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STANDING ROOM AT LEAST

(If Properly Policed)

MICHAEL KELLY, M.D.

An editor-New Englander, saying "The Hour is Late,"¹
Has fallen for the very boring platitudes of Dorn.²
He helps our John to Rock³ us on to fear about the fate
That hangeth o'er the more and more who still wait to be born.

'Tis weakness sad of science bad when dead-end has been reached;
When we can't think we spill more ink—the law of Parkinson.
Your ears we fill with slogans shrill in every language screeched,
To blind⁴ you to the prospects true which wait for every one.

The specialist, no apiarist, finds bees within his bonnet;
Clings to his own small quirk, now grown to a Malthusian *must*.
If we don't take, for his dear sake, his cure when he breathes on it;
From bad to worse, the universe is certain to go bust.

An explosion late of books in spate is all on population;⁵
They fill them out with moan and shout upon their outlook sour.
Yet Aussie takes now a hundred thousand yearly by migration;
And every day in U.S.A. hears calls for more manpower.

Both India and China far have people too too many.
It has been so since eons ago; we cannot alter that.
But how the mind of the do-good kind doth go explosive, when he
The remedy to pull doth try from statistician's hat!

A pessimistic mental twist is that of good John Rock;
We have his word that bishops erred in past days—and still do.
"Race suicide"—that slogan died when families started to flock;
A joy in growing our own has grown since the days of World War II.

¹Editorial *New Eng. J. Med.* 268:1415, 1963.

²The late H. F. Dorn, World population growth. International dilemma, *Science*, 135: 284, 1962.

³J. Rock, *The time has come. A Catholic doctor's proposals to end the battle over birth control*, New York, A. A. Knopf, 1963.

⁴Please forgive mixed metaphor.

⁵Borrowed from Garret Hardin, A second sermon on the mount, *Perspect. Biol. Med.* 6:366, 1963.

R.C.'s who bate their own birth rate have conscience good as ours;
For them the ban episcopan roars gently like a dove.⁶
Can a priest unwed from his single bed with justice claim these powers
O'er the daily chores and knightly scores of a *married* man⁷ in love?

If magic pill worketh no ill but only good effects,
'Tis sometimes wise to temporize, though much desired the mite.
All those who love have knowledge of the purpose true of sex;
In consciences enlightened there's first place for what is right.

With Asia's goal of pill control let us not interfere;
It's urgency is local; we must keep out of that 'un.
See bush fires past control burn vast countrysides every year;
But that should not make you feel hot in Boston or Manhattan.

From year to year upon this sphere the total growth of food,
Through progress new in science true has kept on the ascent.
And from the sea economy in taking all the good,
Both animal and vegetable, we still have to invent.

Can streams be moved and great woods shoved flat down with atom burst?
Australia's curse is the spill perverse of rivers uncontroll'd.
For that waste insane, a huge dry plain below sea level doth thirst;
When in they flow, a *great* sea will show my vision's not too bold.⁸

When water spurts o'er world's deserts from the unsalted sea;
Like Southern California, pal⁹, they're gardens beatific!
It is a sin to say we're in for "standing room only";
And what is now much worse—and how;⁹ it is unscientific.

Let all the "haves" convert to "saves," while "having" all they ought;
And day by day in every way turn having into giving.
The "have-nots" need more roads, more seed, more trucks, more ships, more
thought;
More schools equipped and factories shipped will lead to better living.

⁶Bottom, *Midsummer Night's Dream*. ii, 84.

⁷And woman, too.

⁸The whole of Lake Eyre (100 miles long) as at or below sea level.

⁹Sorry the secondary rhyme necessitated these descents into the colloquial.