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Trial Marriages Are Not Novel

Mrs. Parsons' Proposed Plan Has Been Practised for Ages by Many Races.

By A. W. GREELY.

MARRIAGE on trial," the matrimonial reform proposed by Mrs. Parsons in her much assailed book, "The Family," is no novelty. The proposed method of selection which has stirred the pupil to frenzy, of epithetical protests, and scathing denunciation, has been in practical operation for countless centuries in nearly every part of the world and flourishes today with all the vigor of the traditional bay tree in America, Africa, Asia and the islands of the Pacific.

In the evolution of the marriage relation, probational matrimony, in one form or another, has been a feature of the family life of practically every race. Mrs. Parsons' application of the inductive or Baconian method as a species of first aid to the Eros stricken in their pursuit of matrimonial felicity (cynics say the two words are mutually destructive and contradictory) is an appeal to historical experience of the race and not, as nearly all of her vituperative critics assert, a radical, anarchistic "reform" of her own creation.

In fact, Mrs. Parsons' matrimonial probation suggestion might without undue violence to language and accuracy of statement be called the "American" or "Wyandott" plan, as marriage on trial has been from time immemorial an established institution among the Indians. According to the statements of ethnologists many Indian tribes dissolve their matrimonial unions as readily as they enter in to them, and the Wyandots, according to the testimony of Walts, had trial marriages which were binding for a few days only.

Schoolcraft tells us that among the Creeks "marriage is considered only as a temporary convenience, not binding on the parties more than one year," the consequence being that "a large proportion of the old and middle aged men by frequent changing, have had many wives and their children scattered around the country are unknown to them." Evidences of experimental matrimony and connubial variety are found among many of the other American Indian tribes on both continents.

In parts of Greenland six months is the trial dead line, husband and wife separating if the "two hearts-two minds" theory develops discord instead of harmony. Marriages among the Botocudos, according to Keanne, is of a purely temporary nature, "dissolved on the slightest pretext, or without any pretext at all, merely through love of change or caprice." In Tasmania, says Dr. Milligan, "trial" marriages result in a succession of wives." In Samoa the wife's tenure of office is frequently limited to a few days or weeks, and marriage is sometimes only an excuse for the feasts and festivals so dear to the hearts of the pleasure-loving natives.

In the Indian archipelago it is a common practice for formal marriages to be limited—sometimes for only a month and of others for a period of several years. St. John says that among the Dyaks there are few middle-aged men who have not had several wives, and instances have been known of young women of seventeen or eighteen who have already had three or four husbands. In portions of Indo-China it is said to be a rare occurrence for any woman to arrive at middle age without having a family by two or more husbands.

The Malaysians are so capricious that it often happens that a man marries and divorces the same woman three or four times in the course of his life. The Singhalese are even more difficult to please in choosing partners. Knox says: "Both men and women have frequently to marry four or five

times before they can settle down contented." Among the Mantras in the Malay peninsula, it is not uncommon to meet individuals who have been married forty or fifty times. The Bedouins are equally critical, and men forty-five years old have been known to have had more than fifty wives in succession, which is probably the high-water mark in the record of probational matrimony.

The trial marriage idea is firmly established in parts of Persia, where a "Sighe" wife may be taken in marriage for a legally stipulated period, which may vary from one hour to ninety nine years. The Egyptians are also so wedded to the probation idea which in the valley of old Nilus probably is more ancient than the silent Sphinx and the pyramids of Gizeh. Lane is authority for the statement that there are not many persons who have not separated from at least one wife if they have been married any length of time, and he asserts that many Egyptians have in the course of two years married as many as twenty, thirty, or even more wives, which is going some to say the least. There are many Egyptian women, still young, who have been wives to a dozen or more men in succession before discovering the desired haven of matrimonial happiness or possibly giving up the quest, disillusioned. He is also authority for the statement that some men have a new wife every month for years before dismissing servants, a middle-aged man who had taken nineteen wives in trial succession to his bosom. Indeed, according to Reade, among the Moors of the Sahara it is considered unfashionable and vulgar to live too long together. He says: "The leaders of fashion are those who are oftenest divorced."

What a blow at the boasted social supremacy of Chicago and Newport! In Abyssinia marriage is generally entered into for a period of years, and throughout Africa it is the custom of many of the tribes to marry on trial for a fixed time. Among the Bondos it is the privilege of the husband to send away his wife as often as he likes. This custom is so widespread that the paternity of the children is generally unknown.

The laws of the ancient Persians, Greeks, Hebrews, Teutons, and Romans made separations easy. At the close of the Roman Republic and in the palmy days of the republic divorce was a scandal of colossal proportions. Dislike was often considered sufficient grounds for divorce, which was regarded as merely a private act. The Aleuts used to exchange their wives for food, and in Tonkin a husband divorces his wife when dissatisfied with her by simply telling her to go. In Yucatan a man might divorce his wife for the merest trifle.

Among some peoples custom has limited the right to separation after trial marriages. Among the Kukis the marriage is indissoluble if the wife becomes the mother of a son, but the husband can cast off the wife if they disagree, providing that there is no son born to them. The Red Karens in Indo-China allow separation if there are no children but forbid it otherwise. In Western Victoria a man can divorce a childless woman, but only after a hearing before the chiefs of his and her tribes. Among the Santals the consent of the husband's clansmen must precede separation. Among certain lower races, according to Westermarck, the consent of the woman is necessary to separation.

The Chinese code gives seven just causes for divorce including loquacity, inattention to parents-in-law, and ill-temper. One of the old Chinese books declares: "When a woman has any quality that is not good, it is but just and reasonable to turn her out of

doors. Among the ancients a wife was turned away if she allowed the house to be full of smoke or if she frightened the dog with her disagreeable noise." Notwithstanding this, Westermarck declares that divorce is rare in China.

While Mohammed forbid the capricious repudiation of a wife, yet, practically, a Mohammedan may, whenever he pleases, without assigning any reason, say to his wife, "Thou art divorced," and she must return to her parents. The "Laws of Manu" permitted divorce of the wife if she drank, was wasteful or quarrelsome.

But the ancient customs among many of the savage and semi-civilized peoples gave the woman, as well as the husband the right to sever unsatisfactory marriage trials. In Madagascar a wife can divorce herself for several causes and this is true of many of the lower races. Among the Columbians, according to Bancroft, either party can dissolve the tie at will. All that is necessary for a Bonak wife to do is to leave her husband and he has no further claim upon her. Among the Navajoes, when a woman marries she becomes "free," and may leave her husband for any sufficient cause.

In the Hawaiian Islands "a man and a woman live together as long as they please and may at any time separate and make choice of other partners." In Tahiti and New Guinea marriage can be dissolved whenever either of the parties desires it. Among the Shons, Coloquohn says "should the husband take to drinking or otherwise misconducting himself, the woman has the right to turn him adrift and to retain all the goods and money of the partnership." In Burmah, if one of the parties is unwilling to separate, the other is free to go, providing all the property except the clothes to wear is left behind. The Iruas custom gives the woman the right to decide whether the matrimonial union is to be maintained. According to Kandh custom, a wife can return to her father's house within six months after marriage, and if childless she can at any time quit her husband.

In Eastern Central Africa if the husband neglects to sew his wife's clothes she may leave him, and among the Garonganze a wife may leave her husband any time she cares to do so.

Among the more advanced nations the wife, as in ancient Mexico, could sue for separation as well as the husband. In Guatemala the wife could end the matrimonial venture upon even as slight grounds as could the husband. China refuses the wife a legal separation, but the Talmudic law of the Hebrews gave her certain causes upon which she could secure divorce. The ancient Hindus and Teutons would allow the wife to leave her husband only in certain exceptional circumstances, but among the Saxons and Danes in England, according to Westermarck, marriage might be dissolved at the pleasure of either party, the wife, however, being obliged to return the price paid for her if she left her husband without his consent. In most of the Christian states of Europe to-day the wife is given the same rights in divorce as her husband, but in England other charges in addition to infidelity must be proved against the husband, and similar conditions are found in Italy, Spain and Portugal.

Among many savage tribes it is the custom to cast off the first wife when she becomes old and ugly. This is true of the Tahitians. When an Aleut wife "ceases to possess attractions of value in the eyes of her husband she is sent back to her friends." A Malay frequently turns away his wife as soon as she becomes ugly from hard work and maternal cares. The Dyak husband dismisses his helpmeet when she is too lazy or too weak to work, and among the Singhalese sickness is a common reason for the repudiation of a wife.

But there is another side to the problem. Many of the lower races view marriage as a practically indissoluble relation to be ended only by death. The Greenlanders, seldom repudiate wives who have children. Among the Naudowessies divorce is remarkably rare. The Iriquois, in ancient times, regarded separation discreditable to both man and woman. Among the Patagonians marriage is for a life time. In Tonga more than half the married women are parted from their husbands.

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CURRENT SOCIAL EVENTS

The Monday Club's fair at the Reed Building yesterday was thoroughly enjoyable and wholly successful and reflected happily upon its managers in every way.

A pleasant informal session of the Eastern Star was held at the lodge-room on Tuesday afternoon last, when special honors were paid to Past Matron Barbara Hartwig, the expression of good will being emphasized by the bestowal of a beautiful bowl and pitcher of cut-glass as a testimonial of the respect and affection in which she is held by her fraters and friends in the order and out of it. Music and refreshments contributed to the further pleasures of the session; the occasion being the early departure of the lady for her new home in the Golden State.

On Friday afternoon a very pleasant surprise was given Mrs. Schofield at

her home, 9th and Duane streets. The afternoon was spent in quilting, after which Mrs. Schofield spread a large basket, brought by the ladies and there found any amount of good things to eat. Those present were Mrs. J. Wylard, Mrs. Chas. Burlingame, Mrs. L. Moore, Mrs. Frank Donnerberg, Mrs. Harvey Goodall, Little Miss Clover Burlingame and Master Georgie Goodall.

Mrs. H. Goodall entertained the Clover Club on Tuesday afternoon at her home on Duane street. The parlors were beautifully decorated with potted plants and ferns. After the regular order of business a dainty lunch was served. The center-piece on the table was a beautiful bouquet of Brides Roses.

One of the events of the forthcoming week will be the pipe-organ recital by Prof. Fred Goodrich of Portland,

on Tuesday night, next, at the First Lutheran church; Miss Maja Fredrickson assisting. Art events of this character appeal to the culture of Astoria's nicest people always.

AN APT SUGGESTION.

"Astoria, Dec. 8, 1906.

"To the Editor:

"An article was published in the Budget of Friday evening signed 'Law Abiding Citizen.' I have no desire to argue a matter with Mr. Law Abiding Citizen or anyone else, unless they have the courage to sign their names to their articles. But if Mr. L. A. C. will make his identity known, I will take the argument up at any time.

"CHAS. H. ABERCROMBIE."

Up the River—Thos. Quinn arrived in the city yesterday from up river points and reports considerable damage done to log booms and wharves, particularly along the north side of the river between Stella and Skamokawa, during the recent storm. Several log rafts went adrift, but were picked up with very little loss.

Big December Bargains

At Astoria's Great Shopping Center.

You must not fail to read this ad. and then come and see the goods.

\$1.00 Dress Goods 81c.

All wool Panamas in 50 52 and 54-inch widths, the best wearing fabric made for walking suits, etc. \$1.50 grade for \$1.19; \$1.25 grade for 98c, and the \$1.00 grade for 81c.

Silk Department.

For this week we offer 2,800 yards of all silk Japs, for linings and fancy work; come in 24 and 25 inch widths; very special, the yard at..... 25c

Crepe De Chines for Du Barry Scarfs.

This is the favorite fabric for these faddish scarfs, and we have the most complete assortment possible, at, the yard.....\$1.00, \$1.25 and \$1.50

Women's \$1 Underwear 85c

White or natural Merino pants and vests, medium weight goods, sells regularly for \$1.00 the garment, special for this week only at 85c

Women's Black Cashmere Hose, for this week only at 25c

Women's fine ribbed Cashmere Hose for this week only at 40c

Full assortment of Fleischner's Knitting Yarn..... 25c skein

Big selection of Challis Gingham and Calicoes..... 4c the yard

The best assortment of Ladies' and Children's cloaks and suits in Astoria, from \$2.50 up to \$35.00 each

Astoria Agents for Royal Worcester Corsets.

Buy "someone" a Fur Scarf or set of Women's velvet Costumes. Reduced one fourth.

Special Lace Sale

Mechlin and Maltese Laces in complete sets; splendid for trimming so many of the little things you'll be making for pretty Christmas gifts, priced like this:

1/4-inch width, per yard.....3c
3/8-inch width for, per yard, 12 and 15c
1-inch width, yard....15c, 18c and 20c

Mechline Laces and Insertions, especially suitable for the trimming of fine kerchiefs, waists or any article that needs the application of filmy, foamy laces.

See These Kerchiefs

All Linen Kerchiefs with embroidered and hemstitched edges 15c, 25c, 35c and up from50c

Initial Kerchiefs of pure linen, Richardson's make, hemstitched; 25c each, or a box of six for.....\$1.25

Fine Initial Kerchiefs, hemstitched, 35c grade, box of six for.....\$1.50

Hemstitched Handkerchiefs, pure linen, special values at 35c, 25c, 20c, 17c, 15c, 12 1/2c and.....10c

Colored Check Kerchiefs, the latest fad in women's handkerchiefs, splendid assortment, special values at each40c

Elastic Belts

That's the newest and these are among the best; made in the nail-studded effects, come in white, black or colored and selling up from.....\$1.25

Scarfs and Boas—of Ostrich feathers, in black, white or colors, every one a special value; prices up from \$15.00

Ribbon Specials

Miles and miles of Ribbon at this great Ribbon store. Holiday time calls for ribbon for so many things. You'd better come here today bent on ribbon buying.

No. 1, all silk Ribbon, per yard....2c

Or the piece of 10 yards for....18c

No. 1 1/2 Ribbon, all silk, the yard....3c

Or the piece of 10 yards for....25c

No. 2 Ribbon, all silk, the yard for 3 1/2c

Or the piece of 10 yards for....30c

THE A. DUNBAR CO.

Astoria's Foremost Dry Goods, Suit and Silk House.

(Continued on Page 12.)