Along Highway and Byway

Catholic Physicians' Guild
DOCTOR RONGY AND PAGAN PROPAGANDA. On Monday, May 28, 1934, there was held a stated meeting of the Medical Society of the County of New York at the Academy of Medicine, at which the principal speaker was Doctor A. J. Rongy, M.D., author of "Abortion—Legal or Illegal." Doctor Rongy's address was just what was to be expected, namely, a plea for the removal of almost all legal restrictions with regard to abortion. The other speakers either explained the difficulty of law enforcement and punishment or else deplored the evil. A wholesome talk was delivered by District Attorney James T. Neary who pointed out the cowardice and the degradation of abortionists and recommended a change in the law so that accomplices would be eligible as witnesses for the prosecution. He likewise deprecated the infrequency of convictions. The abortionists and the advocates of changing the laws on contraception and divorce all appeal to a na"ive line of argumentation which refutes itself. The evils attached to abortion, contraception and divorce are on the increase. Therefore we should sanction them by law. This is exactly like sanctioning bank robbery by law simply because the evil is so prevalent.

The Journal of the American Medical Association in its issue for January 6, 1934, carries a lengthy review of Doctor Rongy's book. It is in a certain sense a devastating review and says in part, "Notwithstanding Rongy's advocacy of the utmost freedom with respect to the inducing of abortion, he calls attention to the fact that abortion threatened the stability of the Roman Empire so gravely that the poets, historians and philosophers of that day sought means for stopping it and persuaded the legislators to enact restrictive legisla-
tion. With what safeguards, then, does he propose to surround the
induction of abortion under his suggested scheme, in order that our
own national stability may not be jeopardized? He apparently over-
looks the fact that human life is a continuous process, from the
moment of conception to the last heart beat—gamete, embryo, fetus,
infant, child, youth and man. The Church condemns the killing of
the human being at any time. Rongy, however, would have the gov-
ernment approve the killing of the gamete, the embryo and the fetus.
Why he would tolerate feticide and forbid infanticide and other forms
of homicide is not apparent; the new-born infant may be as much
of an embarrassment to its mother as is the unborn babe; the incurable
invalid and the insane may be a burden, socially and financially, as
insupportable as is an illegitimate or an unwanted infant; and in many
cases the bearer of the burden of a disgraced or invalid life may him-
self vastly prefer that it be terminated.

In his book Doctor Rongy departs from the field of medicine to
to enter into the field of religion and says, "The theological cloud is thick
with its taboos and implications—and its utter remoteness from con-
duct with the realistic implications of child-bearing and child-rearing.
The religious imagination fails to conceive that the slaughter of the
innocents is possible in more ways than one—as witness the high in-
fant mortality in countries where religious influence has banned
contraceptive devices." (Doctor Rongy in this connection has to an-
swer the report of the New York Academy of Medicine stating that
68.8% of 2,041 maternity deaths in New York were due to improper
care on the part of physicians, who presumably had no inhibitions
against contraception.—Ed. Note.) "That imagination contents it-
self by conjuring up a heavenly court with fiats and regulations and
penalties which, quaintly enough, need the strong-arm support of the
civil order."

Doctor Rongy, be it noted, by a contradiction, is calling for the
"strong-arm support of the civil order" in behalf of his own pagan
principles. He and others of his ilk are breaking down the Christian
morality of this country. They are doing the work of anti-Christ.
It is high time that Catholic and Protestant doctors serve notice on
this militant pagan group that they will not be allowed to succeed
in their propaganda. May we not say that it is men of the type of
Doctor Rongy who are responsible for the decline of the prestige of
the medical profession?

THE SHALLOW GRETTA PALMER OF THE WORLD-TELEGRAM.
Gretta Palmer, the woman's page editor of the World-Telegram
writes day after day in that sheet the influence of which is frequently
either anti-Christian or un-Christian with a shallowness rarely surpassed even by other columnists. Recently, commenting on the increasing population of Japan and the falling birth-rate in the United States, she came out for a large navy and a large army. This is a new tack for the feminists who are usually opposed to war. It does not seem to occur to the glib lady that the falling population of the United States means increased taxation for the individual and that soldiers and sailors are necessary for the large army and the large navy whom she would prevent from living by contraception. It used to be said that the hand that rocked the cradle was the strongest national defense. And whether Gretta Palmer likes it or not the natural laws will have their way and the earth and the fullness thereof belong to those who live according to these laws. Gretta Palmer writes like a propagandist of the American Birth Control League. In this connection, our national moderator, Father Ignatius W. Cox, S. J., in a lenten sermon at the Church of St. Ignatius Loyola, 980 Park Avenue, New York City, called attention to the anti-Christian and un-Christian tone of much that appears in the New York World-Telegram. He openly declared that Doctor Harry Elmer Barnes, the author of “The Twilight of Christianity,” the signer of the Humanistic Manifesto (and his type of humanism is atheistic) and member of the international committee for erecting a statue to Robert E. Ingersoll of inglorious, atheistic memory, has frequently used his column in the past and abused the opportunity offered to him by the World-Telegram and insulted the many Christian readers of that paper who patronize its advertisers with attacks on supernatural religion.

The New York American Magazine Section and Unscientific Blah. In its issue for Sunday, May 27th, the American Magazine carried an article by Margaret Sanger which seems to surpass anything in absurdity that has been written by this unscientific pagan propagandist. She who has presented herself as the defender of the rights of women is guilty of this contradiction, “No woman shall have the legal right to bear a child, and no man shall have the right to become a father without a permit for parenthood.” “Even a peanut stand must be licensed,” she says, “is the producer and caretaker of the American public less important?” And so all of this advocacy of the so-called rights of mothers to be immoral by contraception ends in the servitude of the woman to the state, contrary to our fundamental American political philosophy that there are certain inalienable rights of individuals for the protection of which all human government exists. But what interests the editor particularly in this article
is its illustration with a picture of Mrs. Elizabeth Tuttle Edwards who “transmitted her fine qualities to over thirty-one descendants, including Jonathan Edwards, the theologian, President Dwight of Yale, General U. S. Grant, President Cleveland and Winston Churchill, the novelist.” Now the fact of the matter is that on every principle laid down by the sterilizers the famous or infamous Elizabeth Tuttle should have been sterilized. Harvey Wickham in his book, “The Misbehaviorists,” basing his opinion on statements of Horatio Haskett Newman and Herbert E. Walter in “Human Conservation Through Genetics” says the following: “So, if the eugenists had been in control three hundred years ago, Mary Talcott (the 2nd wife of Richard Edwards) would have been allowed to marry. But Elizabeth Tuthill (Tuttle) would have been refused a marriage license even had she escaped a worse fate. Crime and insanity seem to have marked her for their own.” According to Wickham, Richard Edwards, the first husband of Elizabeth Tuttle, divorced her for adultery and gross immorality. The evil trait was in the blood, for one of her sisters murdered her own son and a brother murdered his own sister. Richard Edwards married again after his divorce and had five sons and one daughter, but none of their numerous progeny rose above mediocrity. This is a scientific fact for Margaret Sanger and the sterilizers to chew upon if they are really interested in science and not propaganda. These facts have been called to the attention of the editors of the American Magazine and we wait with interest to find out if with a decent regard for science they will bring out in their Magazine the true facts. From this we will be able to judge whether the American Magazine is interested in truth or propaganda. Catholics are beginning to see that the only way to have clean movies is to refuse to patronize unclean movies. The transition to apply the same principle to the daily press is easy and obvious.

THE STERILIZATION RACKET. We quote from the Medical Times and Long Island Medical Journal: “In England, the Eugenic’s Society recently opposed compulsory sterilization of defectives but favored the legalization of voluntary sterilization. The government committee’s bill consequently provides that where a patient can give his consent he shall sign a declaration of his willingness to undergo the operation. If an individual is so defective as to deserve sterilization, by what logic is the victim’s consent given any rational value? Why is his reasoning so good when he gives such consent and so bad otherwise as to justify his classification as a defective? The futility of sterilization as a means of eliminating the unfit is pointed out by Professor C. Leonard Huskins of McGill University. Sterilizing the unfit themselves would not produce notable results
even after many generations of effort. To reach a 50 per cent decrease an 'infinite' number of generations of sterilization would be required. To wipe out the unfit it would be necessary to sterilize not only the obviously defective, but 'their brothers and sisters, parents, uncles and aunts, and cousins.' This is because many defects are produced by recessive hereditary factors, and apparently normal carriers cannot be distinguished from those who are normal both as to appearance and their germ cells. All of this is familiar enough to the student of Mendelism. In similar fashion Professor Alexander Fraser of New York University and Bellevue Medical College reminds us that the eugenicist fails to realize that the genes are not dead material bricks in a building, but living units, each reacting with its neighbors, and all reacting together in an organized living totality. From such a group, who is to pick out the members due for sterilization? 'There certainly would be considerable difference of opinion and it is quite possible that so many eugenists would be elected that the whole eugenic movement would be stopped.'

To show that the advocates of sterilization are not basing their propaganda on scientific facts we quote the following from the Journal of the American Medical Association for May 12, 1934:

"Sterilization of the unfit as a means of gradually reducing the toll exacted from society is not of recent origin. It is based on the essential concept that certain traits which are recognized as unsocial are perpetuated in the race by direct propagation. It is on this concept that the whole problem hinges. When viewed superficially with only cursory examination of the eugenic evidence, few socially-minded individuals can resist the rosy outlook of banishing incompetence in a few years by the simple expedient of preventing the conception of such individuals by sterilization of the potential parents. The laws governing human heredity, especially of "mental traits," are unfortunately not known. Too often a mental trait is confounded with a mendelian unit character. Too often are uncritical histories of families such as the Jukes, the Kallikaks and the Edwarses the basis for unsubstantiated far-reaching eugenic conclusions. In feeble-mindedness, schizophrenia, circular insanity, epilepsy, Huntington's chorea and hereditary blindness and deafness the proponents of eugenic sterilization find evidence of inheritance which they believe amenable to reduction by this means. Other authorities, however (e.g., Tredgold), believe that mental deficiency is not due to absence in the ancestral germ cells of certain components but to incomplete development resulting from diminished capacity of growth of the seed. Tredgold finds, moreover, that the proportion of defectives who are the offspring of defective parents
is exceedingly small. It follows that, if every defective in existence a generation ago had been sterilized, the number of defectives today would not be appreciably diminished. Hence if this principle should be properly applied it would be necessary to sterilize heterozygous individuals who are latent carriers of mental ailments. From the evidence thus briefly considered it would appear that society is faced with an increasing (so far) load of mental and physical incompetents. Whether sterilization of large numbers of these incompetents would improve the position of society is dependent on one of two factors as yet undetermined."

THE KALLIKAK FAMILY AGAIN. Mr. Reed of the Catholic Truth Society of Georgia asked the present writer about the Kallikak family. It seems that there is some propaganda for sterilization going on in Georgia by reference to the history of this family. I suppose the present revived fame of the Kallikak family is in part traceable to a book by S. J. Holmes called, "The Eugenic Predicament." He mentions this family three or four times.

Landman in "Human Sterilization," Macmillan Co.; says, "Yet when in need of data to substantiate some theory, such pessimistic eugenicists as L. Stoddard, E. M. East, E. Huntington, H. H. Goddard, and others will resort to the hackneyed geneologies of the Jukes and Kallikaks." Page 187.

Harvey Wickham in the "Misbehaviorists," page 215, writes: "The technique which will separate the effects of blood (heredity) from those of education and example has yet to be devised. And tradition or the lack of it, must be taken into account before we draw conclusions from the history of so-called 'degenerate' families, the Kallikaks and the Jukeses. Who can pretend to interpret the heredity of such unfortunates when the very point of the whole argument is the fact that they were prostitutes and thieves." Wickham is alluding to the fact that all these unfortunates may be explained by environment.

In the "Psychology of Mental Disorders" by Abraham Myerson, M.D., Macmillan, we read: "Second, that such families as the Jukes, Kallikaks, Nams, Tribes of Ishmaels, are not representative of feeble-mindedness, if we may judge by our studies of some 860 families in Massachusetts. There are families with a good deal of feeble-mindedness in one or two generations, but some of their collateral, their cousins, uncles and aunts, to say nothing of the wider ranges, may be and often are all right and correspond to good social groups. We found nothing like the prostitution, crime, and general unfitness recorded in those families. Elsewhere I have criticized the totally indiscriminate way in which low cultural level has been called [39]
THE LINACRE QUARTERLY

feeble-mindedness in the case of those families, and the surprisingly omniscient way in which the field workers pass judgment on the dead as well as the quick, as to mentality, morals, disease, and disposition. Personally I find it hard to evaluate individuals after a close study and after a long acquaintance with mental and physical diseases.” Page 123.

GUILD NOTES

THE MANHATTAN GUILD—The Manhattan Guild held an interesting meeting on May 22, 1934. Doctor William M. Ford, Chief of Gynecology, St. Vincent’s Hospital, N. Y., delivered an interesting paper entitled, “Surgical and Ethical Aspects of Disputed Operations.” Father Ignatius W. Cox, S. J., answered the ethical questions raised by Doctor Ford. He particularly called attention to the necessity of all doctors acquainting themselves with the book of the Reverend Father Bouscaren, S. J., Professor at Mundelein Seminary, Chicago, on “The Ethics of Ectopic Operations.” It was a lively meeting, for some of the doctors present included Doctor Frederick W. Rice, formerly professor of Obstetrics at New York University and Bellevue Medical College held that the opinion of Doctor Bouscaren was altogether too liberal.

THE BRONX GUILD—On Sunday, May 27th, the Bronx Guild had a Communion Breakfast at Fordham University. The Reverend Francis G. Power, S. J., delivered an illuminating address on “The Church and Science.” The Reverend Moderator, Ignatius W. Cox, S. J., spoke on “The Ethics of Artificial Insemination and Sterilization.” Doctor Henry Barrow was elected president for the year 1934-5, whilst the other officers remained the same.

BROOKLYN GUILD—The Catholic Physicians Guild of the Diocese of Brooklyn had its spring meeting since the last issue of this publication, followed by the annual Retreat. Dr. James J. Walsh, the noted Catholic author and lecturer, spoke on the topic, “Some Funny Things that Cure People.”

During the first week of May of this year forty-one physicians from parishes within the Diocese of Brooklyn attended the Retreat at Mount Manresa, Staten Island, N. Y. Rev. James Walsh, S. J., was the Retreat Master; Rev. William J. Duane, S. J., presided over the informal medico-moral conference held on the last day of the Retreat.

At the annual election of officers of the Guild the following were chosen for the coming year: President, Dr. William Steinbugler; President-Elect, Dr. E. H. Fiske; Vice-President, Dr. T. M. Brennan; Secretary, Dr. Frank E. Mallon; Treasurer, Dr. T. B. Torre.