

## GENETICS

# Babies for the Childless

**Marriages unblessed by little ones now call upon anonymous donors. Already 10,000 children in America are products of artificial insemination.**

By WATSON DAVIS

► ABOUT 10,000 children in America, most of them not more than 15 years old, are the products of artificial insemination, born to marriages which greatly desire children although the husband does not have the fertility to father children.

In most of these cases, no one except the married couples knows that the actual physiological father of the children is a quite anonymous donor, a young male who never meets the mother and never knows whether children are produced.

This is the application to human beings of the breeding by artificial insemination that has brought about a revolution in stock breeding in the last few decades. In the case of cattle, pigs, etc., sperm of choice male animals is shipped all over the globe. One male can have progeny by the thousands.

Human artificial insemination has not reached such proportions. In the larger cities it is available where medical skill developed over about a decade serves an urgent human need.

The childless couples who seek this route to children are made happy. They love their children in many cases even more than husbands and wives who do not need an unknown donor who furnishes his hereditary material.

Dr. Sophia J. Kleegman, clinical professor of obstetrics and gynecology at the New York University College of Medicine, reported to the recent First World Congress on Fertility and Sterility her medical experience in helping to bring about over 75 successful pregnancies by what she calls therapeutic donor insemination.

## Form of Therapy

"Therapeutic insemination in human beings is a form of therapy for a certain group of infertile couples, in whom that is the only means whereby the wives could fulfill their psychobiological primary needs and destiny," Dr. Kleegman explained. "In addition, it is also therapeutic for society, since it is the only group of human beings wherein eugenics has a chance to rule."

In her infertility practice not every childless couple who wants a baby by this method is accepted as patients. She will refuse a case if she is not convinced that both husband and wife want a baby by this procedure and prefer it to adoption of a baby completely unrelated to either of them. She must be convinced that the family will pro-

vide an environment in which the child will be wanted and loved. She stresses that no one should know that the child is not physically that of the husband. What is of the utmost importance is that there should be every assurance that the child will become that of the husband emotionally.

"The child is not of the husband's seed, but it must be of his heart," Dr. Kleegman feels.

The selection of the donor is completely Dr. Kleegman's responsibility. Just as interns and medical students often become blood donors for a fee, so the donors in insemination are paid a fee of \$15 and it is a purely monetary transaction, except that many of them are doctors in training and are in entire sympathy with the program. Dr. Kleegman carefully matches the donor to the height, eye color and other characteristics of the husband. A rigorous inquiry into heredity of the donor is made to give the expected baby the best possible biological heritage or the best eugenic attributes. A wide variety of physical and mental characteristics is available among the donors. It is even the practice to differentiate between Christian and Jewish donors in matching them to the religious preferences of the couple.

Often it can be honestly said that no

one can be sure who is the real father. If there is the least chance that the husband's own fluid might inseminate, some of his is mixed in with the donor's fluid.

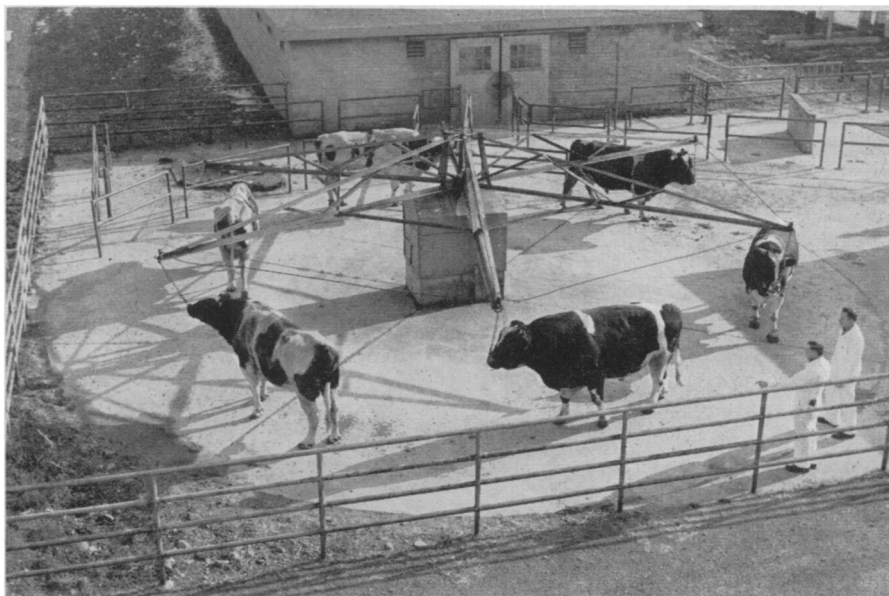
There is more sterility among human beings, both male and female, than most people realize. It runs between 10% and 15%. Interestingly enough, it is about the same in many animals, being 10% to 15% in pigs, for example.

Infertility in the man is much easier to determine than in the woman. It takes a relatively simple test to tell whether the male is sufficiently fertile to make baby production likely. A woman's fertility can often only be proven after she has actually been given the opportunity to become pregnant via regular conjugal relationships for a period of at least a year.

Of the 116 couples who have sought therapeutic insemination in Dr. Kleegman's experience, six of the men knew they were sterile before marriage and five of the couples married with the agreement to have donor babies.

The most gratifying part of this medical practice is to see the babies grow up, healthy, normal and loved in the homes that would otherwise be childless. The proof that the customers are satisfied is that they come back for more, second and even third babies by this method.

There have been no unhappy outcomes and the couples are all "ecstatically satisfied," Dr. Kleegman reports. Invariably and without exception, they have requested the same donor "because our baby is so



**MULTIPLE FATHERS**—These six bulls on the exerciser at the New York Artificial Breeders' Cooperative are expected to sire at least 75,000 progeny this year. Research at Cornell University Agricultural Experiment Station has made this progress possible.

wonderful that we want one just the same, it couldn't be better."

Both the law and the church have mixed feelings about donor babies. The matter has not been taken to the law courts very often. No sensational cases have yet arisen, and the physicians in this medical practice might be a bit hesitant to take as patients parties to a marriage that involved large fortunes.

Among the couples aided by Dr. Kleegman there has been a divorce, but the donor child had nothing to do with it. The father loved the child "more than anything else in the world," and is still devoted and attentive to the child.

Legally it might be charged that a donor baby is illegitimate and the wife has engaged in adultery. The court decisions are largely in the future, although in a case that got to a New York court a donor baby was declared legitimate.

In an English case involving artificial insemination, the child was ruled illegitimate, although in this case the semen of the husband was used and the child was not a donor baby.

In Canada, a judge, although he did not rule on the status of the child, declared that if he had it would be declared illegitimate.

No one is likely to know in the case that might cause international complications. The donor was in New York and his semen was flown within hours to Canada and produced a new young Canadian citizen. Or is the baby legally an American by paternity?

Religious opinions are not too heated, al-

though the Catholic Church in America and the Lutheran Church in Sweden are in opposition. So is the Church of England, but not the Episcopal Church in the United States.

The first case of human artificial insemination goes back to 1890 and the late Dr. Robert L. Dickinson was a pioneer in developing this new branch of gynecology and obstetrics. At a time when there was even greater taboo and opposition he developed the methods used, and those who are practicing therapeutic insemination in this country at the present time were taught by Dr. Dickinson.

Artificial insemination in animal and stock breeding began many years ago and is now such a vital part of the industry that stock breeders would be appalled if anyone suggested they go back to the old methods that nature uses. A prize bull can father literally thousands of progeny all over the world.

In the practice of human medicine the scientific research and experience involved in the field of animal husbandry has not been applied. Banks of the male hereditary material have not been established as yet.

Can man use for the enrichment of the human population the same methods that he uses in his breeding of animals? Will there be established banks of human semen with vital supplies of the hereditary material that might be used even years after the death of the great or unusual men who have made such contributions to posterity? This is for the future.

Science News Letter, September 26, 1953

#### METEOROLOGY

## "Brain" Predicts Storms

► UNEXPECTED STORMY weather can be predicted before it begins, using an electronic "brain," Dr. Jule Charney of the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, N. J., reported to the weathermen attending the Toronto Meteorological Conference.

More accurate local storm forecasts are expected to result from this discovery, since weathermen now will be better able to select the causes leading to sudden and unexpected high winds and rains.

Using a three-level model of the atmosphere, Dr. Charney has predicted two severe storms before there was any evidence on weather maps that they might start.

After the conditions that cause the high winds and rains have become evident, local weathermen can track and forecast the storm's future path. However, spotting the conditions that lead to an unexpected storm and predicting the bad weather before it starts have previously stumped the meteorologists. Dr. Charney makes his storm forecast using a simplified model of the earth's atmosphere, charting conditions across the country at three levels, one near the ground, one about two miles high and

one about five miles high. Information on conditions at these three levels is fed into the Institute for Advanced Study's electronic computer, which then predicts the conditions to be found 12 or 24 hours from the starting time, doing his millions of calculations on an hour-by-hour basis.

To predict the "great storm of 1950," considered to be about the worst on record for the eastern United States, Dr. Charney sliced the atmosphere at 3,000, 10,000 and 25,000 feet. The computing machine, in about an hour's working time, then gave him an almost exact model of what actually had happened 24 hours later, he reported to the joint meeting of the American Meteorological Society and the Royal Meteorological Society in Toronto.

Dr. Charney is now working on a six-level model of the atmosphere, and with this, expects to get even more accurate predictions of the occurrence of unexpected storms.

Science News Letter, September 26, 1953

The *tomato* is the most popular garden vegetable in this country.

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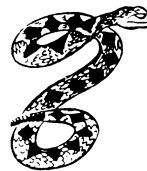
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CLIFFORD B. MOORE,  
Forest Park Museum (Mass.)

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ARTHUR S. DesGREY

College of the City of New York

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