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[Book Review of] *Ethics of Ectopic Operations*

Catholic Physicians' Guild

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that she here permits her natural sympathy with the older babies to color her judgment. Certainly, I had a difficult enough time explaining to doctors the reason for the exorbitant price of products that cost only a few cents." Mr. Stubbs was with the very first pioneer firm dealing in contraceptives. In the same issue Miss Garrett reviews the book *Birth Control in Practice* by Marie E. Kopp, Ph.D. "The statistics," she says, "dealing with the protection afforded by these methods will be of prime interest to many readers . . . but this reviewer feels that the significance of this figure is seriously to be questioned."

Clinical Medicine and Surgery, in its issue for February, 1934, has a picture of Dr. Norman Haire, the well-known British propagandist for Onanism. He attended the recent birth-control meeting at Washington. He it was, according to the *Medical Times*, who at the Seventh International Meeting of Birth-Control defended a certain mechanical contraceptive device from the charge that it would be inductive of cancer by the naive remarks that any signs of incipient cancer would easily be discovered in the periodic examination. The writer of this article on Norman Haire closes with this remark, "The bill repealing our archaic laws relating to the dissemination of contraceptive information may come up for action soon. Write to your Congressmen and Senators urging their support of this measure." Who told the writer that these laws were archaic? The laws are not archaic which are based on a profound knowledge of the moral, physiological, psychological and sociological harm arising from the use of contraceptives. The writer evidently belongs to that group of shallow thinkers who without profound thought would seize on some so-called panacea, unconcerned with its moral and universal implications.

With deep sorrow, the management of the LINACRE QUARTERLY have learned of the passing of Mr. E. Mead Johnson, President of the Mead Johnson Co., on March 20, 1934. The highly ethical standards established both in their products and their method of presenting them to the medical profession were a direct reflection of the soul of their great President. May the force of his splendid example be carried on.

BOOK REVIEW

Ethics of Ectopic Operations. T. Lincoln Bouscaren, S.J., S.T.D., Mag. Agg., Professor of Canon Law, St. Mary-of-the-Lake Seminary, Mundelein, Illinois. Loyola University Press, Chicago, Illinois. 1933. vii-xv. 1-186.

If the purpose of the reviewer should be "to give the book," we forthwith state that this volume is a lucid exposition and logical proof of the thesis that:—

"The removal of a pregnant fallopian tube containing a non-viable, living fetus, *even before the external rupture of the tube*, can be done in such a way that the consequent death of the fetus will be produced only *indirectly*. Such an operation may be licitly performed if all the circumstances are such that the necessity for the operation is, in moral estimation, proportionate to the evil effect permitted. But in all such operations, if the fetus be probably alive, care must be taken to baptize the fetus immediately, at least conditionally."

The core, therefore, of the matter to which the author devotes himself, is the question "whether the surgical operation by which an unruptured, pregnant fallopian tube is removed, and which results in the death of the unborn, non-viable child, is to be considered morally as a *direct* abortion, and, hence, never under any necessity to be permitted, or as an *indirect* abortion, and, hence, permissible in cases of urgent necessity to save the life of the mother." As is clear, from the wording of the thesis, the author maintains the alternative of this double question.

The book proceeds by a fourfold division. Part I gives the historical background of the question: (a) the fight on craniotomy and direct abortion, (b) removing an ectopic fetus. Part II lays down and examines the fundamental principles applicable to the case, among them being the purpose of creation, the natural criterion of morality, the right to life, and refutes some false or inadequate solutions such as those of the unjust aggressor, the supposed consent of the fetus, the conflict of rights. Part III is a record of expert medical testimony upon the physiology of ectopic pregnancy. Part IV contains the moral argument establishing the thesis and a summary of conclusions.

The argument is squarely based on the "principle of the double effect," namely, "that an action from which there follows as a necessary and proximate consequence the death of an innocent person is, under certain conditions, not a direct killing, and is not to be imputed to the agent as such. The conditions are, that there be a proportionately grave reason or necessity for the act, and that the good effect which is sought follow at least as proximately as the evil consequence which is foreseen." The teachings of St. Thomas and De Lugo on this cardinal principle are thoroughly discussed, and give great weight to the author's position.

While admitting that in its application this principle "of the double effect" is an extremely subtle one, the author shows that the principle is perfectly sound, justified both by reason and conscience as well as by authority, and that any objection to its application to the problems of ectopic pregnancy through failure to understand it or refusal to accept it, "is in conflict with the whole trend of Catholic moral teaching for more than six hundred years."

Yet there are moralists who maintain that until the tube is *actually ruptured*, the removal of it while containing a living, non-viable fetus is always and necessarily illicit. It is the refutation of this contention that gives such interest to the book.

For members of the medical profession, for priests and heads of hospitals, the volume will be a *vade mecum* in the solution, according to unchangeable moral principles, of a difficult ethical problem that confronts them in their professional careers.

The Silver Anniversary of *America* the outstanding Catholic publication in this country will be celebrated at a dinner to be held in the Hotel Commodore on April 12, 1934, at 7 P. M. Subscription \$5.00. Address communications to Mr. J. Brunini, Executive Secretary, Suite 606, Hotel Commodore, New York City.

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