

himself, notes (pp. 241 and 223) regarding the highest economic class, "their proportionately infrequent resort to criminal abortion is to be found in the relatively high efficiency of their contraceptive efforts."

Other predilections are the author's favor for Doubleday as against Spencer, though there are several places where the latter's thesis, which certainly needs a modernized restatement, might well apply—places which puzzle Professor Pearl (pp. 37, 79, 211, etc.). Then there is the question of density, which is brought in in many places, though now it seems to be less density as such and much more the social life conditions associated with urbanism and industrialism. Finally, there seems to be some reliance on some mystical "innate powers of adaptation" to bring us out of the mess into which we have confessedly gotten ourselves. One may well share the author's skepticism as to the possibility of effective collective action, but in last analysis one must put his faith in human efforts guided by science or in what for all practical purposes is God. The scientist will scarcely hesitate to make his choice.

FRANK H. HANKINS²



THE VOLUNTARY CONTROL OF FERTILITY

THE new edition of Dr. Dickinson's *CONTROL OF CONCEPTION*¹ answers an increasing demand for an authoritative text on the techniques for controlling fertility. It deals with all aspects of fertility control and offers to the inquiring student a wealth of information on contraception, sterilization, and therapeutic abortion.

The present edition includes new material on the comparative effectiveness of different types of contraception as used in selected population groups. It summarizes recent research on the "safe period" and includes many new diagrams and drawings, illustrating the relation of the techniques of contraceptive practice to human sex anatomy.

On the basis of the latest research in the chemistry of spermicidal compounds and on the quality of a number of commercial contraceptives, Dr. Dickinson frankly recommends several commercial brands of con-

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¹ Dickinson, Robert Latou: *CONTROL OF CONCEPTION*. Baltimore, The Williams & Wilkins Co., 2nd Edition, 1938.

doms, diaphragms, jellies, and creams. The medical profession may be profoundly grateful for the publication of such a "white list." The approval or disapproval of commercial contraceptives is logically a function of the Councils of the American Medical Association, but until they begin to exercise this function, delegated to them in 1937,² the researches undertaken under the auspices of the National Committee on Maternal Health offer the only reliable source of information on commercial contraceptives.

As in the earlier edition, the book includes excellent chapters on the indications for and techniques of sterilization and therapeutic abortion. An entire chapter is devoted to the details of clinic organization, equipment, and architectural planning.

Due emphasis is placed on the positive as well as the negative aspects of the control of conception and the author urges the development of a well-rounded approach to problems of fertility. He believes that clinics should be equipped to treat sterility and to advise on marital adjustment as well as to prescribe contraceptives when they are indicated. It is to be hoped that the new text will be widely consulted by physicians and medical students.

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² *Journal of the American Medical Association*, November 5, 1938, 111, No. 19, p. 1770.