

"MONEY IS ROOT OF ALL DIVORCES—WHY NOT ESTABLISH A MINIMUM WAGE FOR WIVES?"

—SAYS NIXOLA GREELEY-SMITH

BY NIXOLA GREELEY-SMITH
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A campaign is now being conducted in Italy to limit by law the amount of money which women spend on their clothes!

In support of the movement, an Italian writer, Beatrice Maineri, has



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unearthed the fact that in 1700 the Genovese Republic prohibited the wearing of dresses made of colored silk, of lace, of gold and silver embroidery, and later forbade the display of gold and silver watches. Exception was made in the case of brides, who were permitted to sport the finery of which the law deprived their elders.

From denunciations which reach us every little while of the extravagance and bad taste in dress of Amer-

ican women, it is probable that this reactionary crusade may find a few adherents in the United States. And I know a great many women who would be very glad, indeed, to have the law fix the amount they should spend for clothes. In effect, such a law would constitute a sort of minimum wage for wives and the conjugal peace would be no longer subject to periodic upheavals concerning Money—the root of all divorces.

And WHY NOT a minimum wage for wives?

We have motherhood pensions in 20 states, though a few years ago the idea of paying such pensions would have been rejected as dangerous and un-American. When a husband and wife are at war, the law steps in and decides what proportions of the man's income shall be paid to the woman.

BUT when they are at peace, the wife has NO fixed economic VALUE! To find out what her service is worth to her husband she has to quarrel with him! IN OTHER WORDS, TODAY WIVES HAVE TO BE PAID WHEN ON STRIKE, BUT NOT WHEN ON THE JOB!

There are homes in which the subject of the wife's allowance for clothes and other personal expenses is a source of continual disagreement.

If the amount to be allowed her for services to the matrimonial firm were fixed by law on a scale graded to the husband's income, this domestic discord would be stilled forever. Also, if a woman knew that she had to dress on a certain amount and could not, either by cajolery or bullying, get any more, she would soon acquire system and responsibility in her expenditures.

What is to be urged against the Saturday night pay-envelope for wives? So far as I can see, only the