



# The SCIENTIST or the STORK?



THE tragedy of the childless married couple who yearn for children and are physically incapable of having them is not only a pathetic one but is a contributing factor in the dwindling populations of the English-speaking races. It is being solved in a few cases by adoption, but this is not always a happy or satisfying solution. An answer to the problem has been provided in the United States where the artificial breeding of human infants, the mother never seeing the father, is being carried out. It is an answer that is not acceptable to many people, but it may, like many other sweeping reforms, come to be adopted as a commonplace occurrence.

There are numerous cases in New Zealand of married couples who are childless because of the sterility of the husband. It is the wife in such a partnership who is the logical subject for treatment. In America, such a woman desiring artificially induced pregnancy must undergo thorough tests, mental as well as physical. Family history is scanned for hereditary deformities, and if the results of these investigations prove satisfactory the childless wife is regarded as being suitable for help. But before insemination is carried out, the doctor insists that both the wife and the husband sign a document that the wife requests artificial insemination and the husband consents. Not only is the document signed, but it is finger-printed, after which it is deposited in a vault known only to the doctor and his assistant. The reason for this precaution will be explained later.

The selection of the male donor is carefully carried out, and when finally chosen he is submitted to a severe test. He is selected from a middle-age group and must be free from structural defects, venereal disease, epileptic heredity and family taint of insanity. In America it is insisted that the donor is a college graduate and has attained success in his chosen career. The donors are not paid, for it is desired that they are motivated by an interest in genetics rather than dollars. Doctors refuse requests that the husband's brother should act as donor in case of later emotional complications, but they are careful to select a man from the same race stock as the legal father and one with the same dominant physical characteristics. This is to avoid a clash between the growing child, who perhaps is of French heredity, and the legal father who may be of Prussian stock. Moreover, if the child showed different racial colouring from the parents a certain psychological irritation might develop.

Naturally, the identity of the donor is kept hidden from the mother, and vice versa. It would be disastrous for any one of the three concerned in the little drama to obtain a clue as to one another's identity. It would provide too many complications and could easily give rise to blackmail. There is no need for such a complication to arise. Hospitalization for both donor and mother is recommended as an aid to secrecy, but there is no need for them to be admitted to the same hospital. The paternal fluid can be kept in an ordinary refrigerator, at between