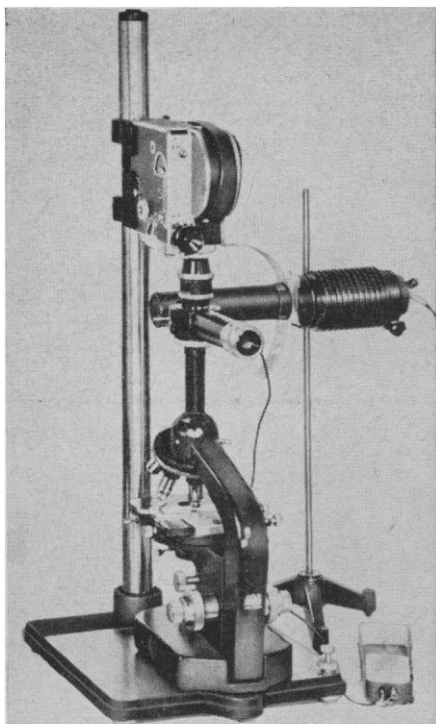




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Letters

Birth Control and Catholic Doctrine

The comments of J. K. O'Loane [*Science* 130, 1302 (1959)] on M. E. Davis' review of Sulloway's *Birth Control and Catholic Doctrine* [*Science* 130, 559 (1959)] deserve notice because they illustrate strikingly the dual intellectual attitude of the Catholic scientist. O'Loane is quite correct, of course, in his description of the distinction which the Catholic Church makes between its doctrine and its opinion. As a scientist he will no doubt understand that for a non-Catholic what matters is what the Church claims and does, and not whether, inside the Church, one particular claim is based on doctrine, or on personal taste, or on scientific evidence. It must have been small consolation to Bruno and Galileo that their torments were caused by the then prevalent opinion of the Church and not by a point of immutable doctrine.

As regards the important subject of controlling the size of our population, scientists are glad to learn from O'Loane that Catholic doctrine is not against artificial birth control; this justifies the hope that on this point also the Catholic Church will someday change its opinion, even if—as in the case of the heliocentric system—it takes three centuries to do so.

GEORGE CALINGAERT
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In a recent letter J. Kenneth O'Loane reproved M. Edward Davis for accepting Sulloway's view that the Catholic Church has made an official pronouncement against contraception. O'Loane contended, *au contraire*, that although some Catholic writers have adopted the position alleged by Sulloway to be the Church's, the Church itself "never has taken a doctrinal stand that 'separation of intercourse and parenthood' is wrong." In this dispute I side with Davis and Sulloway and should like to provide the Papal text that supports their position and to comment briefly upon the issue.

In the encyclical *Casti connubii*, dated 31 December 1930, Pius XI declared the following with regard to contraception: "Since, therefore, openly departing from the uninterrupted Christian tradition, some recently have judged it possible solemnly to declare another doctrine regarding this question, the Catholic Church, to whom God has entrusted the teaching and defense of the integrity and purity of morals, standing erect in the midst of the moral ruin which surrounds her, in

order that she may preserve the chastity of nuptial union from being defiled by this foul stain, raises her voice in token of her divine ambassadorship and through Our mouth proclaims anew: any use whatsoever of matrimony exercised in such a way that the act is deliberately frustrated in its natural power to generate life is an offense against the law of God and of nature, and those who indulge in such are branded with the guilt of grave sin" (italics added) (1). This quotation reproduces section 56 of the encyclical in its entirety. The three sections immediately preceding it should also be consulted, for they make manifest the full intensity of the Papal condemnation.

O'Loane emphasized that "the Church is considered to have taken a doctrinal stand in a matter when she has (i) made an infallible pronouncement by the head of the Church; (ii) defined by an Ecumenical Council; (iii) authoritatively proposed some creed, formula of belief, or matter of moral behavior." Although O'Loane did not so indicate by placing the word *or* between the second and third of the criteria, each of them is a sufficient condition. Clearly, the second is not applicable to the case in point. Let us, therefore, consider the first. According to the canons of the Vatican Council of 1870, the Roman Pontiff is infallible when he speaks *ex cathedra*—that is, when he speaks "in discharge of the office of pastor and doctor of all Christians [*sic*]" (2). Referring to the text quoted above and keeping in mind that the encyclical was addressed to all the faithful, one is logically entitled to conclude that Pius XI was speaking *ex cathedra*. Moreover, it would be difficult to deny that the portion of the text reading "the Catholic Church . . . raises her voice in token of her divine ambassadorship and through Our mouth proclaims . . ." fulfills the third of O'Loane's criteria.

Perhaps, then, neither Sulloway nor Davis is as "deficient in philosophical and theological background" as O'Loane would have us think.

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1. Pope Pius XI, "*Casti connubii*," reprinted in T. P. McLaughlin, Ed., *The Church and the Reconstruction of the Modern World* (Image Books, Garden City, N.Y., 1957), p. 136.
2. "First Dogmatic Constitution on the Church of Christ," chap. iv, reprinted in G. MacGregor, *The Vatican Revolution* (Beacon, Boston, 1957), p. 195.

In a recent issue O'Loane presents a Catholic criticism of *Science's* review of the book *Birth Control and Catholic Doctrine*. O'Loane does not like the

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Letters

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review and says that the editors of *Science* should "insist on the same objectivity in presentation of the position of the Catholic Church that they would on any strictly scientific matter."

O'Loane then proceeds to draw a fine legalistic type of distinction between the actions and views of the Catholic Church that are backed up by a "doctrinal stand" and those that are not. He tells us that the Catholic Church has taken no doctrinal stand on birth control and cites as a parallel case the dispute over an earth-centered versus a sun-centered solar system. He says that no doctrinal stand was taken on either of these matters, and he therefore implies that discussion of either of these matters is irrelevant. Apparently it is also irrelevant that Galileo was condemned for his views, that his sentence was ratified by the Pope, and that his works were placed on the *Index*, where they remained for 200 years. Is a victim of an undeclared war any less dead than the victim of a declared war?

In contrast, the doctrine of the Assumption is cited as an infallible article of doctrine because of the statement of the Pope on 1 November, 1950. Therefore scientist O'Loane must be certain that the Virgin Mary ascended bodily to heaven, flesh, skin, bones, hair, toenails, and all.

The only way a scientist can accommodate this sort of thinking is to have a bicompartimented mind—one compartment for logical reasoning, the other compartment for matters of faith. In a scientific discussion logic is not allowed to enter the sphere of faith, or at least is allowed to enter only on a subordinate basis. That is why the Catholic logician is always subordinate to the Catholic theologian. The theologian is the dogma-maker, and the logician fits his logic to the dogma, or if he can't make it fit, he is required to suspend judgment.

A scientist who discards scientific objectivity as soon as the thought process arrives in the forbidden area of dogma and doctrine is only a part-time scientist. Indeed it would be more wholesome if such a scientist would base himself squarely on faith and make no pretense to a scientific apology for doctrinal belief.

As to the tremendous import of the population bomb, which is the essential message of Sulloway's book, I would that some Amos or Isaiah could wake up the sleeping minds of our Catholic brethren.

ALAN RHODES

R.D. 1, Eagle Road, Willoughby, Ohio

In my earlier letter (p. 1364) I said: "The Catholic Church . . . believes the end does not justify the means, and the use of bad means for a good end makes [an] act morally bad . . . the means, artificial birth control, are always wrong." Apparently it was not clear to some that this is equivalent to saying that it is a *doctrine* of the Catholic Church that artificial birth control is always morally wrong. My reply will be confined to attempting to clear up some errors of fact and to answering the charge of "the dual intellectual attitude of the Catholic scientist."

When a married couple wishes to limit the number of their children, there are, omitting any consideration of sterilization, four methods they can use: they can (i) refrain from using their marital rights; (ii) make use of their marital rights in the proper manner, but at a time when conception cannot normally take place; (iii) make use of some method of artificial birth control; (iv) resort to abortion.

The term *proper manner* means that the marital act is performed so that the male organ deposits semen in the vagina of the female. The term *artificial birth control* means interference with the proper manner of performing the marital act by withdrawal or by some chemical, mechanical, or other artificial means designed to prevent conception.

Regarding the four methods of limiting the size of the family the doctrine of the Catholic Church is as follows: (i) abstinence is permissible under certain circumstances; (ii) marital rights may, under certain circumstances, be used in the proper manner at a time when conception cannot normally take place; (iii) artificial birth control is *always* morally wrong; (iv) therapeutic abortion is regarded as murder.

Methods (ii) and (iii) are both means for separating intercourse and parenthood. Intercourse and parenthood are also separated when the partners are sterile by virtue either of natural defect or of age. Sulloway is undoubtedly correct in saying there were Catholic *authors* who, as Davis (1) puts it, "attributed . . . dire consequences to the separation of intercourse and parenthood." From this Davis and Sulloway erroneously concluded that the Catholic *Church* had taken a stand against the "separation of intercourse and parenthood." Sulloway did not (and cannot) prove this.

Apparently Sulloway fell into this error because he did not understand the relationship between what a Catholic writer may say and what the Church teaches. Since Catholic authors can be on either or both sides of a disputed question, one must not attribute to the Church the views of some particular

author. This error is, unfortunately, quite common among non-Catholics and formed the basis for a considerable number of additional errors made by an Episcopalian bishop in a recent issue of *Life* magazine.

This was why I used the dual illustration of the Copernican theory and the dogma of the Assumption. The first illustrates the case in which, although Catholic writers were on both sides of a question for many decades, the Church took no doctrinal stand. This was obviously not parallel to the case of birth control.

Copernicus (2), who died some 20 years before Galileo was born, was one of a growing number of churchmen-scientists who realized that the idea, then current among theologians, that the Bible gave detailed information on astronomy and geology was wrong. James B. Conant (3) has pointed out that a new scientific idea takes hold slowly even among scientists. So it was in this case. Eventually it was realized that Copernicus was correct in his scientific theory and in the idea, not original with him, as to the relation of the Bible and astronomy.

The Church never took a doctrinal stand one way or the other. It took *disciplinary* action against Galileo—he was never tortured—because he violated a gentleman's agreement of 1616 which allowed him to teach Copernicus' theory as a scientific hypothesis but not as a fact (4).

The second example, that of the doctrine of the Assumption, illustrates a dispute concerning an apostolic tradition commonly accepted by the Eastern Orthodox and Catholic churches for many centuries (5) but not formally defined as a doctrine. Since it was not formally defined, further discussion was permissible, and Catholic writers were found on both sides until the Church finally crystallized its stand in an irrevocable doctrinal decision in 1950.

With respect to the position of the Church on separation of intercourse and parenthood, the facts are that it has repeatedly condemned method (iii), artificial birth control, but never method (ii).

In 1823 the Sacred Penitentiary declared the prevention of conception by artificial means contrary to the natural moral law. In 1851 the Holy Office said that the onanistic use (Gen. 38: 9) of marriage was opposed to the natural moral law (6). The latest condemnation is that quoted by Hoffman from Pius XI's encyclical on "Christian Marriage."

The legitimacy of the so-called rhythm method is mentioned in the same encyclical: "Nor are those con-

sidered as acting against nature who in the married state use their right in the proper manner, although on account of natural reasons either of *time* or of natural defects, new life cannot be brought forth" (italics added) (7). Because, as I said in my earlier letter, the Church had never condemned the separation of intercourse and parenthood, no shift in its position was necessary when the rhythm method became known. Davis' and Sulloway's allegation that the Church shifted its position is but another of their many errors.

Although Hoffman wrongly understood his quotation from the encyclical as condemning the separation of intercourse and parenthood, and although he is also mistaken in thinking that the encyclical satisfies the conditions for an *ex cathedra* pronouncement (8), he is correct in concluding that the condemnation of artificial birth control has a doctrinal basis in the Catholic Church.

There remains the question of whether, as Sulloway, Davis, and Calingaert hope, the Catholic Church will change its opinion, even if it takes a few centuries to do so. This hope has been expressed repeatedly in the past several years by members of the Planned Parenthood Federation, various demographers, and even Protestant clergymen, who, in some cases, have asserted that the Catholic Church must or will change its mind. Perhaps the worst feature of Sulloway's very unfortunate book (9) will be its effect in helping to foster this delusion.

This vain hope arises because these critics do not understand that the Church's ban on artificial birth control is not a disciplinary matter, as are, for example, Friday abstinence, the observance of Sunday instead of the Sabbath, and the celibacy of the clergy. In the case of birth control the Church is interpreting both the natural moral law and Sacred Scripture. When she does this, she acts only as a teacher, not as a lawmaker. Since God, not the Church, is the author of the law, the Church cannot change it.

As I said previously, "an *essential* claim of the Catholic Church is that when it *does* take a definite doctrinal stand it cannot be in error." The Catholic Church would collapse if it ever changed in essence one of its doctrines. However, "over a period of 20 centuries the Church has never made an essential change in any of its doctrines," and it never will.

Since the purpose of the first letter was to correct serious misstatements appearing in a review, it was not *ad rem* to discuss the problem of control of population. However, since Calingaert and Rhodes have mentioned it, I shall make just two remarks. If there is a population control problem in some parts of the world, the duty of the individual Catholic is not solved by pointing out the moral law. Catholics, as well as others, are bound to aid in its solution by using all *moral* means (10).

It is not surprising that Calingaert and Rhodes, having missed the main points of my letter, should be in difficulty in assessing the situation where other, more subtle, factors, such as evaluation of the intellectual attitude of a whole age, are involved. Passing over their various fantasies and implications, unwarranted either in logic or fact, I come to the problem of the supposed dual intellectual attitude of the Catholic scientist.

In the short space of a letter to the editor all I can hope to do is outline the situation briefly. Neither in my earlier letter nor in this one am I presenting any apologia for doctrinal belief, either scientific or philosophical. I am only clearing up errors of fact and sketching a position in outline (11). A good starting point is to consider what the non-Catholic scientist would have to investigate if he wished really to understand Catholicism.

Many scientists today are materialistic monists in metaphysics and positivists in epistemology. The first thing one has to be willing to do is to subject these conclusions to methodic doubt. If at the end of this preliminary investigation one is still convinced that these are valid positions, there is no use going any further. If, however, one comes to the conclusion that the universe is best explained metaphysically by a material and spiritual dualism and that true and certain knowledge can be obtained by other means in addition to the complex vaguely called the "scientific method," the really basic question is whether or not there exists an intelligent, supreme being.

Careful, reflective thinking is necessary at this point. The few scraps of philosophical knowledge picked up in an education often markedly deficient in the liberal arts, and a materialist and positivist bias absorbed from teachers, will not be adequate and proper (12).

If one concludes that there is no God, he will remain a speculative atheist; if he concludes that we cannot know, he is an agnostic. However, if there does exist a supreme, personal, spiritual being, the second question is, has he ever had any formal, public contacts with the human race. Of all the literature on this subject only the books of the Old and New Testament can satisfactorily pass the required tests as valid historical documents. While an Orthodox Jew will reject the New Testament, he can certainly accept everything else up to this point.

The New Testament reveals a person who claimed, and proved himself to be, both God and man. Some Unitarians will drop out here, but most Christians will remain. It also shows that he founded a Church which cannot err in matters of faith or morals. Obviously most Protestants will not believe their church is infallible in faith and morals, although they will be able to accept the rest. However, if one is morally certain on the last five points, it is eminently rational to believe whatever such a church proposes for belief in the sphere in which it is competent.

When there is added to this the reasonable conclusion that truth in science cannot clash with truth in philosophy and theology, and vice versa, the problem of the supposed dualism as formulated by Calingaert and Rhodes simply does not arise. Apparent differences between science and theology are due to an incomplete understanding of the one or the other and will certainly be resolved on further study, though this, just as with purely scientific questions, may take years of effort. Theologians, being human, will occasionally make errors in scientific fields, as they did in the case of Galileo and Darwin. Scientists, at least as human, will make errors in the fields of philosophy and theology.

In my own experience, what has usually happened is that people who pride themselves on being very scientific will reject *a priori*, on what are actually philosophical, not scientific grounds, some religious belief. This is what Rhodes has done, in rather offensive terms, with respect to the doctrine of the Assumption (13). He is quite mistaken in saying that "scientist O'Loane is certain" on this point. *Scientist* O'Loane says nothing about this point for the reason that *science* says nothing *pro* or *con*. As I said earlier, it is a matter of an apostolic tradition,

which is morally certain and accepted both by Eastern Orthodox churches and by the Catholic Church.

There is *nothing* in Catholic doctrine which is contrary to any scientific fact, nor can there be any such in the future.

J. KENNETH O'LOANE
331 Seneca Parkway,
Rochester, New York

References and Notes

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3. J. B. Conant, *On Understanding Science* (Yale Univ. Press, New Haven, Conn., 1947); *Science and Common Sense* (Yale Univ. Press, New Haven, Conn., 1951).
4. C. S. Slichter, *Am. Scientist* **31**, 168 (1943) (one of the fairer treatments by a non-Catholic mathematician).
5. P. F. Palmer, *Mary in the Documents of the Church* (Newman, Westminster, Md., 1952), pp. 59-61; quotation from St. John Damascene's sermon, "On the falling asleep of the Mother of God" (8th century).
6. D. Pruemmer, *Birth Control* (Paulist Press, New York, 1933), p. 5.
7. *Four Great Encyclicals* (Paulist Press, New York), p. 92. The paragraph referred to is the third following the quotation given by Hoffman.
8. J. M. O'Neill, *Catholicism and American Freedom* (Harper, New York, 1952), p. 160.
9. J. R. Connery, *America* **101**, 250, 252 (1959); D. J. Bradley, *Catholic World* **189**, 250 (1959).
10. Editorial, *The Commonwealth* **60**, 333 (1954); A. M. Churchill, *ibid.*, **60**, 344 (1954); D. Lyons, *ibid.*, **60**, 438 (1954); W. J. Grace, *Catholic World* **183**, 406 (1956); R. H. Amundson, *ibid.*, **185**, 352 (1957).
11. Those who wish to know more of the reasons behind the Catholic Church's position on birth control may see J. L. Thomas, *Daedalus* **88**, 444 (1959); *Ave Maria* **91**, 5, 24 (1960); T. J. O'Donnell, *Morals in Medicine* (Newman, Westminster, Md., 1959).
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13. For the positions of various schools of Catholic thought on the condition of the body after resurrection, see George G. Smith (Ed.), *The Teaching of the Catholic Church* (Macmillan, New York, 1950), vol. 2, pp. 1232-1247.

The publication of these letters marks the end of a series of comments on M. E. Davis' review of A. W. Sulloway's book, Birth Control and Catholic Doctrine [Science 130, 559 (1959)].—ED.

Revolution by Committee?

Reading John W. Gardner's account of the life of Abraham Flexner [*Science* **131**, 594 (26 Feb. 1960)] I could not help but ask (as I'm sure many other readers asked): What would be the state of American medical education today had Pritchett appointed a *committee* to look into the matter 50 years ago?

GARRETT HARDIN
University of California (Santa Barbara), Goleta

Meetings

Clinical Scientists

The Association of Clinical Scientists, a recent affiliate of the AAAS, was organized in 1949 by a group of physicians and scientists working in various fields of laboratory medicine. During the early years the group held frequent informal meetings at the laboratories of its members and arranged a number of symposiums, workshops, and seminars on methodology in clinical chemistry which were held in the United States, Great Britain, and Puerto Rico. Until 1956, the association was called the Clinical Science Club. By 1956 the scope of activities of the Clinical Science Club had expanded, as had its membership, and it was then decided to incorporate the group as the Association of Clinical Scientists. The association received a charter from the state of Pennsylvania on 1 March 1957 as a nonprofit scientific organization. The objectives of the association, as outlined in the constitution, are as follows: (i) to promote education and research in clinical science by practical methods; (ii) to maintain and improve the accuracy of measurements in clinical laboratories and to promote uniformity in clinical laboratory procedures; (iii) to encourage cooperation between physician and nonphysician groups concerned with the application of scientific methods to medical practice; and (iv) to support the principles and ethics of the field of medicine and of its constituent basic sciences.

The association holds scientific meetings in the spring and fall. The spring meeting is held in either March or April and is devoted to the presentation of scientific papers by members and invited guests and to visiting clinical and research laboratories. The fall meeting is held in either October or November and is devoted to the presentation of an applied seminar in clinical science. In addition, informal dinner meetings of the association are held periodically in conjunction with international medical congresses and national scientific conventions.

ROBERT P. MACFATE
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Forthcoming Events

May

- 1-5. AAAS Southwestern and Rocky Mountain Div., Alpine, Tex. (M. G. Anderson, New Mexico College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts, P.O. Box 97, University Park)
2. American Federation for Clinical Research, Atlantic City, N.J. (J. E. Bryan, 250 W. 57 St., New York 19)

2-3. Reactions between Complex Nuclei, 2nd conf., Gatlinburg, Tenn. (R. S. Livingston, Oak Ridge Natl. Laboratory, Oak Ridge, Tenn.)

2-4. Aeronautical Electronics, conf., Dayton, Ohio. (L. G. Cumming, IRE, 1 E. 79 St., New York 21)

2-5. Flight Test Symp., natl., San Diego, Calif. (H. S. Kindler, Instrument Soc. of America, 313 Sixth Ave., Pittsburgh 22)

2-11. International Cancer Cytology conf., Mexico, D.F., Mexico. (Office of Intern. Conferences, Department of State, Washington 25)

2-11. Pan American Medical Assoc., cong., Mexico City, Mexico. (J. J. Eller, 745 Fifth Ave., New York 22)

3-4. Association of American Physicians, Atlantic City, N.J. (P. B. Beeson, Yale Univ. School of Medicine, New Haven 11, Conn.)

3-4. Conference of Veterinarians, annual, Philadelphia, Pa. (W. H. Rhodes, School of Veterinary Medicine, Univ. of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia 4)

3-5. Society of Pediatric Research, Swampscott, Mass. (C. D. West, Children's Hospital, Cincinnati 29, Ohio)

3-6. Fuel Element Fabrication, symp., Vienna, Austria. (Intern. Atomic Energy Agency, 11 Kärntner Ring, Vienna)

5-6. American Pediatric Soc., annual, Swampscott, Mass. (A. C. McGuinness, 2800 Quebec St., NW, Washington 8)

5-8. Wilson Ornithological Soc., Gatlinburg, Tenn. (A. M. Bagg, Farm St., Dover, Mass.)

6-7. Minnesota Acad. of Science, St. Cloud. (J. P. Emanuel, Winona State College, Winona, Minn.)

6-7. North Carolina Acad. of Science, Greensboro. (J. A. Yarbrough, Meredith College, Raleigh, N.C.)

6-7. North Dakota Acad. of Science, annual, Fargo. (B. G. Gustafson, Box 573, University Station, Grand Forks, N.D.)

6-7. Population Assoc. of America, annual, Washington, D.C. (K. B. Mayer, Dept. of Sociology and Anthropology, Brown Univ., Providence 12, R.I.)

6-7. South Dakota Acad. of Science, 45th annual, Brookings. (J. M. Winter, Dept. of Botany, Univ. of South Dakota, Vermillion)

6-8. International Cong. of Phlebology, 1st, Chambéry, France. (J. Marmasse, 3, rue de la République, Orléans, France)

6-9. American Psychoanalytic Assoc., annual, Atlantic City, N.J. (Mrs. H. Fischer, 36 W. 44 St., New York 36)

7-8. Academy of Psychoanalysis, annual, Atlantic City, N.J. (M. Ross, American Psychiatric Assoc., 1700 18 St., NW, Washington 9)

9. American Acad. of Child Psychiatry, annual, Atlantic City, N.J. (M. Ross, American Psychiatric Assoc., 1700 18 St., NW, Washington 9)

9-10. American Soc. of Safety Engineers, Chicago, Ill. (A. C. Blackman, ASSE, 5 N. Wabash Ave., Chicago 2)

9-11. Aerospace Medical Assoc. 31st annual, Bal Harbour, Fla. (W. J. Kennard, AMA, Washington Natl. Airport, Washington 1)

9-11. Power Instrumentation, 3rd natl. symp., San Francisco, Calif. (H. S. Kindler, Instrument Soc. of America, 13 Sixth Ave., Pittsburgh 22, Pa.)