

August 1931

Twenty Cents

# BIRTH CONTROL REVIEW



DRAWING BY WILLIAM SIEGEL

# Birth Control Review

VOL XV

AUGUST, 1931

No 8

THE AMERICAN BIRTH CONTROL LEAGUE, INC.  
152 MADISON AVENUE NEW YORK CITY  
Telephones—BOgardus 4 0286-0287

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

MRS F ROBERTSON JONES *President*  
MRS RICHARD BILLINGS  
MRS DEXTER BLAGDEN } *Vice Presidents*  
MRS LEWIS L DELAFIELD }  
MRS ANNIE G PORRITT *Secretary*  
MRS WARREN THORPE *Treasurer*

MRS FRANCIS N BANGS  
REGINALD BURBANK M D  
MRS BENJAMIN CARPENTR  
MRS GEORGE A DUNNING  
MRS CHAUNCEY J HAMLIN  
MRS THOMAS W LAMONT  
MRS VICTOR MORAWETZ  
STUART MUDD M D  
H ADYE PRICHARD D D  
MRS HAYDEN N SMITH  
BENJAMIN T TILTON M D  
MRS LESLIE J TOMPKINS  
IRA S WILE M D

MRS ROGER HOWSON *Executive Secretary*  
ERIC M MATSNER M D *Medical Director*

## BIRTH CONTROL REVIEW

(Copyright 1931 American Birth Control League Inc)

STELLA HANAU *Editor*

### Editorial Board

ANNIE G PORRITT *Chairman*  
JAMES H S BOSSARD PH D  
MARY SUMNER BOYD  
GUY IRVING BURCH  
FRANK H HANKINS PH D  
C C LITTLE Sc D  
KENNETH MACGOWAN  
E A ROSS PH D

*Published on the first of the month by  
The American Birth Control League, Inc*

Single Copies, 20 cents, \$2 per year, \$3 50 two years.  
Canada and Foreign add 25 cents postage per year

Entered as Second Class Matter March 11 1918 at the Post  
office at New York N Y under the Act of March 3 1879

## CONTENTS

BIRTH CONTROL IS AN ECONOMIC MEASURE	227
EDITORIAL	228
THE BIOLOGIST'S POINT OF VIEW By Dwight Elmer Minnich	229
BIRTH CONTROL CLINICS Reports by Carol K Nash and Gladys Gaylord	231
THE SUPERSTITIONS OF SEX By Nathan Miller	233
BOOK REVIEWS By George G Scott, Morris H Kahn, M D, S A K, Edith Hale Swift, M D	235
THE CASE FOR BIRTH CONTROL By James A Field	237
LETTERS FROM READERS 'The Desire for Parenthood is Instinctive, Do Women Want Children? Modesty and Birth Control	238
THE PROBLEM OF RACE IMPROVEMENT By Charles R Stockard, M D	239

*This smaller summer issue has necessitated the omission of some of our usual features  
News Notes, Population Section, In the Magazines, etc These will be resumed in the September  
issue, which will be the customary thirty-two pages*

# BIRTH CONTROL IS AN ECONOMIC MEASURE

BECAUSE it enables parents to limit their children to those they can properly support Over-large families lead to under-nourishment, overcrowding, child labor, low wages, unemployment, they are one of the most potent causes of poverty

BECAUSE it makes possible the elimination of the unfit, who place such a heavy burden upon the resources of the community It is estimated that taxpayers spend close to two billion dollars per year for the care of dependency, much of which is preventable



Birth control does not interfere with the happiness of the marriage relation, and is absolutely non-injurious, when proper methods are used To learn such methods married persons should consult their family physicians or the nearest birth control clinic

In most states it is now legal for physicians to give contraceptive information orally If you are in doubt about the law in your own state, or if you are unable to secure satisfactory advice from your family physician, write to the Birth Control League of your state, or to the American Birth Control League, 152 Madison Avenue, New York, N Y



*“When there are too many mouths to feed, that fact inevitably means a shortage for somebody In its broad economic effect it means an increase in the cost of living Over population sets up a vicious circle, for by increasing the cost of food, increasing unemployment, lowering wages and cheapening the grade of housing, it definitely lowers the standard of living”*

ROBERT W KELSO, in *Poverty*

# Editorial

MARY BRECKINRIDGE opens her article *Is Birth Control the Answer?* in July HARPER'S "I rarely address an audience, especially of women, on the maternity problems of the Frontier Nursing Service in the Kentucky mountains that at least one woman in the audience does not ask 'What about birth control for those people?'" Mrs Breckinridge thinks the inquiry has something of the easy smoothness of a get-rich-quick proposition. She goes on to describe the people among whom she works and for whom she has done so much—their racial qualities, the primitive conditions under which they live, the work of the Frontier Nursing Service in promoting health and aiding mothers and children. "From nine widely separated nursing centers, the Frontier Nursing Service maintains twenty-eight skilled nurse-midwives, who travel on horseback to attend women in normal childbirth, and average now a baby a day to the Service, nurse the sick, practice the tenets of public health, and teach hygiene. There is no question that early and constant childbearing, even when skilled attendance is provided, as is done by the Frontier Nursing Service, at a price these people can afford to pay, is a drain on the physical stamina of the women." Would birth control solve the problem? "It would not," is Mrs Breckinridge's amazing reply. She gives reasons: the question of cost, religious prejudice, the child as an economic asset, the difficulties of contraceptive methods in a one or two room cabin, the love of children, etc. To these "minor reasons" Mrs Breckinridge adds that birth control has no effect on overpopulation, and that it will not work! She supports these sweeping statements by announcing that population the world over has *not* decreased (though vital statistics show the opposite to be true), that despite Malthus "the law of compensation comes in, and that man develops mental powers which enable him to control the health of the world." As a solution she offers, in place of birth control, economic

justice, education for every boy and girl, a higher scale of living, later marriage. Given these factors, she avers, we would have no problem of overpopulation.

It is easy to point out that though birth control may not completely solve the problem it can improve conditions. It is easy to puncture the sophistry of Mrs Breckinridge's article, to answer the questions with reasoned facts. Our readers were doubtless able to do this for themselves. The significant point is that she and HARPER'S have inadvertently done the movement a great service by showing the public just how far we have progressed. Writers and editors can no longer ignore birth control, they can no longer dismiss it with disbelief, they must take devious and insecure routes to show why it should not be used.

That the Kentucky mountaineers need economic justice, along with cotton mill workers, miners, farmers, and all other classes cannot be denied. That they need education, recreation, and the help of the "twenty-eight nurse-midwives traveling about on horseback," is clear. They also need birth control knowledge to space their children, to limit their families in accordance with specific economic and psychological situations. Present contraceptive methods may be difficult to learn and to use under certain conditions. This does not invalidate the need for birth control instruction, it merely points to the necessity for better methods, better education, better understanding of the entire health problem. The hungry man does not refuse half a loaf, the struggling mountain mother will snatch at knowledge which means better days for her and for her children.

Birth control appears with increasing frequency in magazine and newspaper articles, in editorials, open letters and the like. Whether the statements made are pro or anti, prejudiced or fair, the point to be remembered is that birth control can no longer be kept out of the reckoning.

# The Biologist's Point of View

By DWIGHT ELMER MINNICH

*Summary of Professor Minnich's Address at the National Conference of Social Work, June 18th, 1931*

**B**IRTH CONTROL, in its most fundamental aspects, is a biological problem. Like not a few other problems of human biology, however, it is so inextricably linked up with our moral practice and religious thought that the moral rather than the biological issue is likely to engage our chief attention.

I wish to call attention to two aspects of the biological problem, which have been emphasized at length in recent years by numerous biologists interested in human welfare. These are birth control and defective heredity, or social birth control, and birth control and population growth, or voluntary parenthood.

One of the most outstanding advances of biological thought in the last quarter of a century has been the tremendous growth in our knowledge of the mechanism of inheritance. We now know with certainty that minute particles called genes, present in the germ cells, are largely responsible for the characteristics of the future organism. Professor Jennings<sup>1</sup> has recently summarized the evidence for this viewpoint in a masterful way, yet simply enough that any intelligent layman may understand. Emphasizing the tremendous importance of the role played by the genes, he says:

"The evidence on these matters is experimental in character, it is positive, inescapable, conclusive. But it deals with matters unfamiliar to most, and it emerges from a mountain of details that cannot be mastered without great labor. It is to this fact that the persistence of skepticism in some individuals is due. They have not mastered this mountain of evidence, otherwise their skepticism would vanish."

This does not mean that the genes determine the characteristics of the organism to the exclusion of the environment. The two work together. Nevertheless, defective genes frequently mean defective individuals regardless of environment. Important human deficiencies directly attributable to gene defects now number dozens. Huntington's chorea, epilepsy, hereditary insanity and hereditary feeble-mindedness are but a few of the more important ones.

Let us consider one of these defects, feeble-mindedness. According to Professor East<sup>2</sup> there are 300,000 to 500,000 low-grade feeble-minded in the United States, 1,000,000 to 1,500,000 who need institutional care, 5 to 6 millions "who lack sufficient intelligence to go through the primary grades of the public schools," and 20 millions "whose intellects will not carry them through the grammar school even with hard driving." A large amount of such deficiency is due to gene defects, in the first group probably 80%, in the next at least 50%. Moreover, these low-grade stocks breed at 1½ to 2 times the rate of the better grade stocks of our population.

The state of Minnesota may be taken as a typical representative of the United States. I cite it because, as a citizen of the state, I have become interested in its problem and am, therefore, more familiar with its data. Dr. Kuhlmann,<sup>3</sup> Director of the Division of Research of the State Board of Control of Minnesota, states that 5% of the school population of the state have an I.Q. of 74 or below. This group in the population sends 5 to 8 times its quota to the state's penal and reform institutions. The 1931-32 state budget for Minnesota is between 40 and 50 million dollars. 4 million dollars of this are appropriated for the insane, and 1,700,000 for the feeble-minded and epileptic. Thus more than 10% of this year's budget is directly appropriated for deficiency, much of which is hereditary. But this obvious direct cost becomes insignificant beside the total cost. Kuhlmann estimates the total cost of mental deficiency in Minnesota, including the cost to relatives, schools, employers, courts, and the organized charities to be not less than 50 million dollars annually, or more than the entire state budget for one year.

Surely vigorous birth control alone can cope with the growing menace of this situation. The lower grade feeble-minded, capable of reproduction, should be sterilized or segregated to prevent reproduction. According to recent statistics the total number sterilized for eugenic purposes in the United States up to January 1, 1930, was less than 12,000. The number in which reproduc-

tion should be stopped, however, is certainly several million

Of course we must not be deceived as to the result of such a procedure. It will prevent defective parents adding defective children to each new generation. In addition to defective parents, however, there is a much larger group of normal individuals who carry defective genes. Jennings estimates this number to be about 10 million. Surely for such individuals, who, though normal, come from families in which serious defects occur, contraception should be practiced. Perhaps this might reduce somewhat the several hundred thousand new defectives arising from such parents in each generation.

#### THE RESULTS OF OVERPOPULATION

But the problem of defectives is only one aspect of the general biological problem, overpopulation is another extremely important phase. However one may feel about Malthus' doctrine there is no escaping its essential principle. Natural resources and the potential food supply are constantly dwindling, while human population is constantly increasing. The inevitable results of overpopulation are the fall of the standard of living and finally the open struggle, economic or military. One has only to contrast overpopulated Italy, with its avowed policy of encouraging further increase and its military unrest, and Holland with its declared policy for birth control and its peaceful outlook. I do not mean to imply that this is the only cause of the difference in the present attitude of these two nations. I do mean that population pressure is undoubtedly an important factor.

East (*loc cit*) has given a magnificent exposition of Malthus' doctrine in the light of modern knowledge. I cannot do better than to quote him at length.

Let us look forward and draw a picture of the world as it would be at the end of the century with a continued expansionist policy. Food exportation had ceased some thirty years before, except for the exchange of specialties, all temperate regions had then reached the era of decreasing returns in agriculture. The tropics are being populated as fast as their submission to the hand of man makes it possible. Gradual reduction in population increase has occurred, due to the intensity of the struggle, yet there are 3,000 million people in the world. Migration has ceased, the bars have been put up in every country. Those nations where there is still a fair degree of comfort wish to retain

it as long as possible. Food is scarce and costly. Man works from sun to sun. When crops are good there is unrest but no rest, there is privation and hardship, when crops are bad there is mass starvation such as China and India had experienced long before. Agricultural efficiency has risen 50 per cent during the past half-century through the pressure of stern necessity, yet the food resources of each individual are smaller than ever before. Where war occurs it is war of extermination, for only by extermination can the conquerors profit, where peace remains it is under the shadow of a struggle as grim as war. Morale has weakened, and with it morals. The death-rate has risen until it equals the birth-rate. *And the potential fecundity of the human race still remains at 60 per thousand annually.* It is not a pretty picture, but I do not believe it to be overdrawn. It is a portrait of the China and India of today, and the China and India of today will be the world of tomorrow when the world as a whole reaches the same population status.

The answer to overpopulation is voluntary parenthood.

The biologist's viewpoint on birth control with respect to the elimination of defectives and the control of population is a perfectly clear one, but, as suggested at the beginning of this article, difficulty is encountered in the moral viewpoint. Mankind has become conditioned to certain beliefs formulated by priests of long ago—when they represented the wisdom of the clan and laid down its laws. The opposition to birth control is based largely on religious teaching which harks back to this source. The refusal to accept birth control is on the same basis as the refusal of present day orthodox Jews to eat pork, or of Christian Scientists to be vaccinated against smallpox. How soon the human mind will be able to outgrow these traditions and adapt itself to the findings of modern biological science to even a conservative degree is problematic. I cannot believe, however, that the time is far distant when the knowledge of birth control which is now the general property of certain classes must be made general, when the stupid hypocrisy of the present laws will be abrogated, and when voluntary parenthood and the limitation of populations will be determined by the ultimate happiness and welfare of mankind.

<sup>1</sup>Jennings, H. S. 1930 *The Biological Basis of Human Nature*

<sup>2</sup>East, E. M. 1924 *Mankind at the Crossroads*

<sup>3</sup>Kuhlmann, F. 1925 *Outline of Mental Deficiency for Social Workers, Teachers and others in Minnesota*

# Birth Control Clinics

## *Are They Reaching Those Most in Need of Help?*

### REPORT ON NEIGHBORHOOD BIRTH CONTROL CENTERS IN NEW YORK CITY

**H**OW shall we reach the women who are most in need of birth control information? The answer to this question seems to have been found by enlisting the cooperation of philanthropic and communal organizations, toward the establishment of neighborhood centers

The set-up required for a birth control clinic is very simple, consisting of an examining table and a sterilizer. Any settlement which includes health work in its program usually has this equipment. During the past year, four such centers known as Mothers' Health Bureaus, were organized by the New York City Committee of the Birth Control League, in the poorer sections of the city.

At Madison House more than one hundred women have been treated since the service was started late in October. The patients were Italian and Jewish women, most of them born outside of the United States. The average age of the women was thirty years. The average number of living children was four—although it was not unusual to find two or three miscarriages or self-induced abortions in the case history. In this section of the city, the household numbers three to four rooms, without a bathroom or private toilet. The family occupying this tenement may range from four to nine persons. Ninety of these women were treated gratis, ten paid sums ranging from twenty-five cents to two dollars, according to their means.

The Maternal Aid Society, a Jewish organization doing pre-natal work with mothers, was glad to avail itself of the opportunity to include contraceptive advice to its clients, thus rounding out a complete program for the care of underprivileged mothers. Fifty women have received birth control advice since the service was started on February 9th. This organization is in the same neighborhood as Madison House and therefore the same housing conditions prevail. Only four of the women treated here were able to pay any fee.

Council House in the upper part of the city, and Christ Church House on the lower west side organized Birth Control Centers recently. Their work cannot be evaluated at this early stage, but

the records show that the women in both neighborhoods are keenly interested. Council House is in a comparatively new section of the city where the houses are more modern and where practically every family has a bathroom and private toilet. Christ Church House, on the other hand, is located among old law tenements, dingy and ill-ventilated, which are now occupied by a mixture of Irish and Greeks. An interesting feature in regard to Christ Church House is that it is surrounded by four Catholic churches within a radius of seven blocks.

Two more centers will be started this fall. There is also a favorable prospect of a center in a Brooklyn organization, the first of its kind in that Borough.

The neighborhood clinic is an important development in birth control education, for it reaches the women who would ordinarily lack the initiative, the courage or the knowledge to secure contraceptive advice, which is thus made available to them. The warm, friendly atmosphere of the communal organization, the fact that it has won the confidence of its clients, that a member of the Staff is known and respected, lends to contraceptive advice a high standard and an unquestioned integrity. No less important is the fact that through the medical examination incident to contraceptive advice, women are referred to hospitals for corrective health measures, thus checking disease at an early stage and preventing the development of a more serious condition.

CAROL K. NASH,  
*for the New York City Committee*

### REPORT OF MATERNAL HEALTH CLINIC, CLEVELAND, OHIO

**A**RE BIRTH CONTROL Clinics reaching those most in need of help? This is a question which is asked frequently, and it seems to be a matter of real concern to physicians, ministers, social workers and others. It is quite usual to hear a member of these professional groups say, "Of course, I believe in it for the 'right people'." Just who are the right people? It is not merely a matter

of income Social and health problems demand a recognition and intelligent family regulation When we, who are directing the family regulation clinic, are faced with this question, we are apt to answer quickly in the affirmative A dozen illustrations leap to our minds They are dramatic stories But this is not the answer that will satisfy trained workers

The Cleveland Clinic is young, just three years old It was founded on the cooperation and interest of the health and social agencies It is listed in the directory of social agencies of Cleveland Growing slowly, it is analyzing its work each step of the way These are the facts on which we base our contention that those most in need of this information are reaching us

Sixty-nine percent of all our clients have come from the social and health agencies of Cleveland Thirty-five different agencies have referred clients to us The majority of these clients have been known to from ten to twenty different agencies, and it is therefore safe to assume that they come from the more under-privileged group in the city, a group who probably could not secure reliable information from any other source Fifty-nine percent of the 1,046 clients who attended the Clinic during our first three years had incomes which fell under the minimum Associated Charity budget (\$22 00 a week for a family of five people) Sixteen percent were entirely dependent Eighty-five percent of the 1,046 clients had incomes of less than \$40 00 per week, with an average number of seven in the family Sixty-three percent of the total number of clients have come from crowded or over-crowded housing conditions The majority show serious health conditions upon examination, although they may have been referred to us because of some social or economic situation

The second question is whether information and instruction given to this group of people can be effective Our conclusions are based, first, on the increasing cooperation of the health and social agencies, and second, on the continued interest and cooperation of the clients themselves

The number referred by individual agencies is increasing each year, for example one agency referred twelve people the first year, thirty-one the second, and ninety-five the third Another agency referred twenty-four, forty and forty-three people in the three consecutive years, while the third agency referred forty-six the first year, forty-three the second and fifty-eight the third Each

year additional agencies use our service (There have been nine new agencies during the past year) We take this as evidence of the increasing confidence of agencies in the efficacy of our work

On June 1st, 792 of a total number of 1,237 clients were active This means that we know that these 792 persons are following instructions satisfactorily This is not guess work, we have full time trained nurses who make home visits on each patient who does not return regularly to the Clinic The purpose of these visits is to establish accurate statistics and to have a check-up on the method recommended No persuasion is used in encouraging clients to return to the Clinic In other words, sixty-four percent or two-thirds of the total number of patients who have come to our Clinic are following instructions This is a large proportion when you remember that many of these clients are of low-grade mentality, are foreign born, in poor health and dependent circumstances The cooperation of the patients themselves is shown by the number who return at regular intervals for supplies In May, one-half of the people who attended the Clinic were old patients returning of their own accord To give two examples, Mrs D came to the Clinic in April, 1928, she was 35 years old, and had ten living children She has made 28 clinic visits in the past three years, which means that she has returned every five weeks during this period, Mrs K came to the Clinic in September, 1929 She was 26 years years old and had had five children in eight years She has made fourteen clinic visits in the past eighteen months

In concluding, I should like to give a few statements about recent developments in the service which the Cleveland Clinic is rendering In January, 1931, we added a man physician to our Monday evening Clinic, solely for the purpose of consultation with the men who attend the Clinic Men have attended the Cleveland Clinic ever since we opened, and we have found that they prefer to consult a man physician and are using the present arrangement (Sixty-two men have used this service, some returning more than once) Several men have consulted the physician before their wives came to the regular clinic

Since last January, physicians at the Clinic have given talks on sex adjustment to married couples who have asked for it, and premarital talks when the man and woman have been referred to us by the pastor who is to marry them A few Protestant ministers have been led to avail themselves



of this opportunity This is too soon to judge results, but at least for the present, some divorces have been postponed, and there is evidence of better marital adjustment in several cases

The Clinic has always had a library maintained as a station of the public library system Books are loaned to social workers and nurses, to physicians and ministers, to board members and patients

The Cleveland Clinic is trying to give thorough and complete service to those who come to us

We have not been primarily interested in the number of people who have used the Clinic, but that number is increasing, having doubled during the past year 250 people used the Clinic the first year, 285 the second, and 536 the third year We are now accepting new patients at the rate of a hundred a month, and the majority of these patients still come from the under privileged group

GLADYS GAYLORD,

*for the Maternal Health Association, Cleveland*

Further Clinic Reports will appear in subsequent issues

## The Superstitions of Sex

By NATHAN MILLER

GOOD FORTUNE and prosperity have until comparatively recent times been regarded with suspicion by most men In many of the finest products of literary effort the theme of the caprice of fate and the obduracy of fortune constantly recurs We have been accustomed to accept misfortune, ill-luck, and frustration as the common lot but happiness and enjoyment come only fitfully and hence with ill purport In fact, in many instances of prolonged success in the struggle for life, men have purposely attempted to hide their fortune lest it be snatched away Self-commiseration and asceticism—a sort of artificially induced misery—is built up where want, hunger, or privation—*natural misery*—has temporarily vanished

Much of this common attitude may be traced to the fact that social structure and the folkways, particularly in the sphere of self-maintenance, have not been uniformly successful in providing for man's wants At any rate, constant struggle and effort on a "pain economy" have been necessary to keep off the proverbial wolf The primordial wants have been satisfied only by incessive toil, at least for most people In more primitive societies, of course, where the arts of life are not developed, the chance of continuous plenty are remote, but even in the capitalistic commercial economies security has not yet been achieved on the whole One may therefore venture the generalization that men have usually developed a state of fear or suspicion of the gifts of the gods because of their infrequency

The form which this dread takes in primitive society is an anxiety that the unwanted good-fortune may excite the envy or jealousy of the ghosts,

ancestors, or spirits Hence, one must disguise one's prosperity by various practices such as self-denial, continence, sacrifice or the assumption of a grovelling demeanor One's children must not be counted, the first fruits must be offered up as a toll, gaiety must be restrained, rags must be worn, and ceremonial wailing assumed in order to keep the powers in good humor Even the more recent brazen cultivation of "prosperity" in America was interrupted now and then by the gloomy prophets who reminded us of the imminent retaliations of certain "natural" forces or laws which also disallowed continuous success in life

This strange and irrational form of behavior has manifested itself strikingly in the sphere of sex conduct and its regulation and especially in the morality typical of modern Christian communities The sickly sexophobia which has permeated Western civilization may be attributed in large part to the above-mentioned fear of the reprisals of the gods to human happiness The unhealthy prepossession with sex and the regulation of its phenomena is so characteristic that "morals" and "moral conduct" have come to be synonymous with allegiance only to a code of sex conduct In the vigorous words of Dr Robert Briffault "Western morality is quick at suppressing literature, but slow at suppressing war, zealous in the abolition of obscene postcards, but lukewarm in the abolition of obscene slums, active in putting down white slavery but apathetic in putting down wage-slavery, alert in preventing vice, but slothful in putting down starvation, shocked at clothing insufficient for purposes of

modesty, but indifferent to clothing insufficient for purposes of warmth Its efforts are wholly successful in eliminating indecency but wholly unsuccessful in eliminating injustice The 'morality' of Western culture is a scandal"<sup>1</sup>

Sex has been regarded in many cultures as a mystification and the sexual functions with their tremendously significant psychological conditions as powerful causes for uneasiness Therefore, tabus have clustered about sex relationships the more abundantly since sex itself has been a vital source of human happiness or distress But, as we have seen, happiness is mistrusted and full of "black magic" and so sexual satisfactions must also be hedged about with forms of self denial

Sin is ritual or ceremonial impurity, coercive at basis and with the force of church institutions securely behind it In Christian morality this refers particularly to the breach of ascetic tabus on sex conduct As a result there have been developed a general furtiveness, hypocrisy and forms of perversion, since repressions on the sexual life connoted by the "virtue" of chastity have been so contrary to ordinary human nature The Western outlook on sex has been "distorted, deformed, and debased" and so has poisoned sexual life, especially at puberty Dr Briffault continues "in the name of Christian morality, every boy at the age of puberty is required and expected to exhibit a fortitude which the founders of that same Christian morality declared they were unable to exhibit" The mystery of Christian purity, chastity and even the marriage "sacrament" are traceable to this same complex

Immorality becomes an essential compliment to such a system of ascetic mores prostitution and abnormal sexuality protect and sustain these superstitions However, with the recent change in the economic status of woman, it becomes increasingly more difficult to maintain the masculine supremacy which had enforced this medieval code In the Christian apologetics, woman has been conceived either as a maleficent diabolic creature or as an angel—temptress or chaste maid Her social status was determined by the proprietary claims of men, the patriarchal dominance of the father or the husband But with her relative rise into economic independence today, these superstitions have been weakened As a result the puritanical defenders of public morals fear a wave of promiscuous

"sin" It is doubtful, however, whether this threatened shedding of the supposed natural purity of woman will have disastrous effects As Dr Briffault points out, it is a question whether we will ever be able to match the pruriency, perversions and general sexophobia associated with the passing regime of sexual superstitions familiarly called "morality"

The basis of all sex folkways and mores and their wider influences on the structure of historical societies has been analyzed further by Dr Briffault in his monumental research work, *The Mothers* This is now available in an abridged form accessible to the lay reader<sup>2</sup> The evidence has been carefully collated and upon it an imposing argument erected for the primacy of matriarchal institutions in social history, that is, those based upon the mother and relationships with the child as the genesis of all social relationships Subsequent regulations of sex behavior including the relationship of the male to the offspring are described as results of extra-sexual needs and compulsions, particularly the economic The preponderance and high social status of primitive woman was due largely to her great contributions in the struggle for existence as a laborer and producer In the pastoral and developed agricultural societies these economic functions of the woman became obsolete, and only her sexual value was left She became merely a source of pleasure or the bearer of legitimate heirs to property and patriarchal status—concubine or wife And from this we arrive again at that Christian preoccupation with morality as the preservation of chastity in the unmarried and fidelity in the married woman The Christian principle of mystical renunciation and ascetic abstinence from sex—sex as sin—thus received its chief support from the social purpose of safeguarding and extending the dominance of men in society This patriarchal sway has now, however, deteriorated with the emergence again of the economic importance of woman in our industrial civilization, and with it the conception of sin itself begins to carry the odor of a musty survival from medievalism Dr Briffault's work, which should be consulted in the complete and original three volume edition (*The Mothers*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1927), is the most convincing and scholarly treatment of this subject which we have seen

<sup>1</sup>Robert Briffault, *Sex and Sin*. The Macaulay Company, New York, 1931 \$2.50

<sup>2</sup>Robert Briffault, *The Mothers*. The Macaulay Company, New York, 1931 \$4.00

## Book Reviews

SCIENCE AND GOOD BEHAVIOR, by H M Parshley *Bobbs-Merrill Company, Indianapolis* \$2 50

IN THIS study Professor Parshley points out that man has all but conquered nature by employing the scientific method. He suggests that we employ the scientific method in determining the proper human behavior for the continuance and advancement of civilization since neither anarchy, religion nor philosophy have made a good job of it.

The fundamental urges that determine conduct or behavior are hunger, fear and sex. Human conduct must satisfy these, and over and above them our conduct must be adequate psychologically since the human nervous system has given rise to special needs in addition to the more primitive ones. The behavior of the citizen of an ant colony is all set before the ant is born and neither the ant or its colony worry about conduct. Paradoxically speaking, the behavior of the ant, though described as instinctive, often appears intelligent while the behavior of many humans is irrational though supposed to be intelligent. But man can learn to respond to almost anything and we can modify even our habits. Human conduct is susceptible to many influences—so that human behavior is controllable and will be happy, provided it is directed by the findings of science.

In discussing the urge of sex, the author distinguishes between sex phenomena and reproduction of offspring. An individual is a community of highly specialized cells, and their differentiation and functioning result all too soon in inevitable death. The individual is therefore in a state of incompleteness, and the sex urge indicates a way out. It is a push in the direction of physical immortality though this may not be realized, for in a sense he lives on in his offspring. It is the urge for attaining completeness that accounts for the physical and emotional turmoil that accompany sex phenomena.

The singer, the novelist and the poet have "draped the crude form of animal impulse in bright fabrics," but others have "swathed the creature in dark coverings of repression and fear which only deform it and cause evil growths." The author holds that scientific knowledge (not even freely available to medical students) would sweep away

the miasma of ignorance and bring the whole matter out into the sunlight with much happier results for human behavior. He holds that normal sex behavior (apart from reproduction) has important physical, psychological and social values. Some authorities support this point of view and others dissent.

Professor Parshley holds that so far as human propagation goes, neglect of regulation by the inferior and ignorant, and differential regulation by others now obtains, but reasonable regulation of progeny by *all* classes would be better for all, and scientific regulation for genetic reasons would be still wiser.

We must not rely upon reverent studies of tradition as guides to proper conduct unless these traditions stand the test of scientific values. The attack on social problems must *proceed from* the biologic base. Science, the author points out, indicates the value of a little alcohol for the fatigued nervous system and also the dire effects of amounts beyond that little. So he would conclude that legalized prohibition is not conducive to good behavior. He appears to think that science and religion cannot both exist—a position contrary to that of another eminent biologist, Joseph Needham, who holds that it is consistent to retain both, but in different compartments of the mind.

Nevertheless good working ethics can be developed only from a synthesis of the social sciences and any flaw in such ethics would be due to incomplete scientific knowledge. The good life requires reasonable material success, and interest in things of the spirit. Professor Parshley's argument flows on in an easy style and should be given serious reading by all interested in the solution of social problems. It is opportune in these days of so much anti-social behavior. The author concludes with the apt quotation from Bertrand Russell "The good life is the life of love guided by knowledge."

GEORGE G SCOTT

THE FINE ART OF MARRIAGE, by Horace J Bridges *Published by the author, Chicago* \$1 00

IN THIS book the author attempts to defend monogamous marriage and advocates the Catholic viewpoint of its indissolubility. He urges "that

any scheme for the mating of the sexes in humanity must be tested by its adaptation to the needs of men and women as such, and not as animals. This means that it must be adapted to beings whose very essence is the aspiration towards goodness, truth and beauty." He advocates the early education of school children through a course in "compatibility," to enable them to choose infallibly the perfect permanent mate whom they will never want to divorce—"just as in an ideal state of society nobody would want to commit murder, or burglary, or forgery, or suicide." And so the words go on and on for their hundred odd pages without any scientific insight into the problem. Except for the tacit recognition that monogamous marriage and its permanence are in conscious need of defence, there is no *raison d'être* for this book.

MORRIS H. KAHN, M.D.

### WOMAN'S MYSTERIOUS INFLUENCE

OVER MAN, TREATING ON PROBLEMS OF LOVE AND SEX MET IN EVERY DAY LIFE, WITH PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS TO THOSE DESIRING TO MAKE THE HOME WHAT IT REALLY SHOULD BE, by Bernard Francis and S. Dana Hubbard, M.D. *The Independent Book Corporation, New York* \$1.50

FROM the title of this book one would imagine that it would be a volume of several hundred pages, but it is in reality only a very small book (6" x 4½" in size) with 130 pages of print and 3 of illustrations.

The first chapter repeats the title "Woman's Mysterious Influence Over Man." Why so much emphasis should be placed on the mystery of woman's influence over man it is difficult to understand. What is said in this chapter about sexual instincts and their difference in man and woman is correct enough, but it is not mysterious. There are, however, many interesting and useful statements in this chapter which might be profitably read and digested by those in need of such instruction.

The second chapter is called "The Marriage Gamble and How to Play the Game Safely," not a very fortunate way to describe the pros and cons which enter into the selection of one's partner. It would hardly seem to presuppose the spirit necessary "to make the home what it really should be."

Equally sensational and quite as unpleasant is the title of the next following chapter, "The Murderer of all Happiness, and How to Defeat Him."

By "Him" is meant jealousy. Under "The Cause of Sexual Attraction and Selection" the authors make the reasonably correct but rather platitudinous statement that the law of attraction is the law of selection, the law which gives us our individual tastes and qualities such as we see and admire in others. Of considerable interest however, is the chapter in which Professor Thury's methods of producing male or female children is described.

The little book is interestingly written. It is dedicated "To the weak, the suffering, the innocent, and the sexually ignorant." S. A. K.

THE PARABLE OF THE VIRGINS, by Mary Latsley. *Richard R. Smith, New York* \$2.50

THE PARABLE OF THE VIRGINS is an album of snapshot pictures of girls in a woman's college which the author chose to place within easy reach of New York, and to head by an antiquated individual who for twenty-five years had "pulled wires and watched the college grow in wealth and in social importance," who "believed in paternal care and protection" and couldn't sleep because his students in their arrogance "demanded things that ten years ago they never thought of."

That such a college could grow so sizable as to graduate 200 and be peopled by any other than boarding school types is a nine days' wonder. Only two of the six faculty members which the author permits us to know, of the threescore who must have been there, had a grain of human understanding and inspiration, and one of them was being none too gently removed.

As pictured, it is clearly evident that the college in no way made those girls, though it crippled their development at every turn and in one case even caused a tragedy. Only two show any growth. Only two, one forceful and radical, the other, older and foreign, bear the marks of maturity when they enter. The others are types to be seen in any group of the same size and adolescent age, reckless drinkers, petters, cheaters, grinds, athletes, intense and jealous girl-lovers (seeking to "find in a girl everything I would find in a man"), those using power and responsibility none too well, creating false loyalties, earning little respect for their religious affiliations or price to be paid for their Phi Beta Kappa keys. But nothing is said of the nine hundred others who were neither bad enough, nor stupid or eccentric enough to mention.

Of the few among the three dozen snapped, upon

whom the attention is more focused, one's sympathy is allowed to rest with those who in the eyes of the world have sinned grossly and enjoyed the sinning, or fought more or less successfully for self-expression, and in a fog of misunderstanding for love. Much is made of cases of girl-lovers but the author's treatment is no more helpful for the reader who contacts such frequently, than the advice of the clumsy doctor was to those involved.

I found no delight in this portrayal of college life because it is so grossly unfair to the countless numbers of presidents of student government bodies and Y W C A s, to senior and faculty advisors, to the progressive faculties who outnumber the few who are still teaching subjects and not human beings, and to the wide awake student bodies who win personality recognition along with scholastic honors, who desire college education enough to earn it or reward their parents for their sacrifice, who would not agree that "education is a right good thing to have if only it didn't consist so largely in courses you didn't like," nor that any considerable number of parents exist who send their daughters to a "smart college where one gets to know society girls," unjust as well to the highly trained deans of women, who are indispensable to the adjustment of young women to life, and to presidents of colleges who hold their positions because they do understand the needs of modern young women.

From my rather intimate knowledge of some two hundred colleges and universities, I deny that this is a true cross-section of present college life.

EDITH HALE SWIFT, M D

#### CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE

DWIGHT ELMER MINNICH is *Chairman of the Department of Zoology* at the University of Minnesota.

NATHAN MILLER is Associate Editor of the *Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences*.

GEORGE SCOTT is professor in Biology of the College of the City of New York, author of *Laboratory Manual of General Biology*.

EDITH HALE SWIFT, M D, is Associate of the Division of Educational Measures of the American Social Hygiene Association.

CAROL K NASH is secretary to the New York City Committee of the American Birth Control League.

GLADYS GAYLORD is executive secretary of the Maternal Health Association of Cleveland, Ohio.

## The Case for Birth Control

IT IS A brave man who, today, undertakes to examine the case for birth control, not because he fears the rebuffs of an outraged Victorian delicacy, but—what is far more serious now—because he lays himself open to the risk of lapsing into unenlightened moralizing. In a time when intelligent people generally are talking about birth control, and a national commission compiles formidable volumes of evidence, it is not easy to avoid platitudes. But the risk is, perhaps, worth taking, for the issues involved are strategic to any attempt to understand and evaluate the trend of modern life.

The argument for birth control rests ultimately upon the assumption that by taking thought man may improve his condition. In the Victorian phrase, man's progress depends upon the exercise of intelligent responsibility. It is rational, practical, and pragmatic. Historically the birth control movement is the child of utilitarian philosophy and the nineteenth-century discoveries in biology. Its advent was predestined in the development of scientific knowledge and the rise of political democracy of the past seventy-five years. The great advances in science exerted their influence in every field of thought and activity, and were reflected in an insatiable curiosity to find out how things happen and how they can be controlled in the most satisfactory way. The ascendancy of political democracy ordained that the new knowledge should be devoted to the welfare of the common man.

Whatever the philosophers may say, it is quite certain that so long as the results of birth control commend themselves to those who practice it, the knowledge will not be relinquished. Birth control as a practice and as a propaganda in the twentieth century is frankly pragmatic. It has spread because it meets a personal need which reflects a social philosophy that is for most people imperfectly formulated and essentially individualistic. If the race is threatened with extinction, or eugenics proves the policy to be wrong, or the world witnesses a return to a naive religious belief, it is conceivable that the movement may weaken, but it is more probable that in the next generation it will spread and in time will establish itself as moral and even obligatory.

JAMES A FIELD,

*Essays on Population*

# Letters from Readers

## DESIRE FOR PARENTHOOD IS INSTINCTIVE

TO THE EDITOR

It seems to me that an article on *Do Women Want Children* should not be needed. The desire for parenthood is instinctive, although it exists in various degrees in the unselected population, as does every other biological trait.

Whether we have birth control or not, I think that the problem of the future will be how to *reduce* the rate at which the earth is becoming populated. I believe, also, that the natural solution of this problem will be through measures for reduction in quantity and improvement in quality.

AARON J. ROSANOFF, M.D.

Los Angeles, California

## MARRIAGE WILL EVENTUALLY BE DIFFERENT

TO THE EDITOR

I have been very much interested in Havelock Ellis' article in the June issue of the *REVIEW*. However, I see no grounds for citing animal life as giving any indication that marriage is an enduring institution. I have lived with monkeys and birds a good part of my life, and have not found much among any of them that looks like marriage.

Certainly if we are going to have marriage after we get rid of religion (which I hope will be soon, but which I fear will be several thousand years from now) it would be an entirely different kind of marriage from the marriage we have at the present time. Based as it is now on religious mandates, it must always, as long as it is to exist, be pretty much as it is now, but that marriage as we now have it is crumbling rather rapidly is a fact which any one can see by getting deeply enough into the lives of the average man and woman in all the larger cities. On the farm, of course, there is a very strong economic motive, and I can very easily see why, in frontier life or in farm life today, marriage is looked upon as such a fine institution.

New York, N. Y.

JOHN B. WATSON

## THE ESSENCE OF THE MALTHUSIAN DOCTRINE

TO THE EDITOR

We still occasionally hear some prominent person say that Malthus was all wrong in his views, and this even happened, on one occasion, at the

recent meeting in London of the International Union for the Scientific Investigation of Population Problems. I have long felt that the essence of Malthus' doctrine should be incessantly pointed out that *a high birth rate must cause a high death rate except in thinly populated countries where the food supply can be increased very rapidly*.

The *Birth Control Review* is encouraging

London, England

B. DUNLOP, M.D.

## DO WOMEN WANT CHILDREN?

TO THE EDITOR

At present, under pressure of economic necessity women are cultivating their minds to live more abundantly as individuals, each running her own plant (self-development), supplying her own fuels, making her own repairs, and *thinking* before she *acts*. She is refusing to follow false gods and listen to unwise counsels, who could make the worse seem the better cause. The educated woman of today is reshaping her personal and social obligations.

How is the educated woman of today emancipating her sex life? It is true that the biological urge is an important part in her sexual life, but, it is no longer the sole purpose of sex. The primitive biological patterns do not dominate her life. The urge to limit her offspring, rationalized by the fact that unlimited families are the underlying cause of poverty, crime, famine, war and pestilence, is an accomplished fact. Therefore I hold that women want birth control as a force to meet the challenge of existence, not to become extinct.

Bronx, New York

BENJAMIN BIRNBAUM

## MODESTY AND BIRTH CONTROL

TO THE EDITOR

Inclosed is my renewal to the *REVIEW* which I had thought (rather foolishly) could be dispensed with after years of eager perusal. The June issue brought me again into the fold.

Especially to the point is Havelock Ellis' brief for marriage in some form. The flexibility of this institution as to time and place is little realized. Call it what we will, the social and economic community of interest developed between satisfactory sex partners in a presumably permanent union in itself amply warrants the institution, aside from

the question of procreation Also, the practices advocated by Bertrand Russell and William J Robinson, relative to greater freedom of love are undoubtedly, to many of us, a cement to the marital tie rather than a solvent In this, as in all other relations of life, good taste must dictate our acts

But to return to the REVIEW There is one phase of the sex mores which your most excellent magazine seems to have neglected That is the question of clothing The resistance to birth control is based almost entirely upon its relation to the body It shocks conventional modesty and clothes are the crux of our notions of modesty For what is covered is indecent, and usually neglected

Lest this seem a digression it must be pointed out again that birth control meets severe resistance from those before whom the idea conjures up visions of shame and indecency due to its reference

to our bodies, so zealously and shamefully hidden

Birth control is at the center of the modern struggle for decency, freedom and health, and clothes are an important collateral issue When one considers the marvelous results of Swiss heliotherapy, the success of our nearly nude treatment in camps for tubercular children, the interest indicated in the subject by the nude clubs, particularly in Germany, and the prediction of even the Gloomy Dean that clothing will in the future reveal the body, may not the question of clothes be properly taken up by some competent contributor to the REVIEW? It should well serve as a means of reducing the aura of indecency which still surrounds the idea of birth control in the minds of many who identify it with the indecency of the covered body

F E POWELL

Williamsville, N Y

## The Problem of Race Improvement

By CHARLES R STOCKARD, M D \*

THE enthusiastic and generally well-meaning advocate of eugenics might lead one to believe that by marriage between the successful and influential members of the community a population of uniformly superior children would be obtained The more thoughtful and less biased observer questions whether this is a fact He knows that it is so unusual for an eminent parent to produce a child of like eminence that such cases are heralded and conspicuously advertised on all occasions The observer further knows that unfortunately it is not at all uncommon for parents of outstanding ability and worth to produce children so mentally and physically inferior as to be unable to maintain themselves in the same community in which their parents prospered A blacksmith may become the father of a president, and a president may be childless or produce a son whose performance is a miserable failure

It is enlightening, although in some ways discouraging, to ask ourselves a series of questions regarding the parentage and offspring of eminent persons

Who was the father of Sir Isaac Newton, the greatest mind in physical science of centuries, and who were his children? Who was the father, and who the son, of the greatest of English writers,

Shakespeare? What of the same queries of Napoleon, of Pasteur, of Bismarck, and of Roentgen? What does history have to say of the fathers of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and Abraham Lincoln, and what does it have to say about their children?

A review of this sort might be long continued and applied to persons in all fields of human greatness We might then arrange another list of families in which at least one prominent member might be cited for each of several generations—the Bacon and the Darwin families, or our Adams family, for example, yet actually there has been in these families rarely more than one conspicuously outstanding person, and it is he who has elevated the family for several generations

These suggestions are not in any way intended as arguments against good stock, but they help us to recognize the problems to be understood in improvement of the stock We must realize that eminence is necessarily rare, as Sir Francis Galton, a relative of the Darwin family, so emphatically pointed out, all families and stocks have a strong tendency to return to the mean of human ability, mediocrity Finally, then, we come down to the very conservative and ordinary proposition that a better population may be obtained from normally capable parentage than from subnormal and incapable stock

\*Excerpt from *The Physical Basis of Personality*, by Charles R Stockard, M D W W Norton and Company, New York.

## PHYSICIANS' MANUAL OF BIRTH CONTROL

By

**Antoinette F Konikow, M. D.**

*Author of "Voluntary Motherhood"*

The Technique, The Merits, and The Demerits of Every Birth Control Method Now Generally Advocated or Practiced

" Exactly what it purports to be - - a practical guide for physicians in contraceptive technic "

—*New England Journal of Medicine*

" In a word a better and more practical book cannot be recommended "

—*Medical Review of Reviews*

245 PAGES Illustrated \$4 00, express prepaid  
Statistical Review of Over 1000 Cases

**SOLD TO PHYSICIANS ONLY**

**BUCHHOLZ PUBLISHING COMPANY**

1501 Broadway, New York City

*Please use letter head or prescription blank in ordering*

*Remittance should accompany order*

*Refund in 10 days if not satisfactory*

# Oscar Ameringer's New Paper



**HITS THE  
SPOT**

Striking the keynote of American popularity *The American Guardian* in three months has secured its first 10,000 readers.

Under a barrage of laughing gas, Oscar Ameringer hitches up economics, history and philosophy in a way to cause merriment and indignation.

### WHAT OTHERS SAY

"It is one of the most intensely American journals between the east and west coast lines of this country From week to week the case for the underman is stated with statistics, tears, laughs."—*Carl Sandburg, in The Chicago Daily News*

"It is the sort of weekly, unmuzzled and with the punch landing on the noses of the haughty and elect that I have been longing to read."—*Carl Haessler, The Federated Press*

Price \$1 00 for the Year.

**THE AMERICAN GUARDIAN**

Post Office Box 777

Oklahoma City, Okla.

## THE AMERICAN BIRTH CONTROL LEAGUE

*The chief purpose of the League is to make birth control information generally available in the United States*

### PROGRAM

- 1 To ESTABLISH, in every center of population, clinics where the poor may receive contraceptive advice from physicians
- 2 To ACQUAINT physicians throughout the United States with the most approved methods of contraception
- 3 To WORK for the amendment of such laws as interfere with the prescription of contraception by physicians
- 4 To DEMONSTRATE to the public, by means of lectures, pamphlets and the BIRTH CONTROL REVIEW, the importance of birth control in the family, the community and the race

TO CARRY OUT THIS PROGRAM AND FINANCE IT THE LEAGUE NEEDS  
THE HELP OF EVERYONE WHO BELIEVES IN IT

*Annual Dues are \$2 to \$500 Dues of \$3 and over include a subscription to the BIRTH CONTROL REVIEW*  
*Address AMERICAN BIRTH CONTROL LEAGUE, 152 MADISON AVENUE, NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK*

**MARRIAGE** (ORTHODOX vs CREATIVE) 10 page folder digest covering present day challenge against its stagnating state Divided in subjective and objective aspect, indicating degrading influence of Christianity literature and external control Includes reading list Single copies 10 cents Quantities 20 for \$1 00 Write  
NAPOLEON BERNARD 3640 Waldo Avenue New York City

**WANTED** Agents to sell the BIRTH CONTROL REVIEW, single copies and subscriptions Liberal commission

*Write for details*

Business Manager, BIRTH CONTROL REVIEW,  
152 Madison Avenue, New York