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WAGES AND MARRIAGES

By STOUGHTON COOLEY.

It may seem a far cry from Dun's and Bradstreet's to the marriage license bureau, but, nevertheless, the tie is there. The volume of business reported from both will invariably be found to rise and fall together. When the commercial agencies announce an unexampled volume of business, the bureau gives out a record number of marriage licenses.

The Chicago license bureau in June, 1915, issued 3,859 marriage licenses, then the largest number in the history of the city; in June, 1916, the number rose to 4,497. It was during this period that the volume of business in the United States attained to such stupendous proportions. In May our exports of merchandise rose to $274,218,172, the largest amount of goods ever exported by any country in a single month. The June exports were only $10,000,000 less than those of May, and the total for the year exceeds $4,000,000,000, which was almost double our imports.

While such trade is not altogether sound, and may suffer a slump when the war ceases, it has its effect upon the wage market, and, taken with the falling off in immigration on account of the war, it has tended to steadier employment at better wages. The connection between this enormous volume of business and the number of marriages is unmistakable.

Need Employment.

Men cannot marry without employment. They hesitate to marry when jobs are uncertain and wages are low. Yet the home instinct is natural, and all normally developed men and women wish to marry and rear children; hence all but a few would have homes and families if there were ample means at hand to defray expenses and provide something for the rainy day and old age. Such were the conditions in the early history of the country, when practically all married and had children.

Those who deprecate late marriages and, what is worse, no marriage at all, who deplore the increase in bachelors and bachelor maids, will do well to consider the economic problem. For it is quite apparent to anyone who will look into the matter that wages today do not command the same social standing in the community that a day's labor commanded 80 or 100 years ago. Nor will it give the same sense of security, or the same degree of independence.

Different Mode of Living.

It is idle to argue that young men and young women could if they would dispense with frills and fads and so fare as well as did their ancestors. These things cannot be dispensed with; they represent a different mode of living and have become a part of life. People living in the narrow quarters of city flats and apartments can no more return to the earlier modes of life than the chick can reenter the egg. The hand loom is gone; even the making of clothing has passed into factories. The city wife could profit nothing by attempting to do the things done by the housewife of 100 years ago. If she would spin and weave and make up garments she must enter the factory or the shop.

Hence it is that when the young man of today reaches the age at which his grandfather married he is merely entering upon his wage-earning career, and is barely able to keep himself. It is only in exceptional instances that he is warranted in assuming the responsibilities of husband and father at the age of 25. He must wait until he has advanced to a higher earning power. But while he waits, the girl whom he would have wedded enters commercial life and establishes herself upon an independent and self-sustaining footing. And even though her wages be meager, and her home-making instincts be suppressed, she enjoys a freedom and enough of the luxuries of the day to make her hesitate to commit her fortunes to the keeping of a small-waged man.

Tastes Become Different.

Thus the young man who would have married at 25 on his modest income is confronted with the necessity of a larger expenditure than he can now afford and must continue the struggle for economic advancement at the age of 25. Both he and the young woman become accustomed to their single life; their habits become settled, their tastes grow finicky, and they have less and less inclination to make the venture.

The growing reluctance with which men and women resort to marriage and the frequency with which they remain childless is due to no changes in nature, but solely to economic conditions. And the way to restore the customs under which youths and maidens marry at appropriate ages is to recast industrial conditions to a degree that will enable the machines that save labor to save the laborer that will equitably divide the increase of wealth that comes of the use of the machine between the operator and the owner.

Basic Economic Question.

Thus does the marriage question, like all other social and moral questions, lead back to the economic question. General Gorgas says the federal authorities abolished the slums and drove disease from the Panama zone by doubling the wages of the men. He declares the same thing would follow in the tenement house districts in any American city. The New York health authorities have found that intemperance decreases as wages advance; the domestic courts find that wife desertion grows less with a greater demand for labor; it is the common experience of mankind that child labor stops with the increase of the family income, for it is only among the poor that child labor prevails.

It must be apparent to the reflecting mind that the great problem before the people of this country is not whether we should have been less or more severe with Germany, whether we should have recognized Huerta or Carranza, or whether we should build the largest navy, but what causes the economic strain that is turning awry our social forces and interfering with the moral development of the country. The nation can bear many ills, but it cannot long survive the deterioration and disappearance of the home and family.

LOVE OR HATE?

Is your life controlled more largely by your likes, your loves or by your dislikes, your hates? asks a writer in the Christian Herald. It would be well to think about this searchingly.

Malice, envy, resentment, hard thoughts of any sort, poison first the heart in which they orginate. They make a brakish, unhealthful pool, where all kinds of bad mental conditions will generate.

It is only in our loves that we really live.

What we hate is dead to us, and the wider the range of our hates the narrower our lives.

It is a beautiful belief that every kindly act, word, thought or impluse continues in its influence forever, brightening and sweetening the world, and that every evil deed or thought permanently destroys a part of the sum total of human happiness. Certainly this is the effect upon the life in which the thought originates. Every thought elevates or lowers, purifies or debases.

Love thoughts are wings. Hate thoughts are weights.

Your own feeling is reflected back to you from others. If you give love you get love. It is one of the things the more of which you give the more you have. Love is born a twin and cannot exist without its counterpart. It is your own attitude that attracts or repels others. According as we love or hate, we surround ourselves with an atmosphere of inviting sweetness or hedge ourselves in with a barbed wire fence. People are lovely to you or hateful, just as you love them or hate them. This is not mere seeming, but one of the truest actualities in the world.

Love is the light in which we see and live. Hates are malarial mists in which we blindly grope and miserably die.

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The Community Cafeteria has not been with us very long, but it is surely like an old friend. If you want home cooking and the taste of home comforts patronize The Community Cafe. You will find it in every way the best place to drop in and bring your family and friends. You can have a table to yourself and can pick out what you want and be assured that it is the very best to be found on the market. Of course, you wait on yourself—which raises the quality and lowers the cost. Get the habit, and it is a good habit—meet your friends in the pleasant rest room and be assured at all times that you are welcome. Make this your stopping place when downtown and you will find the help at all times ready to give you the best and most courteous attention. "Try us and find out if we are not your friends"—is the invitation of the management. "We are upstairs which makes us exclusive, and really we want you to know us and would like to get acquainted with all the people who appreciate good things to eat at a very small cost and we are friendly to Union Labor—and we work hard to please "the boys" and would like to meet them all personally. Give us a trial and let's get acquainted. Come in and see for yourself how we run your cafeteria and tell us what you want and like and we will do the rest and make you feel at home." 24-26 West Superior street, upstairs.

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A LETTER TO YOU FROM RENA HERMANN MOONEY

Dear Comrades and Friends:

I am still in prison at San Francisco!

A regular jury, a labor jury, a committee of club women and the general public are convinced of my innocence and still I am denied my liberty.

For a year I and my fellow victims have paid the penalty for our loyalty to labor. The united railroads aim to get all of us. We have interfered with their exploiting plans. We attempted to organize their men into a union.

Did you ever stop to think of the ordeal of a trial? Nine weeks of insults by heartless attorneys who plead with a jury to hang you? Did you ever realize what it means to sit there day after day and have paraded before you a foul black crime, pictured in all its hideousness to make a lasting impression on the jury? Word pictures of corpses and the wounded brought on as witnesses, one after the other, with nothing to say to connect any of us with the explosion at Steuart and Market streets on July 22, 1916. Just there for effect. Only insinuations by the attorneys, while they get the poor wounded folks to tell of their injuries. (I certainly feel nothing against them for they were true and none of the injured lied for the prosecution, as did the prostituted hirelings who came to swear our lives away.)

Can you imagine the feelings of an innocent prisoner at bar facing John McDonald on the witness stand? You know all the time that he is framing up his story according to orders from the prosecution. Put yourself in my place and know as I know that at the time he places my husband, Tom Mooney, at the scene of the explosion that Tom and I were standing on top of a high building a mile away, watching the parade. My God, how I felt like leaping to my feet and screaming "liar" to that foul-mouthed perjurer as he sat there swearing the lives of us five victims away.

And Estelle Smith, whose kind has never received a harsh word from me, my heart has always gone out to the women of the street, to those who have trodden the bitter scarlet way, to see that woman sit there and blaspheme the truth. Oh, comrades! it seems impossible that such a thing could be done by one woman to another.

And the Edeaus, mother and daughter, what foul thing have they done that they can be brought to this low level of falsehood and shame?

But why go on with this. You understand!

What I want to know is how long I must stay here? How long must Tom Mooney, Billings and Weinberg lie in prison? How long must Nolan be held by the "law" without even a charge against him?

You have done nobly by us during these trying months that we have been prisoners of the industrial war. You have come forward with your hard earned dollars to rescue us from the frame-up that sought to railroad us to the gallows. Much has been gained for the cause of labor, but candidly, comrades, do you not feel that we have been here in prison long enough? Even though they grant bail, do you think that any let up should be allowed until this whole inquisition is stopped? Until we are all dismissed and the charges against us withdrawn?

I want to go back to my music work. The little folks tell me they want me. Will you do your part? Will you help the boys and me to get out of here? We have no business here. We are innocent. You know what it takes to get us out. Public opinion must be aroused. Lawyers must be retained. That takes money. I hate to ask it, but feel I must appeal to you lest you might forget in these terrible days of war.

Don't let them bury us here! A few more vigorous blows will free us all, so I ask you comrades to see that the International Workers' Defense league, 210 Russ building, San Francisco, is not hampered for funds to carry on the fight, and even though I and Weinberg should be granted bail, remember that Billings has a life sentence hanging over him and Tom Mooney faces the gallows. They are innocent! Help get them out!

I am yours for justice,
RENA HERMANN MOONEY.

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