

then declared the meeting at an end and asked the audience to disperse as speedily as possible. I thought it was an epileptic fit and I had no sense of Sanderson's impending death. I had never seen anything of the sort before. I could not believe it when they told me he was dead.

The windows of the hot and sultry room were opened and most of the people made their way out but the reporters remained and one or two persons of the curious type who hung about vaguely with an affectation of decorous sympathy. The lecture had been a very difficult one for the newspaper men and they came now with a certain eagerness to ask questions about Oundle and Sanderson's career. I answered them as well as I could.

In the Mortuary Chapel of University College Hospital I saw my friend's face for the last time, in all the irresponsible dignity of death. We took Mrs. Sanderson to him and left her for a time alone with him. Four years before in the same London hotel at which she was now solitary, he and she had shared together the bitter grief of their eldest son's death.

An event of this sort produces the most various reactions in people, and I recall with a distressful amusement two unknown persons who accosted me as I went out from University College to find a taxi to take me to Mrs. Sanderson. One was a young woman who came up to me and said: "Don't be grieved for your friend, Mr. Wells. It was a splendid thing to die like that in the midst of life, after giving his message."

I did not accept these congratulations and I made no reply to her. I was thinking that a little acute observation, a little more consideration on my part, a finer sense of the labor I was putting upon my friend, might have averted his death altogether. And I was by no means convinced that his message was delivered, that it had reached the people I had hoped it would reach and awaken. I had counted on much more from Sanderson. This death seemed to me and still seems far more like frustration than release.

Then presently as I gesticulated for a cab near Gower Street station I found a pale-faced looking man beside me asking for a moment's speech. "Mr. Wells," he said, "does not this sudden event give you new views of immortality; new lights upon spiritual realities?"

I stared at a sort of greedy excitement in his face. "None whatever!" I said at last and got into my cab.

I must confess that to this day I can find in Sanderson's death nothing but irreparable loss. He left so much of his work in a state so incomplete that I cannot see how his successors can carry it on. In matters educational he was before all things a practical artist and education is altogether too much the prey of theorists. He filled me—a mere writer—with envious admiration when I saw how he could

control and shape things to his will, how he could experiment and learn and how he could use his boys, his governors, his staff, to try out and shape his creative dreams.

He was a strong man and in a very profound and simple way a good man, and it was a very helpful thing to feel oneself his ally. But now that he is gone, now that all his later projects and intentions shrivel and fade and his great school recedes visibly towards the commonplace, I do not know where to turn to do an effective stroke for education. It is only schoolmasters and schoolmistresses and educational authorities and school governors and school promoters and university teachers who can really carry on the work that he began. I have tried to set out as clearly as possible, and largely in his own words, his fundamental ideas of the supercession of competition by coöperation, of the return of schools to real service. What I have written is, as it were, a simplified diagram of the teachings less luminously and more fully set out in the official life.

One thing I shared with Sanderson altogether and that was the conviction that the present common life of men, at once dull and disorderly, competitive, uncreative, cruelly stupid and stupidly cruel, unless it is to be regarded merely as a necessary phase in the development of a nobler existence, is a thing not worth having, that it does not matter who drops dead or how soon we drop dead out of such a world. Unless there is a more abundant life before mankind, this scheme of space and time is a bad joke beyond our understanding, a flare of vulgarity, an empty laugh, braying across the mysteries. But we two shared the belief that latent in men and perceptible in men is a greater mankind, great enough to make every effort to realize it fully worth while and to make the whole business of living worth while.

And the way to that realization lies, we both believed, through thought and through creative effort, through science and art and the school.

H. G. WELLS.

## The Two Stars

Day has her star, as well as Night,

One star is black, the other white.

I saw a white star burn and pant

And swirl with such a wildness, once—

That I stood still, and almost stared

Myself into a trance!

The star of Day, both seen and heard,

Is but a little, English bird;

The Lark, whose wings beat time to his

Wild rapture, sings, high overhead;

When silence comes, we almost fear

That Earth receives its dead.

W. H. DAVIES.

# Are We in Danger of Overpopulation?

SINCE the time of Malthus there has hardly been a single treatise published on general economics which has not given some study to the menace of a population increasing beyond the safe limits of the food supply. The conclusions reached by the economists have as a rule seemed cogent to the cultivated minority, but they have seldom exerted any influence upon public policy. One reason for this, and the main one, is that these conclusions are dismal and disturbing. Mankind loves children and refuses to have them placed in the category of vices. But another reason is the vagueness of the economic lore on the subject. In time there will not be standing room for all on the planet. But in what time? Next century, the year 5000, or beyond the Judgment Day? The economists have never fixed this point. Yet it is crucial.

Perhaps the reason why the point of time has been left undetermined is that most of the relevant facts fall outside the proper sphere of the economist. The birth rate is essentially a biological phenomenon, while the possibilities of the food supply present problems that fall chiefly under geography, agronomy and botany, in which sciences the economist and sociologist are only amateurs. This surmise is fortified by an examination of Professor East's book,\* which represents extraordinary progress toward definiteness. Professor East is a biologist and botanist who has made an extremely extended study of the food resources of the world. He uses statistics effectively and is by no means amateurish in his handling of economic problems. He is open-minded, as a rule, and has a good sense of proportion.

The population of the world has doubled in the last hundred years. Its rate of increase is greater today than the average for the last century. In sixty years, at the present rate of growth, we should have 3,500,000,000 people in the world, instead of the present 1,700,000,000. By the year 2040 there would be 7,000,000,000 people. Assuming that 40 percent of the land surface of the world is fit for food production—a generous estimate—and assuming that each person requires the product of two and one half acres, there is room in the world for 5,200,000,000 people. In less than a century, then, we should reach the saturation point generally, if population were free to seek the points of lowest pressure. Of course it is not free to do so—a fact Professor East strangely disregards, in his absorption in totalities. In parts of the world the saturation point has already been reached; in other parts it will have been reached in fifty years; in some parts it may not be reached for two hundred years. With all due allowance for this qualification, it is true the point of overpopulation is near

\* *Mankind at the Crossroads*, by Edward M. East. Scribner's. \$3.50.

enough in every civilized state to excite concern.

At the rate of increase prevailing in 1906-1911, the population of the United States would double in forty years. That is bringing the problem home. Can we support over 200,000,000 people on the present level of comfort? We have now 478,000,000 acres of improved land. Professor East calculates that we could increase the acreage to 800,000,000, leaving 1,100,000,000 acres for woodland, thin pasture, desert, roads and cities. But the land still to be improved is by no means so productive as that which is already under tillage. Professor East assumes that the new land is worth about half the old. With our present standards of tillage and dietary habits we could maintain only 135,000,000 people. For 200,000,000 people we should have to increase our agricultural efficiency by 50 percent, or change our standards of consumption. It does not follow that we should have to change in the direction of inadequacy. But we should have to consume more cereals directly instead of putting them through the costly process of turning them into meat. We should have to get more of our proteids from milk, cheese and eggs and consume the cheaper vegetables and fruits more liberally. This does not horrify me; I imagine we should be a healthier and more cheerful people.

Would the increase of the population of the United States to 200,000,000 lower the standard of living? Professor East thinks that we entered some time ago upon the phase of diminishing agricultural returns in which the average labor cost per unit of product tends to increase. He does not give enough of his data to permit the reader to form his own judgment on the point. I am quite sure it is true that any considerable increase in the production of wheat, corn, meat, milk, would involve increased labor cost per unit. But if there is a shift in consumption toward cereals, vegetables and fruits it is quite possible that the unit of food in general will not grow more costly, in labor terms. It may even decline. In our corn production, which we could maintain at 3,000,000,000 without notable increase in cost per unit, we have an immense food reserve, capable of supplying the cereal needs of 300,000,000 people. It is not so good a food, taken by itself, as wheat, but down South, where they still know how to mill and bake it, corn grows a very sturdy stock of men. If wheat gets too dear we shall not turn up our toes and die. We'll eat corn.

Granting, however, that in spite of possible adjustments in consumption the raw material for food must be produced with increased labor cost, it still does not follow that our standard of living must decline. Food represents an item of less than 40 percent in the family budget, and the farm cost of production is probably not more than one