact that immigration during that decade was more than 300,000 below that of the preceding decade, and more than 500,000 below that of the succeeding decade? Does he ignore the facts that more than 500,000 people perished from causes arising out of the war, that from 2,000,000 to 2,500,000 men were in the field, and that a vast number of these were husbands who were separated from their families for a great part of that time? He ignores the war and all its destructive effects on population, and contends that, during all that time, when the sexes were separated to so great an extent, there were more births than in the next decade—a period of profound peace.

Thus the Superintendent has been placed by his enumerators in an unhappy situation. To escape the conclusion that their figures have forced upon him—that 38,000,000 people have increased faster than 50,000,000—he flies for refuge to the still more absurd position that the increase of our population was

greater during a time when the sexes were separated than when they were united. Taking the corrected figures of 1870, as made by the Superintendent, and leaving out immigration, the rate of increase from 1860 to 1870 is 19.38 per cent. Here is still a spasmodic fall from 24.45 to 19.38 per cent., though the diminution of the rate was less than two per cent. in the preceding decade. The rate of increase from 1870 to 1880 is reduced by Mr. Porter's corrections to 18.89 per cent., which is as much too small as the other is too large. From 18.89 in 1880 Mr. Porter plunges to 13.32 in 1890. Thus the diminution of the rate has changed suddenly from one half of one per cent. to five and a half per cent. It is plain that his corrected statement does not extricate the Superintendent from the position in which he is placed by his enumerators. It may be true that the census in South Carolina was defective in 1870, and perhaps it may have been so to a small extent in some of the other southern States. The non-enumerated in all of them were not more than half a million. Now if we take the census of 1870, and add 500,000 for those omitted and 2,000,000 for the loss of life and the retardation of increase caused by the war, we shall have the following rates of increase, immigrants being omitted:

From 1820 to 1830,.....	31.65
“ 1830 “ 1840,.....	28.01
“ 1840 “ 1850,.....	25.83
“ 1850 “ 1860,.....	24.45
“ 1860 “ 1870,.....	23.33
“ 1870 “ 1880,.....	21.50
“ 1880 “ 1890,.....	13.32

Thus it is evident that whether we take Mr. Porter's figures without any allowance for the war, or with the effects of the war added, they by no means account for the apparent loss of population, which has been, as shown by him, greater during the decade just ended than it was during the decade of hospitals, prison pens, and battlefields. The percentage of 1890, to be in harmony with the whole line of preceding decades, except that of the war, should have been nearly 20, which would have given us a total population of 65,000,000 or 66,000,000. It is said that the very low rate of increase, as shown by the census of

1870, in Virginia, North and South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Kentucky, and Tennessee, proves that their populations had not been correctly taken. Does not that record point rather to the terrible results of war? For nearly half that decade almost all the males of the white race who were able to bear arms were in the field, and thousands of them perished. Did it ever occur to Mr. Porter that vast numbers of them fled with their slaves before the advancing armies of the United States and took refuge in Florida and Texas? He did not embrace these two States among those whose populations he says were not enumerated correctly. Texas showed in 1870 an increase of 35.48 per cent., and Florida one of 33.70. It is strange that while their sister States of the South were neglected by the enumerators, they fared so well. Each showed a greater increase than any one of the New England States, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Ohio, or Indiana, and was about 13 per cent. above the average of all the other States. Mr. Porter thinks that the low rates of increase reported for Kentucky and Tennessee in 1870 prove that they were neglected in the census of that year. But, though they had 500,000 men in the field during four years of the preceding decade, their population increased at the rate of 14.30 per cent., while during 1880-90, when all their citizens were at home, it increased, according to the recent census, at the rate of only 13.65 per cent. If an increase of 14.30 per cent. in time of war is so low as to justify the conclusion that they were neglected then, what conclusion is to be drawn from the lower rate of 13.65 in a time of profound peace and undisturbed prosperity? If they went without proper representation in Congress then, what is the outlook now? There is no room to doubt that the census was substantially correct then, and that their increase of 23.70 per cent. in 1870-80 was the natural result of peace and of the return of soldiers to their homes. But who can account for their fearful leap backward in 1890? The small increase of the colored population in the South was attributable to the same cause that hindered the growth of the white population. Many thousands of them were enlisted in the armies of the United States, and many thousands more were attached to the armies in different capacities. The

same cause that reduced the rate of increase among the whites reduced it among the blacks. It is possible that South Carolina and some others of the southern States may have been underestimated in 1870, but they have fared worse under the census of 1890. It is strange that a gentleman of Mr. Porter's intelligence should wholly ignore the war as a factor in reducing the rate of increase of population of "the fire-girt circle." He seems to be oblivious of the fact that the country of which he speaks was the theater for four years of the most gigantic war that has ever occurred in the world. He is mistaken in his assumptions; it was not the census of 1870, but the one of 1890, that caused the discrepancy.

The statistics of scholastic population taken in the different States of the Union show that the census of 1890 is not correct. The children of school age are enumerated by officers appointed under the authority of the State governments. Their number is annually reported at Washington, and from the rate of annual increase of those within given ages the total population of each State can be closely calculated. I am informed by the Commissioner of Education that there were in Texas in 1880, 311,567 children between the ages of eight and sixteen years; that the children between those ages increased between 1880 and 1890 at the rate of 86.4 per cent.; and that the population of the State in 1890, if the whole increased in the same ratio, should have been 2,966,000. The census gives us 2,235,523. Here is a loss of about 700,000. Why should not the whole population have increased at something like the same rate? That four fifths of the people increased at about the same rate that one fifth did, can hardly admit of a doubt, and one or the other of these returns must be incorrect. If all between the ages of eight and sixteen years have increased 86.4 per cent., the rate for the whole State must have been more than 40.44. These two returns are too far apart. One or the other is wrong. Either the school census has been padded, or the federal census has failed properly to enumerate the people. To suppose the first to be true, is to suppose the school enumerators guilty of fraud. But there could be no motive for perpetrating such a fraud. There was no money to be made by a fraudulent school census.

There was no party advantage to be gained. We must suppose that the children were in existence and that they were properly returned. If this is true, the federal enumeration is wrong. The result may have been produced by the neglect or incompetency of the enumerators or of others charged with the work. I state facts, and leave others to draw conclusions from them as they may. But whatever those conclusions may be, the State of Texas is deprived, by the incorrect returns, of at least three representatives in Congress and three votes in the electoral college. Estimating the total population by the same ratio of increase of children within given ages, Alabama loses 240,000, Tennessee and North Carolina 170,000 each, and Virginia, Kentucky, and Louisiana 100,000 each. In the States of the North and West the federal census exceeds the school census by about 800,000, while in those of the South the school census exceeds the federal census by 1,500,000. If we assume that in each State and Territory the highest number is approximately the true number, which I believe to be the case, the whole population of the United States is in the neighborhood of 65,000,000.

ROGER Q. MILLS.

WILL MORALITY SURVIVE RELIGION?

WE learn that the year's earnings of a great telegraph company were sensibly increased by the Birchall affair. Thus was confirmed the saying that nothing else gives a community so much pleasure as a murder, except a case of clerical *crim. con.* But apart from the popular sensation of the crime and the trial, an ethical interest attaches to the character of this man, who, when he was not twenty-four, mounted the scaffold for a singularly cold-blooded and deliberate murder. Birchall was a perfect specimen of the moral, as well as of the religious, agnostic. As he was the son of a clergyman and had been well brought up, he must have been thoroughly enlightened, and cannot have been led into crime by anything like the brutal ignorance of moral law which is often the heritage of the gutter child. Nor does it seem that evil passion of any kind was overpoweringly strong in him. The attempts of the enemies of capital punishment to make out a case of moral insanity were in this case more faint than usual. It even appears that there was an amiable side to his character. His college companions liked him. He seems to have been a loving husband, and there was something touching and almost heroic in the effort which he successfully made, while he was awaiting execution, to master the fear of death and to write his autobiography for the benefit of his wife. The autobiography, it is true, is nothing more than the vulgar record of a fast undergraduate's life at an inferior college; but this does not detract from the nerve shown in writing it, and in illustrating it with comic sketches, beneath the shadow of the gallows. He only happened to have occasion for his friend's money. It is possible that if Birchall, instead of being sent to college—where a youth of his stamp was sure to be idle, and, being idle, to become dissipated—had been set to regular work in an office under a strong chief, he might have gone decently through life, though he would have been a very