

June 1935

Along Highway and Byway

Catholic Physicians' Guild

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THE LINACRE QUARTERLY

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VOL. 3

JUNE, 1935

NO. 3

ALONG HIGHWAY AND BYWAY

THE FEDERATION ELECTS

THE regular bi-annual meeting of the Federated Catholic Physicians' Guild was held on Friday evening, June 14th, at the Catholic Centre, New York City. Dr. Rendich presided. Present: Dr. Carey (Manhattan), Dr. Brennan (Brooklyn), Dr. Hawley (Bronx), Dr. Casey (Boston), Dr. Lavelle (Queens), Dr. Dillon (Manhattan) and Dr. Steinbugler (Brooklyn).

Most of the meeting was devoted to a discussion of methods to increase the number of guilds. From now on the plan is to interest the hospitals rather than the diocesan heads which has been the plan up to the present time.

The officers elected for the coming two years are as follows:

President: Dr. Joseph A. Dillon, 1065 Lexington Avenue, New York.

1st Vice-President: Dr. Jos. A. Tobin, 29-E. Madison Street, Chicago.

2nd Vice-President: Dr. Valentine R. Manning, 800 E. Allegheny Avenue, Philadelphia.

3rd Vice-President: Dr. Charles Mongan, Boston.

4th Vice-President: Dr. B. H. Portuondo, K.S.G., Belleville, Ill.

5th Vice-President: Dr. Milton B. Lennon, Medical School, University of California, San Francisco.

Secretary: Dr. Wm. F. C. Steinbugler, 515 Ocean Avenue, Brooklyn.

Associate Secretary: Dr. Thomas W. Carey, 772 Park Avenue, New York.

Treasurer: Dr. James F. Power, 265 W. 90th Street, New York.

ARE DOCTORS MORALISTS?

It was a splendid and representative throng of physicians and priests which recently welcomed Dr. Leo J. Latz of Chicago, author of "The Rhythm," to the Centre Club under the auspices of the Manhattan Guild. Dr. Latz received a favorable hearing and in general favorable criticism. It was brought out strongly at this meeting that the scientific side of this question is one which belongs solely and exclusively to the doctor.

By the same token the moral questions raised by the Rhythm Theory belong exclusively to the ethician and the moral theologian. Notwithstanding this truth, we find Catholic doctors who go outside of their own specialty and *presume* to *determine* the moral questions involved in the Rhythm. Some are loud-spoken in saying that there is no difference between positive contraception and the use of the Rhythm Theory. These doctors are playing directly into the hands of professional birth controllers, who are saying the same thing.

To these doctor-moralists we would say, "Shoemaker stick to your last." This is a moral question for the settlement of which many doctors have no training whatsoever. It is as absurd for them to talk dogmatically on this question as it would be for a moral theologian to dogmatize on the cause and cure of cancer.

The moral questions involved in the Rhythm Theory were clearly expounded by Ethicus in the March, 1933, issue of THE LINACRE, in which was clearly shown the difference between positive contraception and the use of periodic abstinence. The principles laid down by Ethicus in that article have since been sustained by the greatest moral theologians in the Church today. There is no greater living Catholic moralist than Father A. Vermeersch, S.J., of the faculty of the Gregorian University, Rome.

WHAT VERMEERSCH SAYS!

Writing in a recent number of the *Periodica de re Morali, Canonica, Liturgica*, a publication of the Gregorian University, Father Vermeersch declares: "The practice (of periodic abstinence) cannot be branded as Neo-Malthusian. For although it may limit or exclude progeny it does not do so by violating the natural order in the use of marriage which is the reason for the condemnation of Neo-Malthusianism." This does not mean that one cannot sin in the use of the Rhythm Theory, sin by selfishness or avarice, for instance. It does mean that the sin is not the sin of Onanism. If the Catholic doctor will leave moral questions to specialists in moral questions, all will be well. In fact the Catholic doctor who is unversed in moral questions has an obligation thus to act.

THE S. M. LABORATORIES AND BIRTH CONTROL

The S. M. Laboratories, Inc., Seattle, Washington, have issued a brochure entitled, "Spermicidal Substances and Their Practical Application." The opening paragraph of this pamphlet runs thus: "It is not our intention to offer any defense for birth control. * * * Our daily press has recorded the approval of both Methodist and Episcopal Churches, also that of the Y. W. C. A., for freer dissemination of information; while the Central Y. M. C. A. College pleads the need of birth control and openly affirms that 'Reproduction is neither the sole nor the chief purpose of marriage.' In line with this, *the Catholic Physicians' Guild*, with full approval of their clergy, advocated the 'Rhythm Method,' as a form of prevenience. If we accept these indications * * * the problem presents itself to all persons with a sense of contemporary realities. * * *" This brochure was sent out to doctors accompanied by a letter, signed L. G. Richter, the opening paragraph of which stated: "From a professional view-point the accompanying brochure is of interest, since it summarizes the views of the Michigan State Medical Association, *the Catholic Physician's Guild*, and other representative bodies on the question of birth control."

A LETTER AND A REPLY

Our National Moderator, the Reverend Ignatius W. Cox, S.J., wrote to Mr. Leo G. Richter protesting that the brochure and the covering letter might easily lead others to think that the Catholic Physicians' Guild approved of contraception. To this letter Mr. Richter made the following reply:

S. M. LABORATORIES, INC.

May 7, 1935

Ignatius W. Cox, S.J.,
Professor of Natural Law,
Fordham University,
New York, New York
Reverend Sir:

After considering carefully your letter of May 2, I went over the letter you referred to and feel you are justified in stating it is very possible that "the unwary reader might well come to the conclusion that the Catholic Physicians' Guild approves of chemical contraception, which of course, is utterly untrue."

I believe the reference to the subject in the brochure, which the letter was intended to introduce, clears up any possible doubt. However, I am sorry to have to admit that interpretations based upon the letter alone, could be construed as exceedingly misleading. Needless to say, this was not intentional, in fact, all reference to the matter was obtained from the fifth issue, page 18, of the "National Medical Group for the Investigation of Contraception" published by the National Birth Control Association, 26 Eccleston Street, London S. W.1.

If, as you say, you are going to call attention to this matter in your next issue of "Linacre," I would appreciate an opportunity of acknowledging our unintentional error and making due apology therefor.

I am indeed very sorry over this unfortunate choice of words and trust that I may be able to clarify the matter to your entire satisfaction.

Yours very truly,

S. M. LABORATORIES, INC.

Leo G. Richter

Note: You have my assurance that all reference to this matter will be eliminated, should any further mailings be contemplated.

TWO OTHER LETTERS

May 10th, 1935.

Mr. Leo G. Richter,
S. M. Laboratories, Inc.,
2013 Fourth Avenue,
Seattle, Washington.
Dear Mr. Richter:

I am in receipt of your kind letter of May 7th and am glad that you admit how misleading was the letter introducing your brochure.

I cannot, however, agree with this sentence in your letter: "I believe the reference to the subject in the brochure, which the letter was intended to introduce, clears up any possible doubt." And the more so because of the sources of that reference. For some months past, at least in this country, an effort has been made to make it look as if the Catholic Church because of the Rhythm Theory had changed its attitude on birth control. I had to deny that in a letter printed in four New York papers with a combined circulation of over two millions and a half. I am enclosing a reprint of an article of mine from the March number of "American Medicine."

I still have the intention of calling attention to this matter in the next issue of THE LINACRE. I would be very glad to give you the opportunity of acknowledging your unintentional error, if you can find your way to include in that what I consider the misleading reference even in the brochure. It seems to me unfair to send out any of this literature which still may be on hand. The matter in THE LINACRE with your comment on it will undoubtedly be sent out through the N. C. W. C. News Service to all the Catholic papers in the country as they have been very good in carrying matter that I have forwarded them.

The whole question of artificial birth control is so abhorrent to Catholic principles and the truly Catholic mind that I cannot understand why firms which insist on commercializing this iniquity do not leave out from their publicity any reference to the Catholic Church and to Catholics. It might interest you to know that your publicity was sent to our office from an indignant Catholic doctor in a southwestern state. I will withhold the June issue of THE LINACRE until I hear from you.

Sincerely yours,

Ignatius W. Cox, S.J.

S. M. LABORATORIES, INC.

May 20, 1935

Ignatius W. Cox, S.J.,
Professor of Natural Law,
Fordham University,
New York, New York
Reverend Sir:

Thank you very much for your interesting letter of May 10. Frankly, I think I can state definitely that I have quite a clear conception of the position the Catholic Church has always maintained in relation to birth control. This has not changed because of the rhythm theory. Personally I believe the publicity they received on that particular subject was very unfortunate.

As stated in a previous letter, it was never my purpose, either directly or indirectly, to infer that the Catholic Church advocated or countenanced birth control in the sense that the term usually indicates. In fact I am sorry that any mention of the Catholic Church was made in our literature dealing with the subject of birth control in general. I trust that this acknowledgment will prove helpful in clarifying our position in the matter. If I can do anything further, kindly advise.

Yours very truly,

S. M. LABORATORIES, INC.

Leo G. Richter

Leo G. Richter—AS

THE UPSHOT OF THE MATTER

The National Moderator has in his possession a new letter of the S. M. Laboratories with regard to their germicidal aid to Onanists, in which the reference to the Catholic Physicians' Guild has been omitted. The Moderator does not know whether the objectionable passage in the brochure has been eliminated or whether that brochure is still being circulated. The last letter of Mr. Richter throws no light on these questions. *The writer wonders how long Catholic Hospitals will continue to purchase hospital supplies from firms which are trying to cash in on the present race-suicide movement.* Here is a subject which might well be discussed at the next meeting of the Catholic Hospital Association.

A CHANCE FOR YOUNG MEDICOS

Very Reverend Monsignor Michael J. Ready, the energetic Assistant General Secretary of the National Catholic Welfare Conference, writes: "The Medical Corps of the United States Army offers opportunities to young physicians, surgeons and dentists for service in the Civilian Conservation Corps camps. The number of camps has been doubled and many doctors will be added to the personnel of the Medical Corps.

Medical men at present on the reserve list will be given preference, but civilian doctors will be given contracts for limited service either in the camps or as attending physicians in rural or out-lying districts. The ordinary term of service is six months with the privilege of resigning or re-enlisting.

Applications for this service must be made to the Corps Area Commander of the Army District in which the applicant resides. A list and description of the Corps Areas with address of the Commander is attached.

I thought this information might be released through your various physician's guilds or in THE LINACRE."

<i>Number of Corps Area</i>	<i>States in Corps Area</i>	<i>Corps Area Commander</i>
First	Maine New Hampshire Vermont Massachusetts Connecticut Rhode Island	Major General Fox Conner, First Corps Area, Army Base, Boston, Mass.
Second	New York New Jersey Delaware	Major General Dennis E. Nolan, Second Corps Area, Governor's Island, New York.
Third	Pennsylvania Maryland Virginia District of Columbia	Major General R. E. Callan, Third Corps Area, U. S. Post Office, Baltimore, Maryland.

Fourth	North Carolina South Carolina Tennessee Mississippi Louisiana Alabama Georgia Florida	Major General VanHorn Moseley, Fourth Corps Area, Fort McPherson, At- lanta, Georgia.
Fifth	Ohio West Virginia Kentucky Indiana	Major General A. J. Bow- ley, Fifth Corps Area, Fort Hayes, Columbus, Ohio.
Sixth	Michigan Wisconsin Illinois	Major General F. R. McCoy, Sixth Corps Area, 1819 West Pershing Road, Chi- cago, Illinois.
Seventh	Minnesota Iowa Missouri Arkansas Kansas Nebraska South Dakota North Dakota	Major General Stuart Heintzelman, Seventh Corps Area, Omaha, Nebraska.
Eighth	Oklahoma Texas Colorado New Mexico Arizona	Major General Johnson Hagood, Eighth Corps Area, Fort Sam Houston, Texas.
Ninth	Montana Wyoming Utah Idaho Nevada Oregon Washington California	Major General Paul B. Malone, Ninth Corps Area, Presidio of San Francisco, California.

WELL SPOKEN, DR. DAFOE!

The *New York Evening Journal* has been carrying a series of arti-
cles by Dr. Allan Roy Dafoe, M.D., on "Babies." We present some
striking points made by the now celebrated doctor:

Of all the cowards about life, the healthy woman afraid to bear children is the
most pitiable and the most punished. If only today's wives, otherwise normal,
would stop being scared of the best and most natural thing that can happen to
them!

Too much can be made of certain widely quoted figures on maternal mortality.
While the problem is getting earnest attention from doctors themselves, through
their medical associations in New York and elsewhere, yet the actual statistics ought
not to be printed without careful preparation.

To say, for example, that 15,000 mothers die annually makes the business of hav-
ing a baby sound pretty dangerous. But this very computation is swelled by the
inclusion of all the deaths which occurred not while women were trying to have
babies but while they were trying to avoid having them.

It is right to focus attention on measures to safeguard maternity, but too much
alarmist talk frightens women. If only they would realize that there is nothing to
dread about the natural function of creation! A normal woman, under proper
medical care and supervision, should feel no fear of the process.

Probably as much suffering and danger, in the long run, is experienced by women who can have children but refuse to have them as by the mothers of the race. Methods employed to avoid maternity often not only injure health but imperil life.

Nature, moreover, says that a woman was made to bear. The really dangerous adventure is for her to go against nature, deliberately and of her own free will, for nature has a way of taking revenge.

If the organs and glandular secretions designed for constructive growth—for the little human baby—are not used for that purpose the whole balance of the body and of the nervous system may be destroyed. What trouble can be stirred up by gland suffering from unemployment at their proper job is something about which doctors find out more every day.

The woman who can have babies and refrains through timidity should "take heed lest a worse thing befall." Her nerves and emotional stability can be so adversely affected that as a result she becomes neurasthenic, pathologically irritable, even deranged.

To the contrary, the woman who brings life into the world, nurses it, cares for it, finds that her whole personality is vitalized and enriched. Having a baby, instead of being a menace to her health and happiness, is the natural stimulation of both.

STERILIZATION MEETS DEFEAT

The introduction of bills in favor of sterilization in almost every State Legislature during the past year shows a unified attempt to impose this un-American and immoral practice on the American people. The new bills were defeated in Maryland, New Jersey and Texas. Governor Talmadge of Georgia vetoed the bill passed by both Houses of the Georgia Legislature.

Besides Professor Parshley, Smith College for Women, boasts another so-called "liberal" professor, E. H. Hankins. His letter to the *Hampshire Daily Gazette* of Northhampton, Massachusetts, called forth this magnificent rejoinder from Mary Gawthorpe of Whitestone Landing, L. I.:

MARY GAWTHORPE OPPOSED TO IDEA OF STERILIZING THE MENTALLY DEFICIENT

Whitestone Landing,
Long Island, N. Y.,

June 14, 1935.

To the Editor of the Daily Hampshire Gazette:

Dr. Iago Galdston of the New York Academy of Medicine, whom Professor Hankins criticizes in a letter to the *Daily Hampshire Gazette*, needs no defence from me. As a voting citizen, deeply interested in contemporary proposals for sterilization by legislation, I should be grateful to be allowed to add my comments.

Professor Hankins does not mention sterilization in his letter dated June 7; but the word is present by implication throughout because he complains that "through our extensive relief activities we are enabling them to breed at the expense of more worthy citizens," and further complains that "there are short-sighted persons who oppose even the spread of birth control among those potential parents who recklessly and thoughtlessly procreate offspring who are a burden to themselves and to the community." The word "even" shows the something else that Professor Hankins has in mind. That something is sterilization of the so-called unfit or mentally deficient.

That the "vast mass of mentally deficient" should be found in those explicitly

named: "Such occupational groups as casual and unskilled laborers and farm laborers and renters," that is, the poor, relatively speaking, should not be surprising because the vast mass of our country is poor, 4 per cent owning 87 per cent of the entire wealth, 96 per cent thus living close to or below the poverty line all the time. These facts are given on the authority of a metropolitan daily, which claims they are irrefutable. The apparent scientific discovery that this "vast mass" contains also the "vast mass of mentally deficient" is merely the working out of the rather horse-sense law of averages.

When we come to what purports to be scientific fact that "feeble intelligence seems to be due to what the biologist calls recessive genes," quoting Professor Hankins, we are up against the biggest non sequitur of all, the scientific one. For though Professor Hankins links two concepts in one sentence, he is not altogether too happy about it, witness the concession, "seems to be due." Nice language that on which to base "public policy" for legislative action.

Indeed, the experts do not agree, and whether the student consults Huskins, or Landmann, or Haldane, or Jennings, all outstanding biologists, he finds ample testimony controverting your learned correspondent. The plain truth is that the exact nature of the inheritance, the supposed heredity hidden in the genes, is not known at this date. Hence, over WJZ Jan. 22, this year, Professor J. B. S. Haldane radioed: "Go ahead with your eugenics, but go slow, or you may make some pretty bad mistake. And never forget that it is as important to be born into a society where liberty and justice prevail as to be born with a sound heredity."

This utterance brings to mind that significant event, that stumbling block to easy theory, the birth of Abraham Lincoln, who is still regarded by millions as our greatest American. Apply the Hankins test, "such occupational groups as casual and unskilled laborers and farm laborers and renters," to the unrefuted and unadorned truth concerning the son of Nancy Hanks, as told in Barton's "Life of Abraham Lincoln," and how illuminating the warning of Professor Haldane becomes. The genuinely scientific mind is as reverent as it is enquiring. It will not rest until it has found out scientifically, free from all pseudo-tests twisted by relief-conditioning, politics, snobbery, the scale weighted in one way or another, what exactly in inheritance is due to heredity, what to environment, what due to remediable conditions in both. The scientific word "exact" should precede legislation dealing with the springs of life itself. An unperverted public policy can never demand less.

A grave responsibility rests on Professor Hankins. By insistence on the untruth that those on relief "breed at the expense of more worthy citizens," with its undoubted repercussion in the lives of our fellow citizens, the putting on of the screw, the unfair and insulting pressure and all that, he is doing much to harm the precious plasm they carry.

That old argument that the prosperous and economically efficient, that "sounder stock" of which Professor Hankins speaks, that these are the best, was not true before the Great war, 1914-1918, nor before the great depression, beginning 1929. It certainly is not true in 1935, when millions on relief, thousands, direct sufferers from the operations of that sounder stock, by bank losses, unemployment and from the vast disgenics of war, are painfully awake.

Nor will the bullied, threatened poor, daily facing relief tests, necessarily consent to be reduced by a progressive attrition into the regions of gene deterioration. According to the pattern required by a human and humane society, it might even be that this "poor" germ plasm is in many respects superior; it could even reach up, for instance, in the case of a Lincoln, and bring a great one down.

In June, 1935, when those vast masses on relief, through no fault of their individual selves, as say our wisest, ask for bread as symbol of abundance, not alone as material relief, they are answered with offers of birth control information and bills on sterilization. In a land superbly endowed by nature, plus technological advancement, equipped if ever a country was for the economics of plenty, not for scarcity, such answers are amazing. Surely, they point to a low I Q in the answering intelligence of the society which voices them. Are our sounder stocks already beginning to function, to use the phraseology of the experts, as high grade defectives, who do not realize that in their advocacy of debasing class legislation they are inviting their own destruction?

Mary Gawthorpe.