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## Along Highway and Byway

Catholic Physicians' Guild

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which, by the way, were born on the same day—had been exchanged by their mothers, we should not have heard of either of them. In the case of our over-numerous young American criminals we are dealing with a make-up of such “pliable” genes—(young people “easily led”)—which in an environment of poverty with consequent loss of opportunity, bad home surroundings, materialistic education, lack of moral and, above all, of religious training, give rise to all grades of defectives—dependents, delinquents, and all grades of criminals, whereas the same genes in an entirely different, wholesome environment would develop the characteristics of the ideal, model citizen. It seems a fundamental law of human nature that in dealing with such questions there are always men who can see only the extremes—in this case the eugenicists at one end and the Watsonian behaviorists at the other. Only in the Aristotelian and scholastic principle of the “happy mean” do we find the solution.

In conclusion, we may say that the ideal of eugenics is a worthy one, but that the measures so far proposed for its accomplishment are impracticable, even when they are not immoral. Even if we could by means of some happy discovery detect all the hidden defective genes in the race, and by some other happy method get rid of them all, we have abundant evidence that they are being manufactured in normal individuals perhaps as fast as we could possibly get rid of them.

Finally, in recent years we see intimations of even more serious difficulty in the way of practical eugenics and this is concerned with the great differences of opinion which may arise not with regard to defective genes but as to the value of the individual characteristics themselves. Just what is the “good” man and who are the “undesirables”? The widespread movement in the world today aimed at uprooting and destroying our established institutions and traditions is only too evident, and to the extent that it succeeds will there be a chaos of opinions on this question. With such uncertainty as to what the ideal is, no radical eugenic measures could be attempted.

### ALONG HIGHWAY AND BYWAY

THE DRIVE AGAINST CHRISTIAN MORALITY. *Survivals and New Arrivals* is a book by the brilliant Catholic apologist Hilaire Belloc, which appeared in 1929. In its analysis of the present set-up in the attack on Catholicism it says that the new arrivals in the battle-line opposing the Church are all characterized by this note: “they are at issue with the Church not directly on doctrine, as were their elders, but on morals. Morals derive from doctrine, of course, and indirectly the quarrel is doctrinal, as all human conflicts are.”

**HUMAN RADIO SETS.** Dr. George W. Crile is not a new arrival; he is very much of a survival, despite the skepticism with which the medical fraternity receives his ever-new theories. One of his latest revelations, given at Chicago, October 8, 1933, was "that the processes of mind and matter involve a mechanism similar to a radio set." The distinguished author John O'Hara Cosgrave answered Crile in a splendid letter to the *New York Times*:

"It is important to know the constitution of the protoplasmic cell, but the secret of life is no more to be found in it than the secret of an automobile's motion could be gathered from the analysis of a carburetor and cylinders. Life is a principle apart from the organisms that it animates and develops and the processes it enkindles, as is the principle of building, operating and steering apart from the plans and materials that enter into the making of a motor car or a skyscraper."

Dr. Crile might well give a little scientific attention to the arguments of the vitalists who are unalterably opposed to his mechanistic contentions. If the worthy doctor would read *The Limitations of Science*, by J. W. N. Sullivan, he might succeed in broadening somewhat his outlook:

"What is called the 'Modern Revolution' in science consists in the fact that the Newtonian outlook, which dominated the scientific world for nearly two hundred years, has been found to be insufficient. It is in process of being replaced by a different outlook, and, although the reconstruction is by no means complete, it is already apparent that the philosophical implications of the new outlook are very different from those of the old one. . . . The fact that science is confined to a knowledge of structure is obviously of great 'humanistic' importance. For it means that the problem of the nature of reality is not prejudged. We are no longer required to believe that our response to beauty, or the mystic's sense of communion with God, have no objective counterpart."

And C. G. Jung, the disciple of Freud, in his latest book admits something akin, at least, to the soul. "But I also do not doubt," he says, "that these instincts come into collision with the spirit, for they are continually colliding with something, and why should not this something be called 'spirit'?" It would seem that all along the line the older scientific prepossessions and pretensions against things fundamental in religion are being rapidly demolished.

**THE IRREPRESSIBLE DR. HARRY ELMER BARNES.** Dr. Barnes (not a medical doctor, thanks be to goodness), who constantly uses his column in the *World-Telegram* for the advancement of his materialistic outlook on life under the smoke-screen of pseudo-science, pompously declared in an article, October 27, 1933: "Human life is produced as a result of certain bio-chemical processes which are participated in by man alone." Such a mid-Victorian view of life is anachronistic. Dr.

Barnes needs a vacation to enable him to catch up with the thought of modern scientists. Dr. Barnes' dictum met a speedy rebuke at the hands of the well-known scientist, Charles Pollard Olivier, Director of the Flower Astronomical Observatory of the University of Pennsylvania, and Dr. Ignatius W. Cox, S.J., of Fordham University, whose letters with several others of the same tenor appeared in the *World-Telegram*.

THE WORLD-TELEGRAM AND CONTRACEPTION. The Children's Bureau of the U. S. Department of the Interior issued a statement on maternal mortality, October 10, 1933:

"Probably the most outstanding finding of the study," according to the committee, is that one-quarter of all the maternal deaths investigated were not due to maternal mortality as the general public undoubtedly accepts this term. Careful follow-up of death records revealed that 1,825 women died following ending of pregnancy so premature that the infant could not survive. Of this number 1,324 died from sepsis, and in 50 per cent of the cases of known type these deaths followed attempt by the women themselves to avoid motherhood. Declaring that the study "shows very clearly the seriousness of the problem" the committee defines it as a "widespread sociological and economic problem which the medical profession must have help in solving," adding that "the physician has one great obligation—to teach the public the dangers entailed."

Gretta Palmer, who edits the Woman's Page of the *World-Telegram* and writes on contraception with an assurance in inverse proportion to her knowledge of the subject, commented on the report in an article to the effect that knowledge and use of contraceptives would have prevented this toll of maternal deaths. Apropos of these remarks of Gretta Palmer, the following letter was sent by Dr. Richard Rendich, President of the Federated Catholic Physicians' Guilds to the editor of the *World-Telegram*:

October 17th, 1933.

To: Editor of the *World-Telegram*,  
125 Barclay Street,  
New York, N. Y.

The *World-Telegram* has the reputation of being a liberal paper, but it does seem as if it were determined to withhold from the people the case against contraception. Some two weeks ago Gretta Palmer ran an article on contraception, the fundamental assumptions of which were false. I happen to know that several letters, none of which were printed, were sent to the editor.

In the issue of October 13th, Gretta Palmer again offends in a misleading article. She speaks of maternal mortality from illegal operations and assumes that these deaths might have been avoided by a knowledge of contraceptives. Any physician might have told her that it is as likely as not that the unfortunate victims did use contraceptives and the pregnancies occurred in spite of them.

There are two fundamental false assumptions in the writings of Gretta Palmer on contraception. The first is that contraception involves no physiological or psychological injury to those who employ it. There are medical opinions to the contrary. The second assumption of your columnist is that the effectiveness of contraceptives is assured. Hannah M. Stone, an ardent contraceptionist, has a letter in "The Medical Times and Long Island Medical Journal," for October, 1933, in which she says: "It is quite true that we do not possess a perfect and ideal contraceptive." This is an optimistic understatement of the case. Her admission is a probable explanation why the contraceptionists are becoming so enthusiastic for sterilization.

Gretta Palmer must have been vacationing on Mars when she drew her pathetic picture of poor people deprived of the knowledge of contraception. When your columnist states "That there are those who offer continence as the only form of birth control which the state has a right to condone," she again manifests unacquaintance with the subject which she presumes to write on so glibly. I wonder if she has ever heard of the recent researches of two celebrated foreign doctors, one a Japanese and one an Austrian.

Those advocating contraception ought not to be afraid of the truth, but they seem to be. They are intolerant of anyone who with scientific information dares to contradict them.

Sincerely yours,

THE WORLD-TELEGRAM REPLIES. The letter of Dr. Rendich never appeared in the columns of the *World-Telegram*. After a long delay, Dr. Rendich received the following letter from Mr. Lee B. Wood, executive editor of that journal:

# NEW YORK WORLD TELEGRAM

November 10th, 1933.

Dr. Richard A. Rendich,  
Federated Catholic Physicians' Guild,  
477 Madison Avenue,  
New York, N. Y.

Dear Doctor Rendich:

I wish to apologize for not answering sooner your letter of October 17th. The delay was due to activities of the recently concluded political campaign.

The World Telegram has never attempted to withhold from its readers the case against contraception, and we have printed many letters on both sides of this subject. Quite naturally, there are people who believe in contraception, there are those who do not. It seems to be a debatable matter, and as such we see no reason why Mrs. Palmer should not comment upon it.

Thanking you for your interest in our newspaper,

Very truly yours,

(sgd) LEE B. WOOD  
Executive Editor.



ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS. Very well, Mr. Wood, but in the long interval between Dr. Rendich's letter to you and your reply, two more articles in favor of contraception appeared in your columns. One was a rather vague plea for a sense of responsibility in the use of contraceptives, by Dr. Eric Matsner, medical director of the American Birth Control League. It admitted the inefficacy at times of contraceptives, and seemed to bear the implication that if pregnancy should follow their use, the result should be accepted. It seemed to be a plea by the birth-controllers, to their clients, not to permit the use of contraceptives to terminate, if ineffective, in illegal operations, which Dr. Rendich pointed out is often the result of their inefficacious use. The Woman's Page of the *World-Telegram* seems to be a happy hunting ground for the propaganda of the American Birth Control League.

Besides this, the *World-Telegram* featured a statement of a Wisconsin sociologist, who would compel morons to practice birth control. The shallow and unscientific foundations of any such attempt to make of contraception a eugenic movement are completely shown by an article in this issue by Dr. Alexander Frazer. The upshot of the *World-Telegram* matter is that during the course of several weeks the paper gave considerable space for unscientific birth-control propaganda, that the shallow statements of Gretta Palmer were so ably answered that the printing of Dr. Rendich's letter would have placed her in the silly light where she belongs, and that the defense for this unbalanced policy is that letters against birth control have found their way into the pages of the *World-Telegram* in the past. A steady reader of the *World-Telegram* will have the conclusion forced upon him that through many of its special writers and book reviewers and through the emphasis it places on certain news items it is propagating an ideology which is in hopeless conflict not only with the ideology of Catholic Christianity but frequently with that of fundamentalist Protestantism and orthodox Judaism. The purpose of a newspaper is to transmit the news, not the subjective views of its writers. Since it would seem by the very analysis of its pages that the *World-Telegram* has another idea of the true function of a newspaper, individual readers will have to consult their consciences as to the advisability of subjecting themselves daily to the mentality of the *World-Telegram*. There are similar papers in many cities. Their existence and procedure is a menace to the Christian conscience. The writer

predicts that this menace is a challenge which before long will be met. He predicts that it will be met by insistence on Catholic dailies which, whilst giving the news, will allow the reader to absorb the news without having their religious beliefs exposed to the sneers of self-appointed prophets, unscientific reformers, blind leaders of the blind.

COMMERCIALIZED ACTIVITY OF A CORRUPT MINORITY. All this attack on Christian morality is being propagated by means associated with nice profits. In their latest statement, the Administrative Committee of the N. C. W. C. says:

"Theatres and amusement places have been converted into centres for the exhibition of lewd and indecent performances, and for the presentation of plays and moving pictures that are a constant stimulant to prodigality and vice. The printing presses have poured forth a never-ending stream of obscene books and pictures that are a menace to the morals and characters of the youth of the land."

The writer, a few months ago, saw a display of magazine pictures of feminine nudes on a newsstand on 42nd Street which were an insult to the decency and self-respect of every passerby. Doubtless this experience could be duplicated in almost any important city in the country. Many persons are the recipients, through the mails, of advertisements of books dealing with unnatural sex perversions. Both books and advertisements are a shock and an insult to the Christian conscience. All this is not only rotten paganism but it is a deadly blow aimed at the moral fibre of American manhood and womanhood. In the meantime municipal, state, and federal authorities seem to be strangely inactive. But red-blooded Christianity cannot be passive in the face of this deadly attack on Christian morality. Truly the newest and most bitter enemy facing Christ's Church is a pagan and pestilential immorality. It is time to face that enemy squarely, vigorously and effectively.

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MEDICAL EDUCATION. The *Retort*, organ of the Chemists' Club of Fordham University, carries in its issue for December, 1933, an interesting article on "Medical Education and Some Medical Colleges." Editorially in the same issue it says:

#### MEDICAL ETHICS ARE UNCHANGING

In connection with the paper on medical education presented in this issue, we had intended to write a diatribe on euthanasia, birth control, therapeutic abortion, compulsory sterilization, socialized medical practice, cash-on-the-nail-or-no-treatment tactics such as have been adopted by certain physicians who cannot seem to remember that they are physicians, and

a multiplicity of other errors and apostasies from medicine and medical ethics. But diatribe and invective are of little value, for those who might reform are thereby antagonized, and those who would never reform are impervious thereto.

Over twenty-four hundred years ago a Greek physician, standing in the temple of Asclepios at Cos, the famed "Temple of Healing," swore an oath which has been passed down, in form only slightly altered, to every generation of physicians and of surgeons from that day to this. We speak of the oath of Hippocrates which, if faithfully followed by all present-day medical men—as it is adhered to by all to whom the medical sciences are a profession, and not a mere source of income nor a talking point for the dissemination of radical, anti-social, materialistic propaganda—would materially elevate both the moral and the scientific standards of medicine and its associated professions.

But enough of this. We can only quote the oath which Hippocrates, the descendant of Asclepios, known as the "Father of Medicine," swore in the temple of healing.

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ECONOMICS OF BIRTH PREVENTION. In the contribution presented by Boverat at the Sixth International Congress on the Movement of Population in Europe, he states:

"Nevertheless the diminishing birth rate is due only in part, and that not the most important, to the economic crisis. The most powerful causes are moral: weakening of religious faith, weakening of the family sentiment, the development in the case of the individual of new needs, often artificial and notably the desire for distraction. We can see these causes at work in all European countries in a greater or less degree; everywhere they exercise their nefarious influence on procreation.

"The study of the movement of European population in 1931 and 1932 shows us then how necessary it is, if we wish to snatch European civilisation from the mortal danger which threatens it, to intensify the struggle against the diminution of fertility, and straight away to make known the real demographic situation of Europe and the tragic perspective of its future.

"It is earnestly to be hoped that the knowledge of the peril which the diminishing birth rate means to the white race will make all Europe understand that a new armed conflict will involve the ruin of Europe for many generations, and that the nations have, in consequence, a vital interest in agreeing with each other to assure in lasting fashion the maintenance of peace."



In the *International Labour Review*, Professor Hersch of the University of Geneva argues that the continuation of birth prevention must be a powerful factor in producing permanent economic depression. He states:


"The tendency of the birth rate in Western Europe is to fall to the level of the death rate, that is to say, the tendency of Western populations is to be stationary, or to decline. This means, of necessity, a diminution of consumers in relation to producers, for the part of the population which is economically active consists almost entirely of young and mature adults. Children are consumers and not producers, and the decline in children exceeds the increase among the aged. 'This steady decrease of the consuming population must, other things being equal, bring about an increase of unemployment that is neither seasonal nor cyclical, but may be properly described as structural since it is determined by the structure of the population according to age. The improving technique of production must also result, other things being equal, in an increase of unemployment, which may be called organic unemployment. For European countries the fall of the birth rate has effects similar to the loss or contraction of markets overseas. The combined effects of these two phenomena of declining birth rate and improving technique, are certain to produce a serious situation.'"

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