

A Dangerous Extension of Eugenist Propaganda.

Menace to Society and Morality Involved in New Plans.
The Weak Basis of the Sterilization Demands.

The Eugenist propaganda has found an exponent who is much more frank than were many others who have advocated the eugenetic measure termed sterilization by the operation of vasectomy, to be applied to criminals and defectives who are wards of the state. Hitherto the purpose pursued by the prophets of sterilization was nominally the prevention of procreation by criminals and interned defectives; now comes Dr. Marie Stopes, who advocates in a Sunday newspaper (see "The Echo," Buffalo, issue Dec. 19, 1918, and "The New Witness," No. 134) "the sterilization of all potential parents who are bodily or morally hopelessly and irremediably diseased and unfit." This request represents an extension of the demands of eugenists, reaching out beyond the bounds of their earlier program; but in addition to this extension Dr. Stopes submits the startlingly frank avowal, that her ultimate design is not to benefit the race, but to facilitate deliberately childless marriages. "Every adult, writes Dr. Stopes, 'has a right to marriage; no individual has the right to tax the community with diseased children.'" Once this principle is admitted in the sense in which it is advocated by Dr. Stopes, the validity of her plan of sterilization would have to be recognized, and the barrier standing between the individual and the attainment of his improper desires would be broken down.

The ethical perversity of such a position is apparent to all readers of a Catholic journal. It is interesting to note, however, that even the legal status of sterilization is far from being firmly established, that its position is highly questionable; and that in spite of the fact that the law has had to deal with this problem only in one of its phases, the application to criminals and interned lunatics. An excellent treatise on the subject of "Sterilization of Criminals" was contributed by W. A. S. to Law Notes (Northport) New York some months ago, and printed in the July 1918 issue of that journal. The author, who rightly maintains that the theory of heredity, upon which the application of sterilization is based, is but a theory, and that one barren of satisfactory proof, states that the legal standing of the matter is no less doubtful and shaky than the theory. By way of information he tells us that "laws authorizing the sterilization of lunatics, or criminals, or both, have been passed in some twelve or more states; in California in 1916, 635 operations had actually been performed under the law, — all but one on inmates of state institutions for the insane. The subjects for treatment being selected from among the helpless, there have been but four cases reported dealing with the validity of such a law, and in three of them the law was declared to be invalid."

Thus even the legal status of the measure advocated so ardently by the Eugenists is, to put it mildly, highly questionable. Besides, W. A. S. quotes extensively from reports of investigations into this matter conducted under the auspices of the American Institute of Criminal Law and Criminology, which in 1913 appointed a committee of well-known lawyers and alienists, known as "Committee F." The committee reported in 1914, 1915, 1916 and 1917 (latest report in Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology, Nov. 1917), the sum-total of their findings being that "the doctors stick firmly to their a priori theories while the lawyers investigate the evidence, find it wanting, and demand further evidence before they will pronounce a judgment." The outcome of the investigation is a defeat for the advocates of sterilization, who could not prove their case. One member of the committee (Mr. Hart) "says that he has no faith in sterilization as a remedy in dealing with the problem of the criminal." Another member, (Dr. Gordon), going back to first principles, declares that it is first necessary to discover "whether criminal tendencies are inherited directly or not." Still another (Dr. Hunter), frankly states: "The more I find out about it the stronger my feelings become against the sterilization of criminals as such." And the consensus of the committee was that it could not formulate a satisfactory report until "a sufficient basis of facts" had been established "upon which some definite action may be erected." With this conclusion, the committee asked to be discharged.

So flimsy and hypothetical is the basis on which eugenists strive to rest their immoral demands. The writer from whose article we have quoted advances a number of facts and casts interesting side-lights on the legal phase of the measure. He calls attention to the sacramental character of marriage, and, in another paragraph, to the relation of environment to criminality, — that momentous factor which the advocates of sterilization think so little of in practice. On the whole, he quite properly characterizes the coming of this dangerous "fad" thus: "A Chicago newspaper quoted in State v. Feilen (to which he also refers) says in the course of a eulogy of compulsory vasectomy that "rarely has a big thing come with so little fanfare of trumpets." It might be more accurate to say that rarely has a thing of so doubtful merit gone so far without being challenged to give an account of itself." And therein lies a grave danger: in the vicious character of the proposals and in the absence of proper surveillance.

C. B. of the C. V.

Fragments of shell which twice struck his crucifix and his medal of the Sacred Heart, and were warded off, probably saved the life of Private Harrington of the 106th Infantry.

At Mass Under Fire.

Catholic soldiers in General Pershing's army daily testify by their actions how steadfast they are to the teachings of the Church and prove how eager they are to partake of the spiritual blessings, privileges and comforts provided for them through the ministrations of the many chaplains sent overseas by the Knights of Columbus.

An impressive spectacle of part of a regiment, just before going into action, at confession, Mass and communion while shells were falling around them is described in a letter written by Lieutenant Leo D. Sheridan, Company E, 327th Infantry, to his brother, Ed. A. Sheridan, of Macon, Ga. Lieutenant Sheridan is a member of Macon Council, 925, Knights of Columbus. His letter in part, follows:

"I want to tell you what happened the day before we went into the front lines. Our battalion was located in a dense woods and we were living in shelter tents; the officers had little small shacks with hardly room to turn around in. The K. of C. secretary also had a small shack about as big as your bath room and in this he had a victrola, cigarettes, candy, etc. Needless to say, this was the most popular place in the woods. No doubt you know that the K. of C.'s give away everything and won't take money for anything.

"The morning of the same night we went to the first line, the K. of C. secretary sent down word that Mass would be celebrated at the K. of C. shack at 9:30. I immediately formed our company and read this notice and gave all permission to attend — this was also done in the three companies.

"There is another lieutenant in my company named Nickelson who is also a Catholic; he is from New York and is a mighty fine fellow; has been with our company about one month. We at once decided to attend Mass and beat it through the woods to the K. of C. hut. Upon arriving there we found three hundred or more soldiers gathered around. It was raining, but this did not keep the men from kneeling in the mud. Finally, the priest arrived and the men began going to confession. After hearing confessions, Mass began, and I honestly believe every soldier, including myself, went to communion.

"I will never forget this sight as long as I live and am sorry I can't give a better description. There we were, in the thick woods with rain falling, and men on their knees in mud. Overhead and sometimes striking near were artillery shells; overhead airplanes would buzz and we could hear them signalling to each other; you could hear shells whistling by, bound for the German trenches, and I am sure God was looking down on these devout soldiers. I would have given anything in the world to have had a camera and to have taken a picture of this wonderful assembly, but anyhow it is imprinted indelibly on my mind, and I never will forget the scene."

Nine Hundred Belgian Orphans.

The Catholic Protectors, at Lackawanna, N. Y., cares for 1,600 children, and will later take care of 900 Belgian orphans as soon as the Government can bring them from Belgium.

The sum of \$100,000 has been reached for a shrine at the Catholic University, in honor of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception.

Foreign Mission News

The Propagation of the Faith Society
348 Lexington Ave., New York City.

ST. PATRICK IS HONORED IN LIBERIA.

The free state of Liberia, in West Africa, came in for its share of the recent world conflict, but Mgr. Oge, the Prefect Apostolic, writes that he and his missions are weathering the storm and looking for brighter days. He says:

"Judging from the statistics of the year, which I have just completed, I am glad to say that the effects of the world war have not, after all, proved as disastrous to our work on the Kroo Coast as we at first thought, and although we have been checked in many ways, and have on several occasions even been forced almost to look up owing to the scarcity of food, yet we have been able to jog along, and even to enlarge the sphere of our apostolate. Thus the number of our baptisms, which in July, 1914, amounted to about 300, has since been increased to the total of 1,192. Of these, a good fourth have died, which leaves us a population of about 891 souls.

"Again, at the beginning of the war we had but two principal stations definitely established, viz.: Old Sasstown and New Sasstown. Now we have four large stations and are soon to open a fifth. Of course our buildings are for the most part of the crude native style, as other material is almost impossible to secure.

"St. Patrick is to be the patron of our fifth station, and as the cost of the foundation will not exceed five hundred dollars we look to him to fill our purse."

CHINESE FEASTS ONLY AN AGGRAVATION.

The blessing of the Church of Sacred Heart, at Chau chow, Che Kiang, was the occasion of a native feast, and Fr. Tisserand, C. M., tells how the Chinamen conduct affairs of this kind:

"According to Chinese custom, only eight persons may sit at a single table. Of course our Bishop, the mandarins and notables sat at the first one, and then came the missionaries.

"As regards the food, I must state that a Chinese feast would be the despair of the starving or the impatient. At least twenty courses slowly succeed one another, but on each plate appears only a couple of mouthfuls of food. The feast is one in name only, and after such a function it is not strange that each guest makes for the home larder and there satisfies the demands of his appetite.

"My next great desire, now that the church is finished, is to possess a cemetery. This is needed as much for the living as the dead. The Chinese think much about their ancestors, and the pagans have many ceremonies in their honor. To show them how Christians of the true religion bury and pray for their dead in hallowed ground is to attract them forcibly to the Faith. Therefore my next aim is to consecrate a burying ground."

A NEW BASILICA IN AFRICA.

On the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the promotion of Archbishop Combes to the primatial see of Africa the Holy Father deigned to raise the cathedral of Carthage to the rank of a minor basilica, conferring on it all the honors, insignia and privileges that accompany that title. There are, therefore, at present three basilicas on the Dark Continent, that of Our Lady of Africa at Algiers, that of Hippo in the diocese of Constantine, and that of Carthage in Tunis.

Catholic Short Notes.

The children of the Pittsburgh parochial schools sold War Savings Stamps to the amount of \$578,727.51.

The Bishop of Leavenworth has dedicated an Indian chapel at Holton, Kan.

At Creason, on the Allegheny Mountains, a Grotto of Lourdes was blessed on the grounds of Mt. Aloysius Academy.

The Ladies' Catholic Benevolent Association have invested one hundred thousand dollars in Fourth Liberty Bonds.

The parochial schools of Buffalo diocese sold \$339,850 Liberty Bonds.

In Denver seven priests were initiated into the Ancient Order of Hibernians, and about one hundred candidates received the degrees.

The Holy See has graciously acknowledged the receipt of the munificent Peter Pence collection of the diocese of Indianapolis sent by the late Bishop Chatard.

It is historically stated that Irish priests by the name of William Ires, Patrick Maguire, and other Irishmen from Galway and Mayo, accompanied Columbus on his voyage of discovery of America.

Chaplain Michael Welson Keith is the second American priest to fall in battle; Father Wallace of Fort Hamilton was the first.

The Chateau du Parc, in Brooklyn, donated to the Knights of Columbus for use during the war, has been converted into a rest house for men in the U. S. service.

The Bishops and priests of the Church in the United States shepherd souls speaking about thirty languages.

In the army of Italy there are 1,556 Capuchins, 867 of whom are priests.

Two French priests, Fathers Mira Vail and Bourgade have distinguished themselves in air service.

Recently there took place a numerous French pilgrimage to Lourdes. In the evening there was a torchlight procession. Many American soldiers were in the pilgrimage.

Nazareth, the dwelling place of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, figured prominently in the war. It is about seventy miles north of Jerusalem. About nine miles from Nazareth is Mount Thabor, 2,000 feet high; near Mt. Thabor is the Mount of the Beatitudes on which the Lord delivered His sermon. Cana, the scene of His first miracle, is about three miles from Nazareth. The Sea of Galilee, called also the Lake of Genesareth, is near by; it is pear-shaped and is about 15 miles long by nearly seven miles in width.

In the ruined, magnificent Cathedral of Amiens, France, lately a French priest celebrated at a little altar High Mass; twelve old men formed the choir, a few wounded soldiers were present. Around them was desolation.

The Red Sea is 1,300 miles long and from one hundred to two hundred miles wide.

Late News of Ireland

Carlow
Died—November 16, at the Pines, Cloughna, Carlow, Dermot, son of James McDoonell, of pneumonia, aged eighteen.

Cork
The unique distinction has been conferred on Sister St. Emile, of the Bon Secour Order, formerly Miss E. McNamara, Kildorrey, of receiving medals from the French and Belgian Governments in recognition of her services to wounded soldiers while in charge of a hospital in Normandy.

Married—At St. Joseph's, Berkeley street, Dublin, by Very Rev. Canon Downing, Denis Alphonsus, son of the late James McCarthy and Julia McCarthy, McCarthy's Hotel, Bantry, to Rose Mary, daughter of the late William Mulholland, Carlisle.

Steps were taken at a public meeting in Middleton to erect a mortuary chapel as a memorial to the late Ven-Archdeacon Hutch, D.D., V. F., P. P. R. Fitzgerald, J. P., C. U. D. C., presided. A sum of £450 was subscribed on the spot, the last being started by £100 from Messrs. T. Hallinan & Sons, other subscriptions ranging from £50 downwards.

Dublin.
Prof. R. Donovan, President of the Irish League of Nations Society, in an address at the Irish Club said that if a League of Nations were not established now the new Europe would be only "a bag of cats." He believed if Ireland had made her voice heard in the Peace Conference she would receive her reward in full measure. Mr. Gallagher said he thought it was hopeless to expect a satisfactory solution of the Irish question from a Peace Conference in the present disunited condition of the country.

The annual appeal on behalf of the Christian Brothers in charge of the North Brunswick St. School was made in St. Paul's Church, Arran Quay. The community is entirely dependent for support on the voluntary contributions of the public, and they have 408 boys in the schools.

Kerry
Dr. O'Donoghue, of Waterville, died at the early age of 34 after contracting pneumonia from some of his patients. The funeral was to Cahirciveen.

The Royal Humane Society's certificate has been awarded to M. O'Connor, Ballyunion, for his gallantry in saving a Limerick gentleman from drowning.

Mayo
Ballina Catholic Association and the Stephenite H. and F. Club passed votes of sympathy with their President, Rev. W. J. Greaney, C. C., on the death of his brother, M. Greaney.

Tipperary
The death has occurred of T. Grant, formerly manager of Tipperary Gas Works. Tipperary Magistrates expressed sympathy with D. Kelly, J. P., Co. C., on the death in San Francisco of his son, Rev. P. Kelly. Cashel Guardians passed a vote of sympathy with the relatives of the late D. S. Keogh, Dundrum.

Wexford
Rev. P. Murphy, M. S. S., has been elected Superior, House of Missions, Enniscorthy.

Died—At Kilmokea, Campile, John Murphy, father of Rev. George Murphy, C. C., Krem, Enniscorthy. Interment at Poutur.