

How a Woman Saves a City's Babies?



Dr. S. Josephine Baker, Director of Child Hygiene, New York Department of Health.

The Hygienic Campaign Conducted in New York by Dr. S. Josephine Baker, Who Has Reduced the Mortality Rolls by 1200 a Year

BROADLY speaking, a baby must be saved before it is born if infant mortality is to be reduced to a minimum. Upon this principle a woman has been working in New York for several years, with the result that, from January 1 to November 1, 1911, there were 1324 fewer deaths of babies under one year than there had been for the same period of 1910.

This year, by the way, the record is 300 under the mortality of 1911, for the first six months.

Preventive measures will, therefore, have saved somewhere around 3000 little lives in two years if the present ratio is maintained.

All this has been accomplished through the organization of a division of child hygiene of the department of health, at the head of which is Dr. S. Josephine Baker, who has engaged in a campaign of life saving with as much precision, as great a regard for thoroughness and efficiency of organization, as would be exhibited by a general in the field.

The bureau of which she is at the head is the first "established under municipal control to deal with the supervision of the health of children from birth to the legal working age," and the system she has developed is entirely her own. It begins with the education of the mother, and, once a child is born, it aims to avert disease, rather than to cure it.

It is, perhaps, in accordance with the trend of the times that, as men heretofore have taken the lead in destroying life, a woman should now take the lead in saving it.

BY VIRTUE of her position, which makes her the guardian of the health of all the children of the greatest city of the country, and involves the responsibility for the expenditure of more than half a million dollars yearly, Doctor Baker easily takes first place in the work of human reclamation. The first of her sex to be treated with a position of such importance, she has done much to prove that the feminine hand has long been needed in this branch of civic work.

And it is notable that her success in New York has been followed by the organization of a similar department by the national government, with Miss Julia C. Lathrop as its head.

In Doctor Baker's case, promotion came as the reward of efficiency, demonstrated while a medical inspector in the department of health. Still quite a young woman, she is thoroughly feminine, light of hair and eyes and soft of voice. Judging from her personality, one might say that much of her success has come from a broad and deep sympathy with those she has aided.

Perhaps the most striking measure Doctor Baker adopted was the supervision, by competent nurses and physicians, of babies born in districts where they were not likely to receive efficient care.

"We cannot hope to cover the entire city," said Doctor Baker, recently, "so we naturally concentrate our efforts on those sections where the mortality is greatest, in the congested districts of the boroughs of Manhattan and Brooklyn, and in some sections of Long Island, principally.

WORKS FROM BIRTH REPORTS

"The birth reports are consulted every day, and a nurse is sent to any home in which there is a possibility that assistance may be needed. Last year from May 1 to September 15, there were 16,987 babies under the supervision of these district nurses, with the result that there were only 237 deaths, or a mortality of 1.4 per cent."

Naturally, as this system has proved so eminently satisfactory, it is being continued this year, with an increase from 157 to 163 in the nursing staff, in order that a greater amount of work may be done.



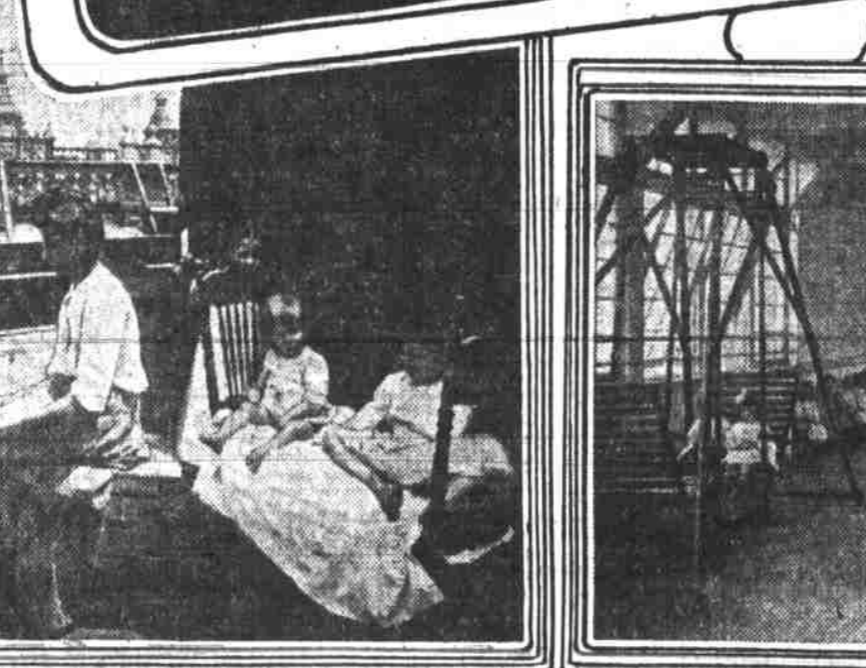
Illustration of a woman and child.



The Milk Line



BOARD HEALTH DOCTOR FREE CLINIC SICK BABIES



Free Clinic for Babies.



A Day Nursery in Tenement District



In the Shade of a City Roof

made in the death rate, as the above table shows, it indicates, first, that the problem of child saving is in a fair way of solution; and secondly, it calls up the question of cost, which is always of great weight with municipalities when any humanitarian project is under consideration. In this case, the cost cannot be considered prohibitive, amounting to about 50 cents per month each for the more than 16,000 babies. A physician was assigned to every two or three nurses, and held daily consultations with them. All babies were visited at least once in ten days, and those who needed attention were seen oftener. The ill and delicate children were under the direct supervision of the physicians, and a case record of each was kept at the headquarters of the division.

hood; we must educate them to the observance of hygienic laws.

"If we could secure cleanliness and ventilation in all homes, the necessity for the greater part of our work would be obviated. Contagious diseases, for instance, start to increase in the fall, when people begin to close their windows, and reach their maximum during the coldest months, when fresh air is almost entirely excluded from many dwellings. In the spring, when the windows begin to open, there is a corresponding decrease, and during the summer months, when windows, almost universally, are open, the number of contagious diseases is extremely small.

"In order that women generally shall be brought to appreciate how necessary it is to nurse their children themselves, and to obey simple hygienic laws, we greatly elaborated our educational work last year by holding conferences with mothers on recreation in parks, in playgrounds, vacation centers and at the offices of charity organization societies. A physician and a trained nurse gave lectures and demonstrations, and this work has been continued, also, during the winter, with gratifying success.

"Along the same lines, but going still further back in preparation of women for motherhood, we have begun to form 'Little Mothers' Leagues,' with 239 organizations and an enrollment of 17,050. Lectures on the care of babies have been given in the public schools to girls over 12, and they have served to stimulate interest in the leagues.

"I have great faith in what may be accomplished through these leagues, because we can never reduce infant mortality to a minimum until all mothers are thoroughly educated and prepared for their duties. So far there have been given just a few of the distinctive lines upon which Doctor Baker and her several hundreds of doctors, nurses and other assistants have been working. But, as she herself has pointed out in a recent paper, no one line of endeavor will obviate the evils of a complex situation. "In stating what I believe to be the principles involved in the reduction of infant mortality," she wrote, "I shall go back of the more concrete forms and mention rather those broad forces which must be studied and applied to the fullest extent before we can definitely and permanently lower the death rate.

"First and foremost, we need public opinion, the awakening of civic consciousness, to view clearly the paradoxical situation of increasing our population by immigration, while allowing our native born to die; stimulation of the people to demand that all civic forces shall be so adjusted and co-ordinated that the babies may be allowed to live, instead of forced into illness and doomed to death."

The specific principles upon which Doctor Baker has been working, as given in the same article, are as follows:

- 1. The study of the problem of the institution baby. During this year up to October 1, 42 per cent of all deaths of babies under 1 year in the borough of Manhattan have occurred in institutions, the founding babies furnished the greater proportion.
- 2. A supply of milk safe for infant feeding at a price within the reach of the majority of our people. The relative value of raw and pasteurized milk for infant feeding still seems an open question. Quotation cannot take the place of purity, but the matter is economic and purity seems beyond our reach at the price we can pay.
- 3. The broadening of courses in pediatrics in our medical colleges, so that they may assume the importance that is their due and assure to every physician a thorough knowledge of infant hygiene and care.
- 4. The interest and attention of social students and workers and of philanthropists, in meeting individual family needs and adjusting economic conditions.
- 5. The proper substitute feeding, and how she may take advantage of and apply the essential methods of hygienic baby care.
- 6. The understanding of the immediate causes of infant mortality.

All of these principles have been applied in part, with results that are worthy of attention. In the thirty-year period from 1880 to 1910 the changes in the infant death rate in New York city have been as in the accompanying table.

Deaths of Children Under 1 Year of Age for the Years 1880 and 1910, With Rates per 1000 Infants Living at That Age	
Year	Rate per 1000
1880	100.0
1890	85.0
1900	70.0
1910	55.0

When a reduction of more than 50 per cent is



Illustration of a woman and child.



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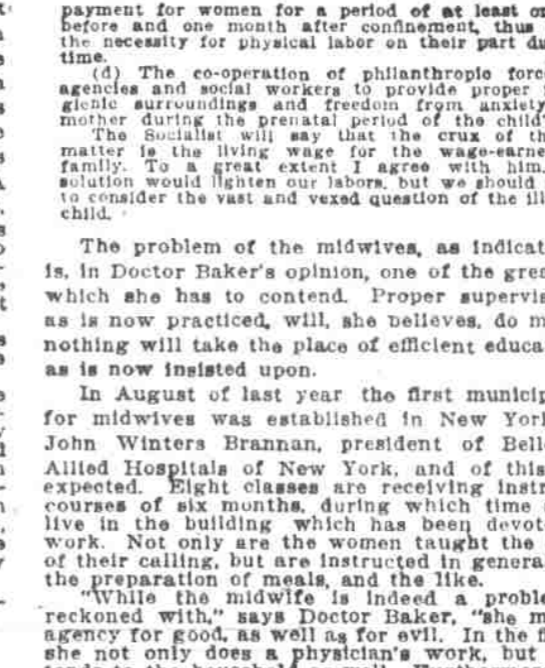


Illustration of a woman and child.

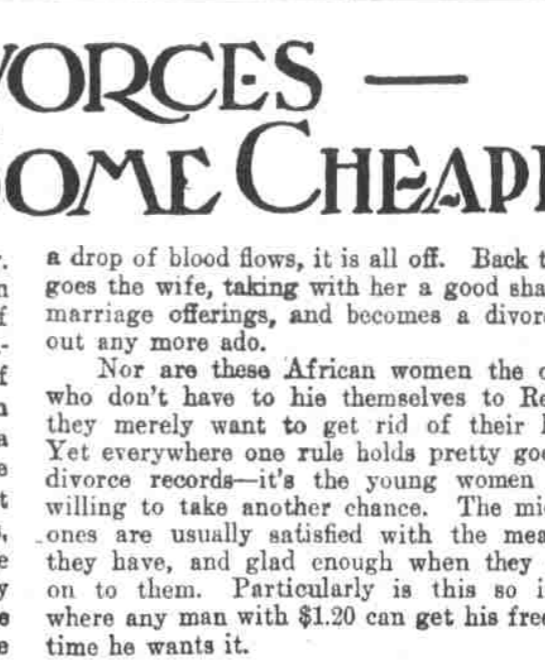


Illustration of a woman and child.

payment for women for a period of at least one month before and one month after confinement, thus obviating the necessity for physical labor on their part during this time.

(d) The co-operation of philanthropic forces, relief agencies and social workers to provide proper food, hygienic surroundings and freedom from anxiety for the mother during the prenatal period, the child's life.



Illustration of a woman and child.

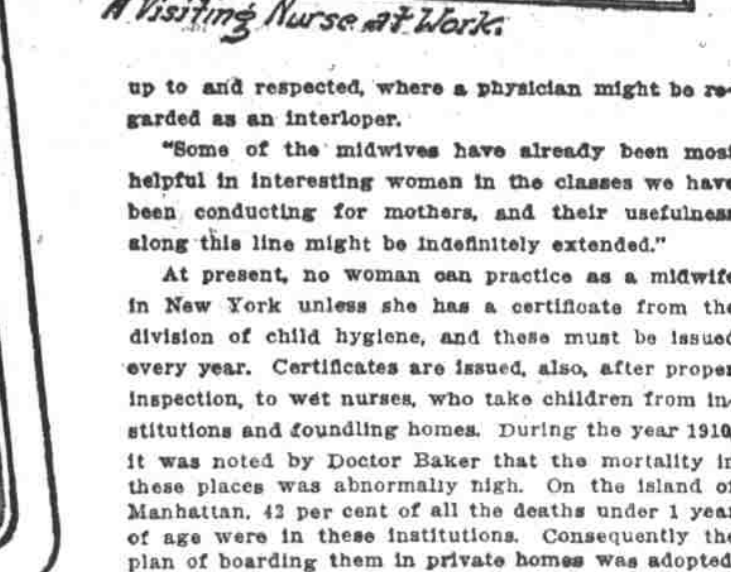


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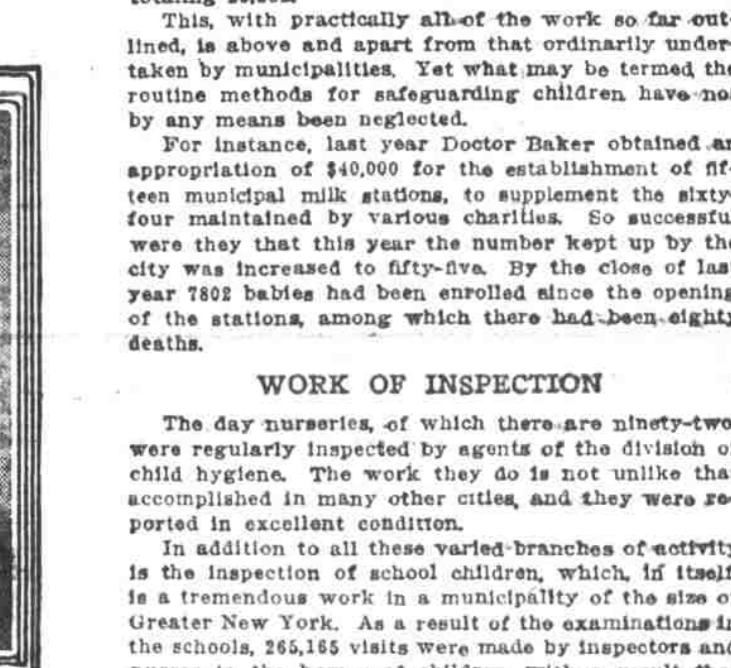


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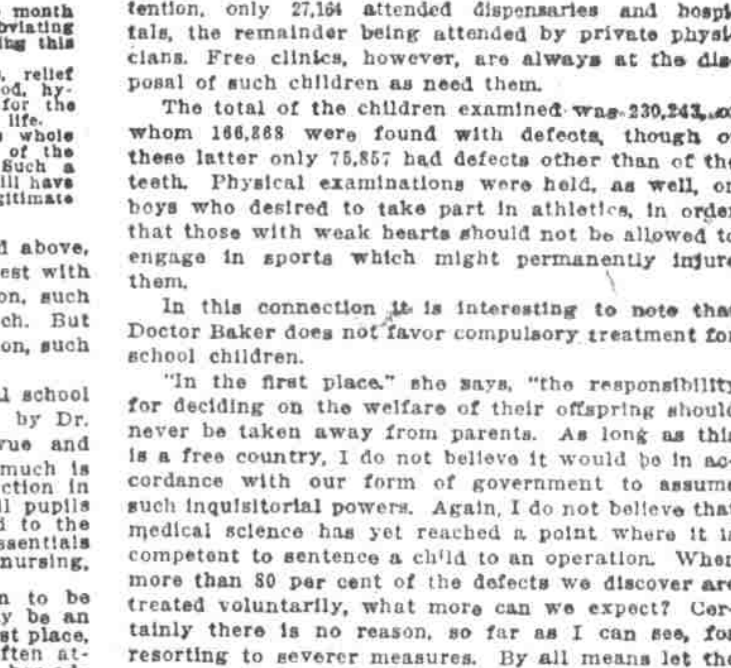


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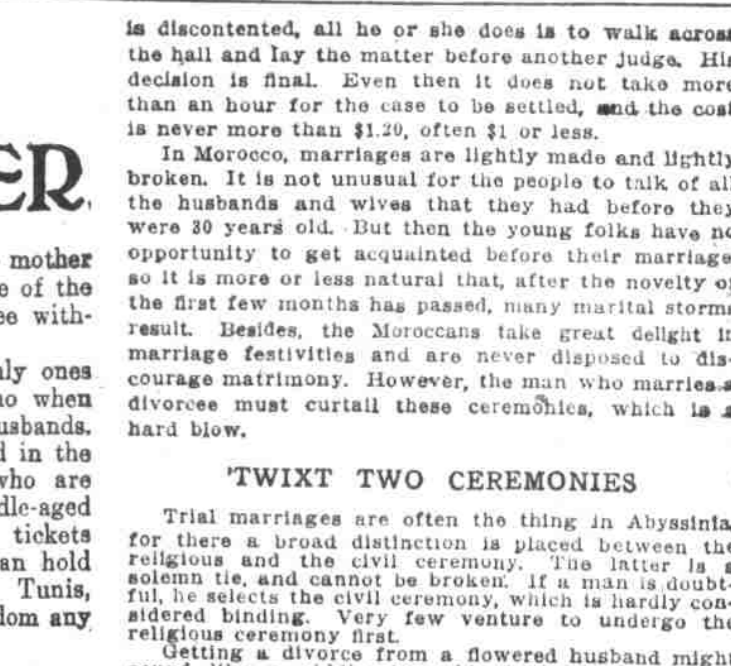


Illustration of a woman and child.

up to and respected, where a physician might be regarded as an interloper.

"Some of the midwives have already been most helpful in interesting women in the classes we have been conducting for mothers, and their usefulness along this line might be indefinitely extended."

At present, no woman can practice as a midwife in New York unless she has a certificate from the division of child hygiene, and these must be issued every year. Certificates are issued, also, after proper inspection, to wet nurses, who take children from institutions and founding homes. During the year 1910, it was noted by Doctor Baker that the mortality in these places was abnormally high. On the island of Manhattan, 43 per cent of all the deaths under 1 year of age were in these institutions. Consequently the plan of boarding them in private homes was adopted. Last year certificates were granted to 4010 foster mothers, and the homes were visited frequently, the reinspections, to insure proper care of the infants, totaling 29,283.

This, with practically all of the work so far outlined, is above and apart from that ordinarily undertaken by municipalities. Yet what may be termed the routine methods for safeguarding children have not by any means been neglected.

For instance, last year Doctor Baker obtained an appropriation of \$40,000 for the establishment of fifteen municipal milk stations, to supplement the sixty-four maintained by various charities. So successful were they that this year the number kept up by the city was increased to fifty-five. By the close of last year 7802 babies had been enrolled since the opening of the stations, among which there had been eighty deaths.

WORK OF INSPECTION

The day nurseries, of which there are ninety-two, were regularly inspected by agents of the division of child hygiene. The work they do is not unlike that accomplished in many other cities, and they were reported in excellent condition.

In addition to all these varied branches of activity is the inspection of school children, which, if itself, is a tremendous work in a municipality of the size of Greater New York. As a result of the examinations in the schools, 265,185 visits were made by inspectors and nurses to the homes of children, with a result that Dr. Baker was able to report that 88 per cent of all the defects discovered had been treated.

Of a total of the 65,160 children who received attention, only 27,104 attended dispensaries and hospitals, the remainder being attended by private physicians. Free clinics, however, are always at the disposal of such children as need them.

The total of the children examined was 230,243, of whom 166,888 were found with defects, though of these latter only 75,857 had defects other than of the teeth. Physical examinations were held, as well, on boys who desired to take part in athletics, in order that those with weak hearts should not be allowed to engage in sports which might permanently injure them.

In this connection it is interesting to note that Doctor Baker does not favor compulsory treatment for school children.

"In the first place," she says, "the responsibility for deciding on the welfare of their offspring should never be taken away from parents. As long as this is a free country, I do not believe it would be in accordance with our form of government to assume such inquisitorial powers. Again, I do not believe that medical science has yet reached a point where it is competent to sentence a child to an operation. When more than 80 per cent of the defects we discover are treated voluntarily, what more can we expect? Certainly there is no reason, so far as I can see, for resorting to severer means, by all means let the parents decide, because it is only through the cooperation of the parents that we can hope to reduce the ill of childhood."

DOLLAR DIVORCES — AND SOME CHEAPER.

DOLLAR divorces! Reno papers, please copy. Cut-rate separations, marked down severances of matrimony, bargain sales of single bliss—what a wonderful lot of inducements might be offered to mismatched tourists if Nevada could appropriate some of the African statutes! For instance, the women of the Ingawla tribe who are tired of their husbands have the Reno women backed off the map. They do not have to worry for six months, a year or two years, held in an onerous marital leash until a judge condescends to sign a decree. Instead, they simply nag and nag their husbands until they induce the irate gentlemen to give them a good beating. Once

the Arabs and the Moors probably hold the divorce record. In Sudan there are Arab men who have been married forty or fifty times within ten years. The female of the species cannot boast of such record. The best they are usually able to do is twenty matches in a decade. This is because the customs and conventionalities decree that a divorced wife to startle Sudanese society by being so previous. But after her period of grass widowhood has expired, she can go and do it again without fear of criticism.

In the Barbary states a wife can get a divorce if she finds that hubby had another sweetheart before he wooed her. That is her only salvation if she tires of her better half, unless she can prove that he has beaten her without sufficient provocation, or that he had not given her proper food, clothing or shelter. And this is pretty hard for her to do, for the judge might agree with the husband that she deserved the beating and that the food and clothing that he gave her were good enough for her.

On the other hand, it is the easiest thing in the world for an Arab of the same region to cast aside

his wife in favor of another. And then the first one cannot remarry, unless she returns to him the money that he paid when he bought her. If she loses her good looks or is untidy in her dress, or if he grows tired of her for some reason or another, all he has to do is to say, "Woman, get thee hence; take thy goods and go." And she must. Divorce courts or fees do not have to be contended with.

In and about Tunis it is a different story. For there one will find a divorce court, where the men can get rid of their wives for the grand total sum of \$1.20. And the women seldom have any say in the matter, it being estimated that nine divorces out of every ten applied for are granted.

There is a wonderful scene in this majestic hall of justice in Tunis, presenting a picture which may some day win a prize for some energetic and ambitious artist. In this hall, the principal furnishings of which are beautiful eastern rugs and draperies, there is a striking contrast in the appearances presented by the gray-bearded judges in green robes and gold turbans, the husbands—also in turbans, the lawyers in tarbooshes, and the wives, closely veiled and hooded, herded like so many sheep behind an iron grill. These latter take no part in the proceedings, leaving their interests in the hands of an advocate.

After the judge gives his decision, which is generally in favor of the husband, and one of the other

is discontented, all he or she does is to walk across the hall and lay the matter before another judge. His decision is final. Even then it does not take more than an hour for the case to be settled, and the cost is never more than \$1.20, often \$1 or less.

In Morocco, marriages are lightly made and lightly broken. It is not unusual for the people to talk of all the husbands and wives that they had before they were 30 years old. But then the young folks have no opportunity to get acquainted before their marriage, so it is more or less natural that, after the novelty of the first few months has passed, many marital storms result. Besides, the Moroccans take great delight in marriage festivities and are never disposed to discourage matrimony. However, the man who marries a divorcee must curtail these ceremonies, which is a hard blow.

TWIXT TWO CEREMONIES

Trial marriages are often the thing in Abyssinia, for there a broad distinction is placed between the religious and the civil ceremony. The latter is a solemn tie, and cannot be broken. If a man is doubtful, he selects the civil ceremony, which is hardly considered binding. Very few venture to undergo the religious ceremony.

Getting a divorce from a flowered husband might sound like a riddle, but this is done among the Khasa, Kumbis and Wamasas. For a girl to marry in India for the first time a man who has not great wealth, if she belongs to a high caste or class, is considered a crime; but, as in many other places, wealthy men cannot be found every day, so to settle the matter the girl is married to a bunch of flowers, and she divorces herself by throwing her beautiful bouquet in a well or hiding it somewhere, that it won't be easily found. Then it is easier for her to contract a marriage, and she will not have to remain an old maid the rest of her days. Other girls of this same tribe marry men who already have helpmates, with the understanding that they will divorce them. Then cheaper ceremonies are performed without the expense and fuss that must accompany first marriages.

In South Africa the men also have the advantage over the wives, that they have in many cases bought for pigs and goats. The Bushmen, for instance, can divorce their wives at their pleasure, but the discarded one cannot marry. If she should take a fancy to another, her former lord and master can challenge him to a duel, and she humbly follows the conqueror.

The Bushmen still observe an ancient custom that a man must not look his bride in the face, but must visit her in the dark. In other tribes, especially among the Hottentots, the Fiji Islanders and the Circassians, it is almost considered a crime for a man to be seen with his wife.