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## Along Highway and Byway

Catholic Physicians' Guild

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## ALONG HIGHWAY AND BYWAY

**H**EARTENING WORDS. It is with great pleasure that the Editor presents to LINACRE readers the following letter received some time ago from the Rev. Henry Borgman, C.S.S.R.: "I am glad to be able to tell you that I receive THE LINACRE QUARTERLY in every issue and read it through from cover to cover. *Pity that the run is so short. But, I guess, it will lengthen with time.* Here is a splendid occasion for the Catholic doctors to enter the field of Catholic action. In these days when the world unites more and more to demolish religion in general, and the Catholic Church in particular, there is need for all the forces of the Church to unite, to organize, and to march forward under the banner of the Living Christ. There is no grander profession, next to the priesthood, than the medical profession. And there is no larger opportunity offered to any branch of men in the Church than to the medical branch. Therefore the great need of an organized Catholic doctorhood of the English-speaking world. There are very many eminent Catholic doctors in the world. Were these to unite, imagine the immense force that would stand allied in the cause that should roll back the great hordes of modern pagans in the world. Your review is the beginning of this organized effort in this country. In a few years this organized effort will count its marshaled forces among Catholic doctors by thousands. There has been too much *laissez faire* among the Catholic laity. Sometimes this *laissez faire* ends with the catastrophe which the enemy would bring about, the world over. The bishops of Spain, seeing how the recent rally of Catholic voters ousted the enemy, declared that what they had attempted for many years, namely, the organizing of the Catholic population, had been brought about by the radicals in two years by burning churches and in every way limiting the works of the Church by iniquitous laws against religion. Now is the time for Catholic doctors to rally, under your standard. A united Catholic doctorate will tell in every lecture hall of the world, and the powerful voice of many will disrupt the marshaled forces which stand against God and law and all that is right and true. You need more aggressive methods to bring about a more powerful effort. 'Direct Action' is the cry of the enemy. 'Direct Action' must be your cry. An occasional paper mailed to the N. C. W. C. News Agency, 1312 Massachusetts Avenue, Washington, will give the advertisement to your review and your works, which will result in a more general support by Catholic doctors in this country. Also papers occasionally in the *Ecclesiastical Review*, the *Homiletic* and the *Acolyte* will bring about this same desired result. To beat the big drum and blow the big horn is the way to get attention from those whose attention you need, and whose support you must get to grow into that

powerful machine which the Catholic doctorate can make and should make for God and Church, for Country and Home." An admirable letter!

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THE DIFFICULTIES DEMAND HEART. Dr. P. W. O'Gorman, M.D., the energetic editor of the *Catholic Medical Guardian*, writes under date of July 23, 1934: "For some reason it is difficult to persuade Catholic doctors to unite in view of the moral necessity for both instructing themselves and guiding the laity in the current medico-moral problems which are in vogue today. *I think they want stirring up by frequent public meetings, at which good speakers should introduce these subjects and rub them in thoroughly, and show how important it is that Catholic doctors should counteract these tendencies. I suggest that you should have meetings of doctors at different centers.*"

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AN ENCOURAGING OUTLOOK. At the present time the Catholic hospitals in the United States represent 9.8 per cent of the total number of hospitals, and 13.6 per cent of the non-government group and 64.8 per cent of the Church-controlled hospital group. In these there are 87,612 beds and 74.5 per cent of the beds in Church-controlled hospitals. The average bed capacity is 152.9 beds, twice as large as the non-government hospitals. What a glorious record for the good sisters who give their services for the ill of the country!

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DOES MEDICINE ALWAYS MARCH ON? Dr. James J. Walsh, M.D., reviewing in the pages of *America*, Edward Podolsky's book, *Medicine Marches On*, pays a tribute to its interest and the immense amount of medical information in popular form therein contained. He says this, however: "It seems too bad that the book should be disfigured by some exaggerations, for there was no need of them to attract attention and excite interest. . . . The same fault is to be found with Dr. Podolsky's exaggeration of the significance of sex in medicine. . . . Psychoanalysis, which is now disappearing as fast as hypnotism did a generation ago, is hailed as a great discovery. Those of us who can recall how many books were written about hypnotism find it easier to understand the vanishing character and lack of significance of psychoanalysis. Dream interpretations are the oldest things that we have in medicine. They come down to us literally for many thousands of years. Interpretations of them have always been fantastic, but the old-fashioned inter-

pretations are not nearly so fantastic as those we now have from Freud and his followers. Some examples are given in this volume that illustrate the insanity of this very well. No wonder that we hear that Freud has in recent years soft-pedaled dream interpretation. Why should this nonsense be given a place in the history of modern medical advance? Freudianism has been just one of the quackeries that come and go in the history of medicine, one of the cures with a formula produced by mental influence that after a while will not cure anything or anybody. Sex suppression is supposed to be the cause of disease, but there are any number of people who have suppressed sex almost entirely in their lives who are living very happily. Twenty years from now physicians will wonder how Freudianism was allowed to take so prominent a part in the medicine of the early twentieth century."

UNEMPLOYMENT AND FERTILITY. *Health News* (New York State Department of Health) states: "The birth rate among wage-earning families who suffered serious loss of income on account of the depression was 39 per cent higher in the period of 1929-32 than among their neighbors whose incomes were not reduced following 1929. These findings are reported in a recent issue of the *Milbank Memorial Fund Quarterly* by Edgar Sydenstricker, in charge of the foundation's division of public health activities, and G. St. J. Perrott, consultant to the United States Public Health Service, following a house-to-house investigation of occupation, employment, income, births and ill health in 8,000 families in eight typical cities. The authors believe this study to be the first of its kind ever undertaken. It is considered significant that families forced to shift from a higher to a lower income level were found to have a higher birth rate during the depression years than those families who were able to remain in the class from which the downward shift was made." The true significance of all this lies in the fact that has been stated over and over again, that high cultural level and proper living conditions without any contraceptive influences bring about a lessening of the birth rate. Attention frequently has been called to the fact that in times of famine women are particularly fertile. The true solution of too high a birth rate for those who believe that the birth rate has been too high is to work for social justice and for a proper distribution of wealth and income. In this way the health and happiness of the human race will be promoted without the destruction of moral health by the practice so widespread and so unscientific of positive contraception. Will the *Birth Control Magazine* PLEASE take notice?

FORETELLING DEATH. M. Lecomte De Nouy, of the Pasteur Institute, France, claims that the spectroscope which records the birth and the decay of stars can also foretell the approaching death of man. "We predicted a man's death, which followed in twenty-four hours." There is a spectroscopic death curve which forecasts the human death more accurately than the physician. It is not said how sensitive this death barometer is.

THE NEW YORK TIMES SAYS A WORD FOR THE PHYSICIAN. "Falling death rates during the depression are declared by high medical authority not a sufficient cause for optimism. Death rates are not a 'sensitive index of ill-health and do not promptly measure decreased resistance to disease.' We still have to face the full impact of depression on vitality. But one saving factor is to be reckoned on in bad times as well as in good—the service of the physician. This is too little appreciated. The *London Times* recently made a special plea for the payment of doctors' bills by those who have had the benefit of their attention. Even when the physician is not paid because of the poverty of his patients, his contribution to public health should at least have its due credit. The doctor is in a peculiarly difficult position. The sick in their need cannot be expected not to call a doctor and the doctor cannot decline to respond unless he is paid in cash or has the assurance of prompt payment. He is not in the category of the merchant or the worker under salary or wage. He is under the compulsion of his skill—as well as of his own humane feeling—to answer every call. This is part of the definition of his occupation. It would bring his profession into odium as it would the individual if he were to refuse to go to the patient though there were no certainty of compensation. As a matter of fact, much of the average physician's skill is given with the certainty that there will be no payment except gratitude—and he cannot always be sure of that. Many excuse their delay in paying the doctor, or their complete neglect of their obligation to him, by pleading their own limited means; but it is at best selfishness, or at worst something one hesitates to say, not to economize in spending for things not necessary in order to meet a doctor's bill. As it is, the physician sets an example of unselfish service to other professions and even to trade. Without his indispensable skill freely or generously given the depression would be far worse than it has been. That the death rate is not higher is in part due to that service seldom if ever paid in full. It is still much as it was in other times.

"God and the Doctor we alike adore  
 But only when in danger, not before.  
 The danger o'er, both are alike requited—  
 God is forgotten and the Doctor slighted."

FORMER PHYSICIAN SINGS HIS FIRST MASS. Dr. W. D. O'Leary returned to his home at Augusta, Georgia, last July to sing his first solemn High Mass as a Jesuit priest. He was graduated from the Georgia Medical College in 1921 with the degrees of Bachelor of Science and Doctor of Medicine. It will be recalled that our quarterly takes its name from a doctor who was Royal Physician to Henry VIII and founder of the Royal College of Physicians. When he was about sixty years of age he became a priest, devoting the rest of his life to caring for souls as well as bodies.

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### GUILD NOTES

SAN FRANCISCO joins the movement.—On May 2nd last, in the auditorium of St. Mary's Hospital, San Francisco, California, there was inaugurated a Guild of Catholic Physicians, which will be an outstanding unit in the Federation. The reason is that San Francisco is a medical center for the whole Pacific Coast and many Catholic physicians have attained distinction there. Dr. Milton B. Lennon, Chief of the Neurological Clinic and Professor of Neurology in the Medical School of the University of California, was elected Master of the Guild. Dr. Eileen M. Leonard, on the staff of the Children's Hospital and prominent in medical circles, was elected Secretary. The Federation hopes for big things from the California unit. Welcome, California!

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THE PHILADELPHIA GUILD.—The Guild of Sts. Luke, Cosmas and Damien of Philadelphia has held three meetings since October, 1933, and its usual retreat in Cathedral Chapel. The Chaplain, the Rev. John W. Keogh, A.M., gave the retreat in four exercises, the subjects: "Religion"; "The Passions and Morality"; "Love and Self-Control," and "No Perfection Without the Seven Fundamental Virtues."

On May 5th the Guild held what was declared the most interesting meeting of its history. The subject was "Sterilization of the Feeble-minded," and excellent papers were read by Michael A. Burns, M.D., Professor of Neurology of Jefferson Medical College; by the Rev. John Keenan, C.M., J.C.D., Professor of Moral Theology of St. Vincent's Seminary, Germantown, and by John B. Gest, Esq., whose paper was entitled "Legal Status of Sterilization Laws." After the papers the subject was discussed in open forum. One voice from the floor was that of Agnes Kemper, Ph.D., psychologist and social worker for the state, who said "that social workers generally believe that sterilization is a physical and mental help to the feeble-minded." She stated that doctors usually use only two approved tests in cases of mental defec-