

any part of the world. In round figures the States doubled their number, from births alone, every twenty-five years. How is it now? Vital statistics are as yet too incomplete to base any accurate calculation for all the States of the Union, but those of Massachusetts and Rhode Island are most trustworthy, and afford information that is appalling.

The registration reports for Rhode Island, which I have just received from Dr. Snow, than whom no one is more competent show an immense falling off in the birth-rate in that state, and leave but little room for conjecture as to the cause. Those of Massachusetts are equally significant; and were they not furnished as State Documents with all the weight of authority, I should not dare to allude to them.\*

I fully admit the statement of Dr. Edward Jarvis that: "Massachusetts is one of the most favoured states in the world for the intelligence, at least of its native population, and for their thrift and wisdom in management." In the fifteen years preceding 1870 of the children born in the state only 13.91 per cent. died in their first year—the smallest infantile mortality, excepting Norway, in the whole world. And when it is added that this mortality "includes the record of the foreigners, whose infant mortality was in a larger ratio, as well as that of the native families whose infant mortality was at a lower rate than this average," it may be seen how devoted, how intelligent is the care of the New England mother of her infant.

Once born, the New England child has a better chance of living than has the child of any other country or state; but Storer and other American

writers have pointed out the ante-natal dangers to which the fetus is exposed. And we are left no room to conjecture one at least of the causes.

Dr. Gould, of Boston, speaking of the births registered in Massachusetts 1859 to 1863, says: We have to record a continued deficiency in the number of births to be expected from the known population. 1865 was a year of war, and the diminished birth rate may be satisfactorily explained—the birth rate was only 4,097 in excess of death rate. But even then it was noticed by Dr. Geo. Derby that the births had diminished in all but three counties, while the deaths had diminished in every county except two. The population at that time being 1,267,059, there was one living birth to every 41.89 persons, and even then it was observed "that the births are most numerous in the counties containing crowded towns and a large foreign population." Dr. Derby, as if in anticipation, adds: It should not be inferred that the ratio of excess of births among the foreigners . . . is likely to lead finally to an extinction of the American element. But the most striking statement is that of Oliver Warner, Secretary of the Commonwealth: The native population of Massachusetts in 1860 was 970,752, the foreign population in the same year was 280,114. In that year the natives produced 16,672, the foreign 16,138. Dr. Derby in commenting says: The superior fecundity of the Celtic race . . . over the Anglo-American race is, we think, abundantly proved.

In 1865 the native population was 1,000,761, the foreign 266,270. They produced in the following year, the former 16,555 children, the latter 17,530—thus showing a productiveness of the latter over the former four times as great.

In 1867 the birth rate was 27.6 per thousand. Compared with the preceding year, the American births had diminished by 318, the foreign had increased by 922.

In 1868 the birth rate was 28.6 per thousand, an increase over former years, and it was then observed that the strictly American births had diminished 2.21 per cent.; the strictly foreign had increased .84 of one per cent.

In 1869 the birth rate was 25.5 per thousand. It had decreased by 52, while the marriages had increased by 970. It has now arrived that the excess of birth rate over death rate is but two-thirds of one per cent!

It is again observed that the American births had diminished during the preceding year, while the foreign had increased. The foreign births now exceed the native by 2,129, notwithstanding the relative smallness of the population.

In 1870, Dr. George Derby, Secretary of the State Board of Health, and Professor of Hygiene in Harvard University, reports the birth rate for Massachusetts as 26.2 per thousand, and adds: "The proportion of foreign births has remained quite constant since 1864; the purely American births have steadily diminished their ratio, and the births from mixed parentage have as steadily advanced." He continues: "Surely, and not very slowly, a mixed stock of Irish, Germans and Canadians is taking the place of the purely English stock which has possessed Massachusetts for more than two centuries. Here are facts for the statesman, the educator, and the moralist." In 1871, the same high authority states: "The superior fecundity of the foreign element among us is a fact fully recognized, and one which is confirmed in a most suggestive way from year to year by the registration returns. This year there was an increase of American births by 234; of foreign by 781.

In 1872, the births had increased by 3,444, but the deaths by 7,076, and the excess of birth rate over death rate was but .563 of one per cent. Again is noticed a progressive diminution in the purely native births, and a corresponding increase in those from a mixed parentage. The excess of birth is now entirely with the foreign element. In one year the native births have increased by 1,125, the foreign by 1,992.

The report for 1873-74 I have not at hand, but that for 1875, just published, (1877), is more than confirmatory, and with it I close.

Dr. Derby has passed away, and Dr. Draper prepares under direction of the Secretary of the Commonwealth that portion of the thirty-fourth Annual Registration Report from which I glean that the birth rate is 26.63 for every thousand of the population. Still a falling off—28.3 having been the average for the preceding three years, and 27.4 the average annual rate during the twenty-five years,

\* The population of Rhode Island last year was 258,239, of these, classed by *nativity*, the *foreign* born were 71,630, and the native 186,609. I continue Dr. Snow's figures: the report of births for 1875 gives 6,508, divided as follows:—American, 2,727; foreign, 2,906; mixed 875. The birth-rate for 20 years, says Dr. Allan, has steadily decreased among the Americans, but increased with the foreign, so that in 1875 the foreign had 58 per cent. of the births in the state. Dr. Snow adds:—The native American population of Rhode Island, by parentage, has increased 12.89 per cent in ten years, while the foreign population, by parentage, has increased 80.11 per cent. in the same time. In 10 years at the same rate the native population of Rhode Island would be 152,087 and the foreign 222,466.

In two years (1874-5) 8,221 married women in Providence, born in the United States, and of an age to bear children, had 2,532 children; while 5,919 married women of the same ages, born in foreign countries, had 2,912 children in the same time; that is, says Dr. Nathan Allan, the foreign married women, 2,302 less in number than the American married women, had 380 children more. If the American married women had had, in the years 1874-75, the same percentage of children as the foreign born women, there would have been 4,044 children of American parentage, instead of 2,532, a gain of 1,512 children. If the comparison is made between the American and Irish alone, by parentage, the former class would have had 4,249 instead of 2,532, the actual number, which would show a gain of 67 per cent in two years. I have selected Rhode Island because the system of Registration is singularly correct; and I have taken the *ipissima verba* of the reports. The statistics of many other states are equally appalling. Those of Massachusetts especially so.