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March 30, 1927.



The Church and the Sex Problem

BY RICHARD H. TIERNEY, S.J.

A Lecture Delivered at a Meeting of the American Federation for Sex Hygiene.

THE opportunity of addressing this Federation is a source of great pleasure to me. As a member of a Church which during its whole existence has waged a constant, strenuous, intelligent warfare against the social evil consequent on the fall of man, and as a teacher whose life is consecrated to the education of boys and young men, I rejoice at the chance of paying tribute to the lofty purpose and unselfish zeal of the members of this society. Your purpose, gentlemen, is sublime; your zeal inspiring. And it is good that such is the case. For there is need of both in view of the delicate problem which is calling for solution.

This question of sex hygiene is not merely pedagogical nor quite yet one that affects temporal interests only, such as the health of the individual and the present welfare of the family and State. Though it does not neglect these, still it reaches beyond them and has its chiefest concern with the eternal destiny of man, the fate of his immortal soul. Man's temporal and eternal interests are involved in the problem. Hence its unique importance.

In the final analysis, the question concerns the abolition of sexual sin. Many suggestions have been made for the accomplishment of this: that which is most in favor at present advocates the public teaching of detailed sex hygiene to our children.

A careful study of the proposed courses reveals therein two elements, one intellectual, the other ethi-

cal. The former is detailed; the latter vague and purely naturalistic. The course adopted, therefore, will appeal primarily to the intellect. Its main effect will be knowledge, information; not will power, not virtue either natural or supernatural. The course is incapable of arousing strong moral forces. The appeal is made to the wrong faculty. The emphasis is put in the wrong place. Hence motives for right conduct will be weak and ineffective. Information, aye, even love of learning, cannot keep a man upright before God, cannot cleanse a heart or keep it clean. Knowledge is not moral power. There is a deep psychological truth in the horrid sneer of Goethe's Mephistopheles that man used reason to be more bestial than the beast. Does not Coleridge insinuate a similar idea by saying that it is principally by the will that we are raised over the estate of an animal? Both men read history and know something of psychology. They were not theorizing. Knowing of itself saves nobody from delinquency.

Almost all our sinful men and youths realize that some dread disease follows sexual sin. The result is not virtue, but precaution to avoid the disease. Better sanitation, not more morality is the outcome. A race of hygienists, not a galaxy of saints, is the result. An apostle of this movement sums up my contention in this pithy sentence: "I confess that I am not moral, but I am hygienic." Hygiene is a barrier of straw before the onrush of the primal passion in man. Christ, not hygiene, saved the world. Christ, not hygiene, will cleanse the world and keep it clean. Hygiene will but give point to Sophocles' burning words: "Fair to the eye, but a festering sore within."

Some ten or twelve years ago the physical dangers of this sin were brought to the attention of our college boys. The horrors of venereal diseases were laid

bare in lecture and pamphlet. Nothing was hid. A marked improvement in morals has not been noted. Your society is distributing a play called "Damaged Goods," whose lesson is my lesson, to wit: knowledge is not a protection against passion. The keen psychologist, William James, approaches the same truth when he insists that sensuous images must be combated by ideals that lie beyond the intellect.

Why ladies and gentlemen, if belief in a personal God and an eternal hell is at times scarce sufficient to keep men clear of impurity, is it too much to say that insistence on hygiene will be altogether ineffective for the preservation of chastity? Solomon, who was wise beyond measure, answers: "As I know that I could not otherwise be continent except God gave it . . . I went to the Lord and besought Him." As it appears to me, not only will the detailed teaching of sex hygiene prove ineffective of the very noble purposes in view, but it will even thwart that purpose.

This phase of the question must be examined critically and dispassionately. Such an examination necessitates the consideration of some facts concerning children of ten and twelve or fifteen years and youths of eighteen and nineteen years. At these ages the faculties are untrained and to a large extent undisciplined. The imagination is flighty and irresponsible and extremely susceptible to sensuous images. These images impress themselves on the phantasy and notably influence the actions and often the whole life of the youth. Moreover, the will of the child and youth is weak and vacillating and subject to the allurements of pleasure in whatsoever form it may appear. Now the sex passion is for the most part aroused through the imagination. As a rule the first impulse is not physiological. It is psychological. It almost invariably begins in the phantasy. A vivid

sensuous image occupies the phantasy. Sensible pleasures is then experienced, and there is no force to combat it effectively. The will is weak, untrained. It appreciates a good, and either falls to it forthwith or delays its poor resistance till the soul is aflame with the fire of concupiscence. The detailed teaching of sex hygiene, especially if it be done through book and chart, will make a strong impression on the young imagination. Sensuous images will crowd the faculty as bats crowd a deserted house. The condition already described will follow, viz., sinful thoughts, sinful desires, sinful conversations, preludes to other crimes which we prefer to pass over in silence.

Nor is this all. For obvious reasons this instruction is apt to put forward by some years the time of suggestion; and temptations which normally belong to the age of eighteen will be experienced at the age of twelve or fourteen. Experience and psychology tell the result. A month ago a medical doctor told me that the pastor of some boys who had attended lectures on sex hygiene complained that he found his boys joking and laughing unseemingly over the picture drawn by the lecturer on the board. There is scarcely need of pointing the lesson but I will say that we cannot afford to concentrate the attention of our children on sex details. Safety lies in diverting their attention from them. In truth, the safety of most adults, trained though they are, depends largely on the same process. A moment's reflection will convince the thoughtful that even physiology supports this contention.

But to continue: Two of the great natural protections of our children are modesty, or reserve, if you will, and shame; not prudery, mark you, but healthy and healthful shame. Both are sniffed at as an outgrowth and upgrowth of dogma and superstition. They are neither one nor the other. They are an in-

instinct of nature. This is true, especially of the latter, which is seen in children before they reach the age of reason. Modesty and shame, then, are natural protectors of chastity. But the public and frequent discussion of sex details will destroy both. Familiarity will breed carelessness. The lesson of the class will become the topic of conversation. Reserve will go. Shame will disappear. Sin will follow. Thus your good intentions will be frustrated. A few weeks ago a careful periodical announced that discriminating critics attributed the deplorable condition of morals in one of our high schools to the very cause just now discussed.

The more I ponder the means advocated to combat the social evil, the stronger grows my conviction that this whole movement will eventually fail of its high purpose. Successful house-building does not begin high in the air at the steepletop. It begins in the ground. Therein are laid firm and fast foundations which ultimately support the tower. Chastity is the tower. Deep down in the soul must be placed foundations for its support. Such foundations are self-control, self-sacrifice, obedience to conscience and external authority, modesty, love of purity, respect for self and others, high reverence for motherhood, and all the traits that combine to make a sweet, noble, strong character. Elemental character-training is the first important step towards purity. Sex instruction will not give character, if for no other reason, because it is not deep and comprehensive enough. Without character sex instruction is as chaff before the wind. And, sad to say, our children lack character. Their ideals are low. Their wills are slack of purpose. At home the youth are absorbed in luxury or frivolity, or both, and for reasons which we need not discuss here, our schools do not open the eyes of their souls

to the higher and finer realities of life. For only too many, life is but food and raiment and pleasure. In their estimation, meat is more than life; raiment more than modesty; pleasure more than virtue.

If your movement would be successful it must first concern itself with this state of affairs. It must reach down to the very elements of character. It must acquaint the child with the things of the spirit, and then teach him to love the things of the spirit. A child is naturally moral. Even the new experiences of the age of puberty are accompanied by strong moral impulses. As a consequence the task of forming his soul is not supremely difficult. Failure in this matter does not come from the difficulty of the task, but from neglect of the task. A boy properly managed is as willing to care for the soul as for the body. His delight over his growing muscles is often exceeded by joy over his growing strength of character. Athleticism of the spirit can be made as congenial to him as athleticism of the body. But, alas, his instructors are often more concerned with the latter than with the former. *Mutatis mutandis*, all this is equally true of the girl.

But do not misunderstand me. Though I insist that such formation is both the first and necessary step towards your final aim and an excellent, though perhaps indirect, training for purity, yet it is sadly inadequate. Life on the highest plane is impossible without God and religion. And chastity belongs to life on the highest plane. The conclusion is Solomon's: chastity is a gift of God. And if you dislike Solomon, the conviction is Plato's and the converted Carlyle's and others', who have fought the battle of life. This is not mere rhetoric. Experience as a priest has taught me that the children of religious schools are vastly more moral than the children of non-religious schools.

The difference between the two classes is striking to a degree little appreciated by most people. And there is a certain fiery nation, a Niobe amongst nations, distinguished for its faithfulness to religion. The result is a purity which is the admiration of the unprejudiced.

Not long since a doctor who has given lectures on sex hygiene in one of our Western States spoke to me of her work. No one could have been more earnest in your cause. Yet she insists on two points; the difficulty of getting suitable instructors—an item worthy of your consideration—and the futility of sex instruction which is not supported by an appeal to God and prayer. As far as she could see, the boys and the girls got profit through that alone, if not entirely from that. Unfortunately her appeal to the religious sentiments raised so strong a protest that it had to be discontinued. Will the same not happen if this saving element is introduced into lectures by this Federation? And if such an element is not introduced, will your lectures to be fruitful of good or evil?

Be convinced, ladies and gentlemen, that religion alone will be of lasting benefit in this campaign. God, not hygiene, is the supreme need of the hour. Our children must have brought home to them the idea of a personal, omnipresent, omniscient God, who rewards virtue and punishes vice. Nothing can replace God in their souls. The human heart is made for God. It is hungering for Him, athirst for Him. Without Him there is a void in the soul, a haunting sense of lack, which, in St. Paul's judgment, causes the ungodly to make unto themselves gods of the things of the earth. The need of this Federation bears eloquent testimony to the nature of the things of earth which is the god of many.

On the other hand, if God is put into the life of the child, all is different. The child is consecrated to

something holy and has no serious thought for sin. God is present in his thoughts, God is present in his words, God is present in his actions. The child and all that is his, thoughts, words, and actions, are wrapped round with Divinity. He stands with God for God, not with vice and for vice. Herein is the lasting hope of your movement. Herein is profit, herein protection, herein eternal life.

These, then are my convictions about the public and detailed teaching of sex hygiene. They are not favorable to your movement in all its detail. Neither are they adverse to all its details. Eliminate from your lectures the details of sex hygiene; cast aside text-book and chart. Train your children's character. Teach them that purity is noble and possible; that vice is vile and carries with it its punishment; that marriage is inviolable; that the family is sacred. Your boys: teach them that their bodies are vessels of honor, the habitation of an immortal soul made in the image and likeness of God, redeemed in the Blood of Christ; train them from their early years to reverence woman-kind, to fall down in veneration before motherhood, God's sweet gift to women. Your girls: teach them reserve, modesty in manner and dress; tell, O tell them, that in their purity and self-sacrifice lies the hope of our beloved nation. This done, carry your campaign further. Purge the press, cleanse the novel, elevate the theatre, abolish animal dances, frown on co-education after the age of puberty. In the words of St. Paul: "Be instant in season, out of season; reprove, entreat," so that all men may realize the great obligation of life, which is to know God and do His behests.

Catholic Sociology

BY RICHARD H. TIERNEY, S.J.

*An Address Delivered at the Annual Meeting of the
St. Vincent de Paul Society of Baltimore.*

YOU have asked me to talk about Catholic ideas in sociology. The subject is a large one, for it has at least a four-fold aspect. It has first of all, a historical aspect; secondly, a theological aspect; thirdly, a strictly moral aspect; and fourthly, an economic aspect.

The historical aspect takes us back through the centuries, two thousand years, to the pitiful Figure on the naked Cross, dying that He might regenerate men. Our sociology, as everything Catholic, centers around Him, who went to His death reviled by the creatures He created, buffeted by the very elements He called forth from nothing. Apparently, He died a failure. The doctrine He preached seemed discredited. He went down to death a pauper, despised by the rabble, deserted by His followers. But He died that He might live and He came forth from the grave with a larger, fuller life, and when He went up to Heaven He sent down upon the little society that He had formed and sanctified, the Holy Spirit, who breathed into it the breath of a new life, and hallowed it again in a peculiar way. That society, the Church, embodied not only all of Christ's doctrines but all of Christ's ideals; that is, that society the Church, not only held uncorrupted and incorruptible the Master's doctrine, but it held the motive force that could make that doctrine a practical thing in the lives of Catholics. In no way has the Church put Christ's doctrine into practice more effec-

tually with more holy zeal, than in work for the poor and sick, the suffering members of Christ.

Not so long after Our Lord's Ascension the Church made its center at Rome and was a poor, struggling little thing, with a few old fishermen and some slaves as its sole members. Its lot was cast in a world seething with sin. The great tyrants of the Empire turned their eyes upon it; they thought it a danger to the State, so they drove it under ground; and there it dragged out a precarious existence.

And when the Apostles and other simple followers at last came forth from the bowels of the earth, what did they see? And to what did they come? Did they come to a world showing signs of regeneration through the Blood of Christ? No. They came back into a world filled with the deeds of Satan. Rome in those days was reeking with vice. It was composed of poor, unfortunate slaves, miserable physically, but a thousand times more miserable spiritually; men of wealth who were indescribably lustful, and high-born dames who actually measured their years by the number of husbands they had had, and whose names were a hissing and a byword. In that great city, moreover, there was not a single real hospital for the sick and maimed; not a single asylum for the poor, or for the dear little children that were dying by scores. Pity and mercy were unknown there, because the breath of Christ had not yet breathed over the city. Catholic sociology was unknown.

But before many years have passed what do we find. A marvelous change! For the villas of the wealthy are converted into hospitals for the sick and into asylums for children. The spirit of Christ, the spirit of Catholic sociology, was beginning to sweeten and purify the corrupt atmosphere of Rome. The mantle of Christ, who was the greatest of all sociolo-

gists, the mantle of Christ, who loved the poor and sick and desolate, had fallen upon worthy shoulders. There were many men in those days like the great St. Lawrence, who, when ordered to bring the Church's treasures to the tyrant brought him the old, the crippled, the maimed and the diseased, thus showing the world how Catholic sociology works out in practice.

Time went on, and the spirit of Christ's love for the poor and ignorant kept spreading. Through all the centuries the Church's missionaries searched the forests and the jungle and gathered together savage peoples and taught them the Christian doctrine and the arts and sciences. That was Catholic sociology.

The illustrious Order of St. Benedict was the greatest corporate instrument of sociology that the world has seen.

One-third of the French towns owe their existence to the monks. Their methods have never been equaled, and they have been imitated only indifferently. The religious built their monasteries in the trackless forests and gathered together wild tribes from all sides, they turned their houses of prayer into schools and hospitals where Christianity was taught, where the arts were cultivated, where distress was relieved. Soon wild souls became tame, uncouth intellects cultured, clumsy hands skilful. This is the Catholic idea of sociology.

Catholic sociology, moreover, is alive and vigorous today. For sociology is founded on Christ's doctrine; it is in fact nothing more nor less than the spiritual and corporal works of mercy, and Christ, mark it well, came to regenerate souls unto the end of time. As a consequence His doctrine will live on to be your consolation and the consolation of your children, and the consolation of your children's children, even to the last.

This great work of Catholic sociology continues today. Not long since, when there was trouble in far-off South America, the cry went up that rubber merchants down there were torturing the Indians. Who was sent there to alleviate the suffering? The Catholic missionary, the truest sociologist. Moreover, if you look through the world, what do you see everywhere? Examples of the Church's sociological work, go where you will. Go forth into the splendid city of Baltimore and on one hill you will see a cross, beneath which live hundreds of little children, picked up in the street, who are being brought up for Christ and the State. Such is Catholic sociology. Turn now to the left and you will see the noble buildings of a great hospital and in it lie moaning men and women, and by their sides sit the gentle nuns assuaging their pain, teaching them to bear suffering patiently for Christ's sake. That is Catholic sociology. Further on you will see a large industrial school for boys, who were bereft of parents at an early age. There, too, in the different shops are skilled Brothers teaching their charges useful trades, bringing the boys up not only for God, but for a useful life as citizens: Catholic sociology again. And so work goes on throughout the world, because Catholic sociology and the Catholic religion are inseparable. For Catholic sociology is, as I have said, the spiritual and corporal works of mercy, part and parcel of our religion.

Imagine, if you can a sociology without the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. Imagine a sociology without the instruction of the ignorant; imagine a sociology without the giving of food to the hungry, and of drink to the thirsty. Imagine it, if you can. These spiritual and corporal works of mercy are integral parts of Christ's eternal Gospel. He taught and practised them Himself. "And Jesus went about

through all the towns and villages teaching in the synagogues and preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom and healing all diseases and infirmities." And when the great Precursor lay in his prison cell and sent messengers to Christ, asking if He were the Messiah, what word did Christ send back? Did He expound lofty doctrines? No; He simply said: "Go back and tell him that the blind see, the deaf hear, go back and tell him that the halt are no longer infirm, go back and tell him that the poor have the Gospel preached to them. Go back and tell him that I am spending Myself for the poor. That I am relieving all their wants." There, then, is our ideal. Our sociology is bound up with our religion; it is inseparable from it, and Christ is the Master of our religion, the Master of our sociology.

Christ is our ideal, but where is our charter? Our charter is clearly drawn up in the twenty-fifth chapter of St. Matthew, beginning with the thirty-fourth and ending with the fortieth verse. You all remember it well, how the souls of the saved appear for judgment before the King who smiles and says: "Come ye blessed of My Father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave Me to eat: I was thirsty and you gave Me to drink: I was a stranger and you took Me in." The blessed soul then asks: "Lord, when did we see Thee hungry and feed Thee; thirsty and gave Thee drink? And when did we see Thee a stranger and took Thee in?" And the King answers: "I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these My least brethren, you did it to Me." There is our charter. There is our whole sociology; works of mercy done in the name of God, and for Christ Our Redeemer.

Just at this point a sharp line of demarcation between secular philanthropy and Catholic sociology is

to be noted. Catholic sociology begins in God and flows down to the people. Philanthropy begins with man and ends with man. The mainspring of Catholic sociology is love of God; the mainspring of pure philanthropy is love of man. Catholic sociology is founded on a theology that makes God everything, and does everything for God primarily. Philanthropy is founded on a philosophy that prescind from God. In this regard it is well to remember that the fact that we do things for love of God, does not make those things less effectual, does not make them less congenial to those who are helped. It but elevates the man who is helped, and teaches him that we recognize in him, the creature, a brother in Jesus Christ, the Man-God, that we do not lower ourselves or him in offering this help, but that we lift him and ourselves up to Christ. Ladies and gentlemen, the only sociology that will last and do good to man is this kind of sociology. To teach the poor to appreciate the goods of the world, and to require exterior refinement without imparting to them a knowledge of Christ is to train a race of pagans: "Glittering stars with festering ills within."

To aid people, to pension them without teaching them the things that belong to their state, is to bring up a race of parasites, the more dangerous because of their ignorance of God. I insist on this. I wish to drive home the idea that Christ must never be lost sight of in our work for the poor and needy. He is the ultimate object of all our labors. You have doubtless seen beautiful pictures representing St. Vincent de Paul walking through the slums of Paris, carrying under his cloak poor little abandoned infants. Do you think that St. Vincent de Paul loved those children less because he loved God more? Do you think the aid given those children was the less effective be-

cause St. Vincent de Paul saw in them immortal souls which he would save for Christ's sake?

Not long ago I received a letter from Father Conrady in his far-off leper colony. As he spoke of his work there, every now and then occurred this expression: "I am doing it for Christ." And what was he doing for Christ? He was living among the lepers, living a leper's life, to bring the lepers to Christ. All his work for them had this in view. Such was his sociology. It was Catholic sociology.

But how does this theory, it may be asked, work out in practice? Let us first consider the case of children and then that of adults. Now, it is a fundamental doctrine of Catholic ethics that the home is the unit of society, in the sense that the State has formally to do with the family. Moreover, it is a fundamental Catholic doctrine that the home is the natural place of the child. God has put into the heart of every man and every woman a natural inclination to enter into matrimony, and found a home into which children are born for God and the State. Before the coming of Christ matrimony was a natural contract, not a mere civil contract, and when Christ came, He sanctified it, elevated it to the plane of a Sacrament, made it the instrument of many graces that man and woman might live together in mutual love and beget and educate children. The child then finds its natural place in the home. It is in the home that the little one learns all that is high in hope and noble in aspiration; it is from the home that the child goes forth into the world fashioned to the image of the most perfect of men, Christ Our Lord.

There is no place in the great wide world, no institution however perfect, no institution however wealthy, no institution however carefully managed, that can replace the home. Be an institution as per-

fect as possible, yet the mother is not there, the father is not there, the brother and sister are not there. When the mother is absent, there lies dormant in the heart of the child a great emotion intended by nature to play on the soul and lead it on to higher endeavor. When the father is absent, there lie dormant in the soul of the child elements that nothing else can call into action; and where the love of brother and sister is not, there also is a soul lacking in something.

Hence it has always been the desire of the Church to preserve the home at all hazards. But, alas! at times that is impossible. Impurity and drink, or some other unfortunate circumstances beyond the control of parents or child, forces children into an institution. What is the Catholic ideal of an institution? Simply this: the institution should be as home-like as possible, should be as uninstitutional as possible, should have as many of the qualities or characteristics of the home, as brain and good-will can give it. Hence, there should be in that institution a religious atmosphere; there should be discipline; there should be preparation for a useful life.

Now, discipline, ladies and gentlemen, does not consist in the measured tread of little feet. It is not oppression; it is not a force without but a spontaneous growth of the soul under the guidance of religion.

Discipline is something interior. There is a double element in it; there is the intellectual element, and there is the volitional element. The child must first understand the difference between right and wrong. It must, above all, be taught to love the right and scorn the wrong; and once having learned to know and to love the right its will must be strengthened to such an extent that it would die rather than give up the right. But this will never be accomplished unless those in charge of our children teach them their re-

ligion and induce them to look up to Our Father in heaven with confidence. This presupposes a religious atmosphere which is produced not only by formal instruction but also by the holy lives of those whom God has set over our unfortunate boys and girls. This reminds me to urge you to resist by all legitimate means the awful practise of those who rob the needy child of its Faith, a crime infamous beyond the telling. It is a sin crying to heaven for vengeance to take advantage of the hunger and nakedness of a waif to make it an apostate.

There is yet another element to which I would call your attention. It is this: the child should be prepared to be a useful citizen. No institution which fails in this is worthy of the name. An institution which does not turn out useful citizens is a lie, and the sooner it ceases to exist, the better. It is doing children an injustice. Therefore, every institution should be most careful of the children's training. There should be play—and this is apt to be neglected at times, not so much now as in former days. Yet, play is an instinct of nature, a primal instinct which fairly drives the normal child to romp that its muscles and sinews may be made strong for future stress. If we act against that instinct we do the child a great physical and psychological harm. But more important still, every child who is put into an institution should be taught some useful trade. There is hardly any excuse these days for bringing a child up without a trade. Here in this great archdiocese there is that excellent institution, St. Mary's Industrial School, which has been a model for so many of its kind, and I am happy to say that in the State of New York the first institution to introduce vocational training for boys was the Christian Brothers' institution at Westchester. Throughout the country, too, there are now growing up in all

the dioceses, institutions where the children are most carefully prepared for future work. The boys are being taught farming and carpentry; the girls are being taught dressmaking and millinery. This is quite as it should be. Therefore, when all has been said, our idea of an institution is this: it is a place where a child can get as far as is possible, all that it would have obtained in a good home. We may fall short of our ideals; but, to fall short of our ideals is not the great fault. The great fault is to have no ideals. We fall short because we have not the means of carrying out all that we should and would carry out of our ideals. Nevertheless, the ideal is there before all Catholic workers. They are striving to live up to it and their success is astounding the world.

Having spoken of the children, I should like to say a few words to you about some of the problems facing us in the larger cities. Mr. Biggs touched upon them very nicely, and I noticed he mentioned the Ozanam Society. I have had some experience with that Society in New York. It is doing a marvelous work. In New York City the Ozanam Society now has six club houses. The need of them is most apparent to one who goes among boys. Nearly all the boys have the Faith, and what is a most peculiar thing, they have the Faith firm and strong, yet they are almost totally ignorant of Christian doctrine. Many of them, poor boys, do not know how to make their confession; many of them do not know the Our Father, and yet, through the grace of God, the virtue of faith is there, waiting to be stirred into action.

There is now in many of our cities a great effort on the part of non-Catholic societies to get hold of those boys. Let me give you some figures without mentioning the city. Not long since I became very much interested in a certain institution which is entirely non-

Catholic in influence, and to my utter amazement I found that sixteen hundred Catholic children were receiving instructions in non-Catholic doctrine. Later I looked in on a Protestant settlement and I found that fifty per cent of the boys in attendance were Catholics, who are being quietly led away from the Church. I do not say that there was malice in those engaged in the work, but I do say that it is a most deplorable thing that our boys and girls are led astray in this way. If they are to be saved, lay people are the ones to save them. You have noticed as I have noticed, that there is a wave of radicalism sweeping over the country. This radicalism has alienated many people from the priests. As a consequence many children seldom or never come in contact with the priest, and the priest is quite unable to go after them. It is, therefore, the solemn duty of those who enroll themselves in these societies to seek out those lost lambs and lead them to Christ.

The juvenile courts, too, need our attention. Many of the children who find their way there are Catholics, needy Catholics. The judges are sympathetic but the workers are few. This kind of charitable work is very important, because there is a great amount of good work to be done in taking care of those children. In many cities guilds have been established to care for such children. In Chicago, for instance, there is a Catholic Ladies' Guild with one thousand members.

As for the grown people, what shall we do for them? Mr. Biggs has told you. Help them materially by all means, but don't forget their souls. We are apt to dole out bread or to give clothes and send the poor away without a word about Christ's charity. The aim of charity is to "reconstruct" the soul. That was St. Vincent de Paul's idea and Ozanam's too. Would that more of our Catholic men were interested in this

work! Our college men are especially lacking in zeal for His cause. In one city, only thirteen per cent of the Catholic men who are working in the St. Vincent de Paul Society had a high school education. The brunt of the work is borne by poor, hard-working clerks who never had a chance for higher education. There is something wrong here. I wish that some strong men would arise in this country, denounce the college men, the Catholic college men for their neglect of social work. They are shirking their responsibility shamefully. What is wrong? I leave the answer to you.

Today you and I know that there is a great stress and strain upon the body politic. There is little respect for authority. Morals are bad; lawlessness is rife; selfishness has come to such a pitch that few men are willing to make sacrifices for others. Worst of all, many good men have become pessimistic. They have thrown down the battle axe in despair. It is now your duty and mine to enhearten them by our sacrifices for God and God's poor, teaching them that God's arm is not shortened, and that as in the past, He saved States through the efforts of good men, He will save them now by the same means.

It is our work therefore, to go forth, ministering to the poor, the ignorant and the lowly, bringing into their lives, Christ, the Saviour of mankind. Every Catholic social worker, to be a true worker, must be a Christopher, a Christ-bearer, a man or a woman who carries Christ to the souls of the poor. May this great society, which is flourishing so well here in Baltimore, spread throughout the United States, spreading with it Catholic sociology, the great hope of our Catholic people.

Agenics

BY M. J. RIORDAN

LATELY we have had eugenics *ad nauseam*. Through skilled advertising, it has become a fetis within the decade, and imperceptibly a crop of allied sciences or fads has sprouted from its root. The ugliest, of these scientific offshoots is one that curiously enough, if it reaches maturity, must destroy the parent, since its purpose is not the pharisaic "quality rather than quantity," but out-and-out nonentity.

This derivative science has not yet risen to the dignity of a specific name. It is known variously as birth-control, eugenic selection, infanticide, or child-murder, according as it is practised by the exclusives, the intellectuals, the depraved or the Chinese. Now that it has advanced to the point of having open advocates on the lecture platform and in the press, it should have for the sake of convenience, "a local habitation and a name" in the dictionaries and encyclopedias, and I think no term can label it more accurately as a science than the word "agenics," the science of the deliberate annihilation of human life, the science of the purposely childless wife.

The wilfully childless wife with a dog in her arms is the uttermost symbol of failure. This seems a hard saying when we look out over the mad world strewn with human wreckage, and when we consider that wherever the sun in all its course casts a shadow, those are to be found in plenty who have missed their way in life through poverty or ill-health or lack of opportunity or defect of ability or some one or other of a thousand misfortunes or through one of the seven deadly sins or a combination of them. And yet no one

of these can have failed quite so miserably as the wife who through deliberate will establishes a dumb brute in the affections that were made to cherish a wingless cherub fashioned in the very image of God.

Obviously the failures in life are based on the fact of life; no life—no pain, no sin, no suffering—only nothingness. It is in this case alone—and it is this that makes it a supreme failure—that there is a reaching out into the mysterious realm that precedes life, to the enactment there, by an act against nature, of a tragedy compared with which other ills are commonplace. In that realm, which is the eternal counsel of God, there are myriad souls awaiting the cooperation of woman for creation and incarnation. She alone can defeat the eternal design of God; she alone can make it effective. It is true that every sin in its own weak way, blocks the harmonious fulfilment of the plan of the Creator, but the wife who refuses to be God's instrument of life rebels against creation and that in the face of the transcendent gift of her own creation. Her attitude is, in effect, the appalling one that so far as she is concerned creation shall end with her. She does not will to reject the gift of life for herself; but she decides that the line of life, in so far as it depends upon her, shall come to an abrupt close.

What matters to her, the infinite purpose of God or the failure of souls to come into immortal being? A lapdog satisfies her yearning for creation and for correspondence with the duty set to her hand by her Lord and Master. She will not serve; she will not be "the handmaid of the Lord;" she has received her own existence as a pure gift; she will enjoy it while she may, then let the deluge come. Lucifer rebelled against the living God; she rebels against life itself. Lucifer would rule life; she would destroy it. The parallel is terrible but the fact is more terrible still. No other

being beside such a woman can or will dry up and make barren the source of life and that to no other purpose than that she may riot more abundantly, though it be only the silly riot of idleness and self-indulgence. Such a woman—and can it be said that there are not many of them?—may hang her throat with pearls and circle her fingers with sapphires, her limousine may be fragrant with the breath of orchids, and her drawing-room may be draped with tapestries and inlaid with lapis-lazuli; but her spirit is dead and is wrapped in the vesture of the grave, when her face is turned away from the souls that God has assigned her from all eternity to clothe in fair young flesh. An Angel Gabriel is sent her, a wedded wife, “with tidings of great joy,” but she rejects him; she will have no part in the incarnation appointed her; there is no “Magnificat” in her heart or on her lips; most lamentably for her, no sword pierces her heart and though “the wideness of God’s mercy” is for her as for all, most lamentable of all her misfortunes, she can never know a Calvary of her own.

The attitude of the modern world toward the wilfully barren wife is amazing. She has come to be looked upon as a rather superior person. She assumes and is encouraged in assuming the patronage of mothers. She is stage-crazy over the latest baby in the block; she adores Mrs. Smith’s twins; she simply can’t keep her hands from off Mary Brown’s baby boy; she is Lady Bountiful to the Jones tribe of children, though she does sympathize with Mrs. Jones; she lets it be known that she really would like to have a dear little baby of her own, if a child of hers could possibly have as little sense as her dear Fido. There is no brand on her forehead. Far from it, there is just a suggestion of a crown. She has laid hold of much of the skill of the devil in transforming darkness into light. Her neighbors begin to remark over the pity that such a

splendid woman, or lady it will probably be, should be childless. But then it would never do for her to be burdened with family cares since that would mean withdrawal from charitable work and social duties. No, it is too bad that she should have to give up the hope of being a *matrem filiorum laetantem*, but she is altogether too important for that. God would have difficulty in handling matters without her unhampered help. Then the poor would miss her so much, and so many young mothers would lack advice and so many unsophisticated maidens would have no one to tell them "truths" that their foolish mothers withhold from them. On the whole, the poodle is a sign of election in her case and in the case of innumerable other women of brains and money, particularly the latter; for it is to be noted that the wife childless by design almost invariably belongs to the brainy or wealthy classes; it is the exception to find such women among the ignorant and poor; God's love of His own is wonderful.

And so this woman, who has defied the creative act of God and has been ungrateful for the gift of life, becomes by ingenuity of her selfish diplomacy, not an outcast and a shame, but an angel of light and healing to her less fortunate sisters who have not yet learned that child-bearing is indecent among the rich and immoral among the poor.

The steps from praise to envy and from envy to imitation are not steep or far apart. Is the mother of a large family a wooden image that she should not regard with envy the fine gowns of her childless neighbor, and her jewels and motors and massaged cheeks and manicured fingers and her freedom, as of a bird, from petty household duties and her opportunity to entertain at afternoon teas and to shine at evening balls and midnight suppers? Though she indeed prizes her treasure of children, they have cost her anxiety,

and pain and deprivation, sleepless nights and busy days, and perhaps hardest of all, they have brought her the contemptuous sympathy of her superior neighbor. Is it any wonder that at times there is just a suggestion in her heart of envy for the wise woman who has known how, and who has dared to defy the laws of God, and at the same time establish herself in the front seat before the stage of the world? Then may it not well be that some weak matron will take the plunge from envy into imitation? Thus is the woman who flaunts her Creator made to spread sin and sorrow like a plague among the wholesome members of the community which she infests, while gullible society is in admiration of the dear soul who is interested in civic welfare, humane treatment of stray cats, and the movement for better babies, and fewer of them.

The selfishness of these women is as monumental as their ingratitude to God. They will have no part in the perpetuation of their species, but they will fight like a tigress for ease, admiration and command, and in the height of effrontery they attempt to instruct and criticize, even to pity the noble mothers who are bearing the burdens and the joys of the race. Their effrontery is beyond measure. In so far as it rests with them, human life would cease at their death-bed, and so they would not hesitate to put a final term, to the family, to the State, to the Church, to the School, to everything. Yet, through eugenic societies, clubs of various kinds, and incessant personal propaganda they are eternally regulating the affairs of the good women on whom the Church, the State, the school and life itself depend. It is sad enough that these women should travel the road to destruction themselves; it is appalling that they should go out into the highways and hedges to compel as it were, others to join in their unholy pilgrimage.

In Israel of old the barren womb, even when the result of natural causes, was looked upon as a blight and a visitation of God. The hope of a quiver filled with arrows, of a table aglow with children like shoots about the olive tree, of a wife like the fruitful vine on the walls of the house, was the dearest expectation of the Jewish bridegroom and the highest ideal of the Jewish bride. A large family was the blessing of Heaven upon a holy union: the lack of it was the sign of a curse upon the door post.

Thank God, that among the virile Jews of today the traditions of their fathers has not been lost. Thank God, too, that in Holy Ireland, with all its suffering and centuries of poverty, its women are still fruitful mothers of men; and the same is true in Poland and in Spain and in South America and in Italy and in parts of Boston, and wherever else the laws of God are "the truth, the light and the way." A blessing is upon them, and in spite of the eugenicist and the sociologists, they and their children shall, by the promise of God and the workings of His laws, inherit the land. Their rags shall be riches when set side by side with the silks of the deliberately childless wives.

Our Lord uttered a curse upon the irresponsible, barren fig tree. Shall the judgment upon the barren wife, who is so through choice, be less severe? The words of St. Paul to Timothy: "Yet she shall be saved through child-bearing," are the passport to Heaven of the wife who is fulfilling the duty of her state in life; they are also the warrant of condemnation of the selfish and cowardly wife who is a wife only in name. The inspired words of St. Paul need enunciation among modern women much more than do the specious vaporings of eugenicists or pseudo-scientists. They are the words of the Holy Ghost; the latter are for a great part the maunderings of unclean minds.

In recent years there has been an immense amount of plain speaking and indecent writing in behalf of childless wives and limited families by Malthusianists, eugenists, prophylaxists, birth-controllists, and a host of others of like ilk. They have commandeered the churches, the schools, the press, the theatre, the cinema, the lecture platforms and every other possible agency into their service of spreading the gospel of the destruction of the race, until the mass of the people are really coming to believe in and practise the infamous teachings that have been dinned into their ears and set before their eyes and hammered into their heads so persistently and enthusiastically, and by such ingenious methods as to deceive even the teachers.

The net result of all this propaganda may, it is true, be summed up in a mongrel parody of Horace's famous line, *parturiunt montes, nascetur ridiculus, "pup,"* but the result to innumerable souls has been mortal, and the effect on the character of the nation has been evil beyond estimation. But this, at least may be said: By reason of the unholy practices developed by the vicious teachers the future American is certain to have more of the blood of the Celt and the Slav and the southern Latin in his veins than of the Puritan or the "high-brow" which in many respects may not be so much of a disaster as some might think.

But the serious things that these vampires have brought about is the reproach they have succeeded in fastening upon holy motherhood. They have made child-bearing a shame, whereas it is a glory; they have made motherhood—a most sacred state of woman, the state that made the name of Mary the most beloved that has ever been given to a created being—a state to be apologized for, if not subjected to their detestable rules and limitations. It has come to be that the

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mother of two children is tolerated: the mother of four endured; the mother of six is outside the pale of society; the mother of eight is a nuisance; of ten a calamity and of twelve a brute. The order of God and of normal human beings, of those whose opinions are of the least value, is precisely the reverse in an ascending scale of honor until the mother of twelve assumes the dignity of a queen.

The ostracism of motherhood is a despicable manifestation of brutality under the guise of culture and exclusive knowledge. The strength of this brutal cult of barrenness lies to a large extent in the brazenness of its propaganda. The megaphone has been at its mouth and has drowned out the occasional voice of protest. Then, too, prudery has been its efficient assistant. There is a wholesome disposition among certain minds to be overnice and to dread uncleanness where in reality there is none. Hence they have kept quiet through dread of notoriety or of overstepping the bonds of modesty, and a clear field has been left to be sowed with the cockle by an enemy. But the voice of St. Paul is not dead, nor the voices of the Doctors in the Church who have succeeded him. They are only muffled by the clamor of the noisy horde, who have been preaching the doctrine of child-prevention and of defiance of God. It is time that those commanding voices should again be heard and that the words of authority, "Yet she shall be saved through child-bearing," should be proclaimed anew, and without mincing them, as St. Paul proclaimed them through holy Timothy, the Bishop of Ephesus. Then shall motherhood become once more as it really is, a most glorious and honorable title among the daughters of Eve, and the wilfully childless wife shall take the conspicuous place she belongs, as the very head of the bitter procession of human failures and outcasts.

Was it not Chesterton who said of eugenics: "It stinks"? By these words he burned an eternal brand of infamy on the unsavory science; at the same time he robbed the language of the only phrase that can fitly describe agenics. The latter brand of human knowledge must now parade the less distinguished heraldic motto: "It's rotten."

APPENDIX

The first of these is the fact that the
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