

THE STORY THE DIVORCE COURT RECORDS TELL

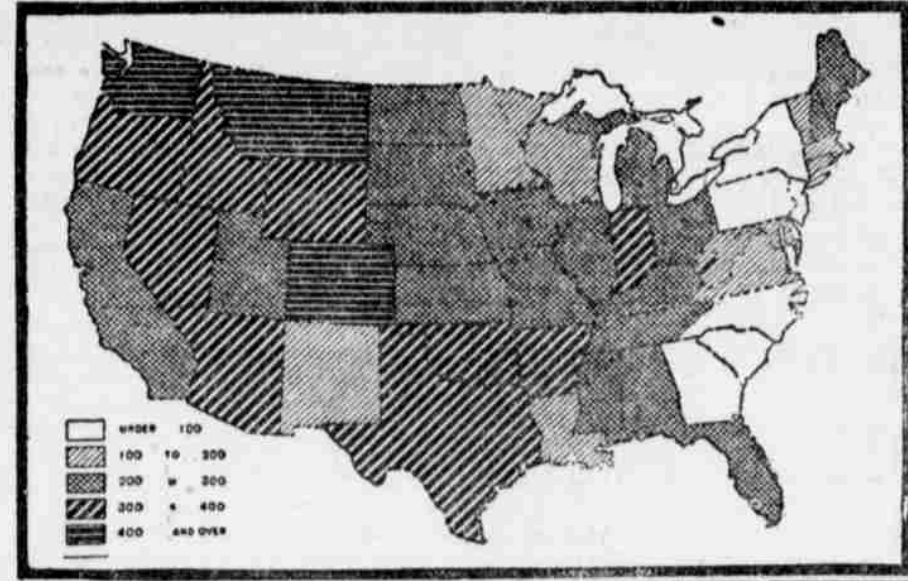
Facts That Indicate Why It Is That Americans Are Earning Distinction for Being the Greatest Nation of Home-Breakers and Home-Makers in the World.



WHATEVER else America may be doing, it is not dying. Wherever the tendency toward marriage almost gives promise of robbing the cradle to fill the cradle, there does vitally abound. Nor can red corpuscles be said to be lacking in the blood of those who after marriage want to rid themselves of the obligations that they assumed at the altar.

Such are the conditions that the census bureau, after a four years' investigation, has found in America. Only Hungary leads the United States in the percentage of marriages to marriageable population. But, on the other hand, no country even approaches America in its tendency to burst into the divorce court and smash the domestic relation over the Judge's bench. Japan was outdoing us in 1898, when the last Japanese census was taken, but since then the mikado, the elder statesmen, and a few others have promulgated some new divorce laws that have somewhat strangled the Japanese desire to emulate the household manners of their big neighbors across the Pacific.

Yet the Japanese at their worst probably never approached Americans in their tendency toward the divorce courts. Before a Japanese became in a mood where he could do much fighting he cut the domestic ribbons and set himself free—for divorce in his country was easy. But in this country, where, relatively, a divorce is difficult to obtain, the report of the census bureau not only shows an enormous amount of cruelty and a great increase of cruelty, but it shows



Average Annual Number of Divorces Per 1000 Married Population for States and Territories 1900.

that women are increasing in cruelty more rapidly than men. Indeed, it is an astounding fact that the cruelty of women toward their husbands showed a greater increase during the 20-year period ending in 1906 than any other cause for divorce, the gain being 1,609 per cent.

Marriage and Divorce.

Perhaps the strangest feature of the report is the fact that it shows an unparalleled marriage ratio side by side with an unparalleled divorce ratio. Out in Indian Territory the preachers must almost have to fight them off—the would-be wedded—or go short of sleep. In matrimony Indian Territory leads the world. Even Hungary, with its ratio of 456 marriages every year to each 10,000 of marriageable population, is made to look like quite a cold and clammy community. Indian Territory's ratio is 555. The ratio of the United States is only 356.

If Arkansas had held another county fair in 1906 probably it would have beaten Indian Territory at that. Arkansas, with a ratio of 554, came just one short of tying the leader.

Texas, Florida, Oklahoma, Mississippi, Alabama, Utah and Georgia follow in the order named, and the ratio of Georgia is 422. Even in Nevada the tendency toward marriage is greater than the average tendency of the United States. Nevada's ratio is 389. In fact, one has to go down the list to Kansas, the fifteenth in line, before he gets to a state, the people of which exhibit what might be called normal matrimonial proclivities. Kansas, with a ratio of 358, is one above the average for the country.

Turning to what might be called subnormal communities, the people of Connecticut, with a ratio of 232, are really at the bottom of the list. California is in last place in the statistics, but Californians are actually not as frigid as they are tabulated. The fire that followed the great California earthquake destroyed so many rec-

ords that nobody knows exactly what is going on in the marriage and divorce circles of the Golden State. But Connecticut is preceded, in the order named, by Delaware, Montana, Massachusetts, Wyoming, Rhode Island and Pennsylvania. Pennsylvania, though it contains the "City of Homes," has a ratio of only 255, while New York stands only 269. In other words, a resident of Indian Territory is almost twice as likely to marry, provided he has not already done so, as if he lived in New York.

In South Central States.

Not only that, the tendency to marry seems to flourish in certain groups of states and to wane in certain other groups. The south central states lead the list with a ratio of 426; the south Atlantic with 350 come next, while the north central, the western, and the north Atlantic groups follow in the order named. From all of which it appears that while one may go west for wealth, he should go south if he is having difficulty in finding a matrimonial mate where he is.

Yet, exceeding, as we do, the marriage ratios of all the world except Hungary, we are barely holding our own. Our ratio for the ten-year period ending in 1905 was 357. Our ratio for the ten-year period ending in 1895 was 356.

But if the tendency toward marriage shows signs of having reached its maximum, no such indication is apparent with regard to divorce. In that field we are bounding along, not only at prodigious speed, but at a terrifically increasing pace. The manner in which our population increases is the wonder of the world, but it is dwarfed by the increase of our tendency to break the homes we have

made. In 1867, there were granted in this country 9,337 divorces; in 1906, 72,062. Population increased about 110 per cent.; divorce increased more than 700 per cent. Furthermore, the increase between 1890 and 1900 was greater than that of any other decade since 1870. The increase of divorce exceeded the increase of population more than 300 per cent.

Putting it in still another way, in 1870 28 divorces were granted to every 100,000 of population; in 1900, 73 divorces were granted to every 100,000 of population.

Figures for Divorces.

Only once during the last 40 years has the number of divorces actually shown a decrease. That was in 1884, when there was a decline of 204 over the number granted during the preceding year. In 1870, 1894 and 1902 there was a decline in the rate, though an increase in the number. Doubtless there was also a decline in 1908, though the figures have not been compiled. The reason for believing there was a decline last year is that there was a panic in 1907. Panics invariably check the tendency toward increased divorce. When times are hard people forget their domestic troubles for a time and occupy their minds with the problem of how to get a living. As soon as times improve the rate usually bounds upward with a rapidity that indicates that nothing has been forgotten or forgiven—or nothing learned. Accumulated grievances are worked off in the divorce court, and the tide sweeps on more rapidly than before.

Where in the United States would one naturally expect to find the greatest tendency toward divorce? In what state? Not one person in a hundred could guess right if he were given a dozen chances.

Washington is the state. Far from the stress of modern industrial life; away across the country where the people, for the most part, are engaged in agricultural pursuits—there 519

couples are annually divorced to every 100,000 of married population. The rate for the whole country is 200.

Washington is followed in the order named, by Montana, Colorado, Arkansas, Texas, Oregon and Wyoming. Wyoming has an exceedingly low marriage rate and a very high divorce rate. In this respect it is unique. But in general it will have been observed that while one is most likely to be married if he live in the south, he is most likely to be divorced if he live in the west.

New York's Low Record.

New York's divorce rate, as might naturally be expected, is low. New York stands forty-seventh in the list of 50 states and territories, with a ratio of 69. New Jersey's ratio is the same. Connecticut is thirty-ninth, with a ratio of 130, while in Pennsylvania 100,000 married couples are required to produce 94 divorces in a year.

Coming down to causes, we find that most men who obtain divorces assign as their grievance the desertion of their wives, and that most women give the same reason. It also appears that women are more likely to desert than men. Of the divorces granted to men 49.4 per cent. were for desertion. The divorces granted to women because of the desertion of their husbands amounted to 33.6 per cent. of the whole number of divorces that were granted to women.

Cruelty comes second as a cause

first place as an increased cause with a jump of 1,331.4 per cent., which, barring the Utah gentlemen, goes entirely to women.

Drunkenness comes second as an increased cause, with a general increase of 685.2 per cent. The drunkenness of husbands increased 699.9 per cent.; the drunkenness of wives 554.5 per cent.

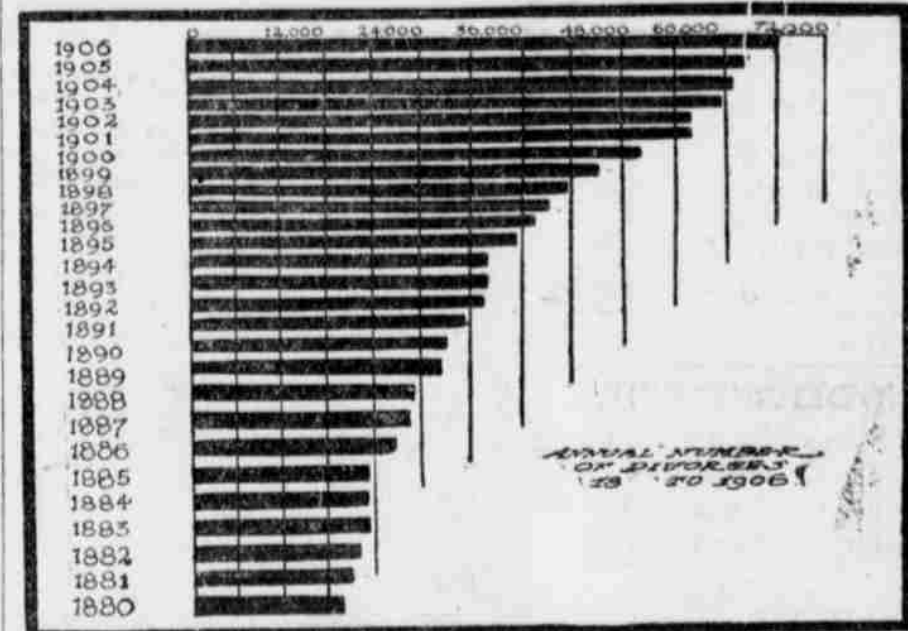
Desertion ranks third as an increased cause, with an increase of 569.8 per cent., while infidelity has increased the least of all—only 270.8 per cent.

Here, again, the census figures play tricks. Infidelity among women is represented to be increasing more rapidly than infidelity among men. For women an increase is shown of 299.8 per cent.; for men 237.1 per cent.

Figures as to Suicide Rate.

Americans, it would seem, take divorce more easily than do some others. Over in Europe the fact has been ascertained that the suicide rate is abnormally high among those who have been separated from their mates by due process of law, rather than by death. It is not so in this country. On the face of the returns one is likely to have lived longer if he has been divorced than he is if the death of the one to whom he was married has left him alone. The suicide rate for the widowed is 22 to each 100,000 of population; of the divorced, 30.

The director of the census says that



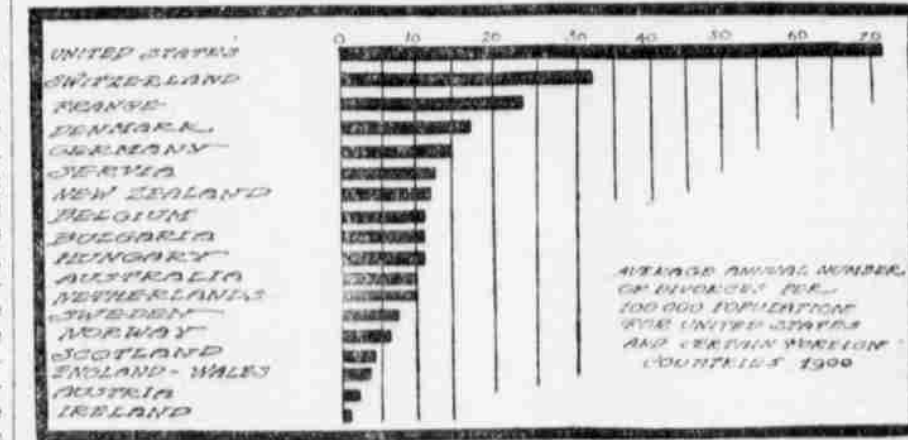
and, as in the preceding cause, it applies heavily both to men and women. Of the divorces granted to men 10.5 per cent. were for the cruelty of their wives. Of the divorces granted to women 27.5 per cent. were for the cruelty of their husbands.

In the case of both men and women infidelity is the third cause in relative importance. On the bare face of the census figures it would appear that women are more likely to be untrue to their husbands than men are to be untrue to their wives, since only ten per cent. of the divorces granted to women were for the infidelity of their husbands, while 28.7 per cent. of the divorces granted to men were for the infidelity of their wives. But, of course, it is not true that women sin more than men in this respect. What is true is that women who thus err are more frequently found out and less frequently forgiven. And a poor old census bureau is not, of course, expected to tabulate such a fact as this, because the figures to sustain the fact cannot be obtained.

Laid to Drunkenness.

Drunkenness comes forward as the fourth cause, but it comes forward shaky in its legs and emaciated in form. Only 3.4 per cent. of all the divorces are granted because of habits formed around hot stoves in the bar-room, and as between the sexes most of the blame, of course, goes to the men. Only 1.1 per cent. of the divorces granted to men were for the drunkenness of their wives, while 5.3 per cent. of the divorces granted to women were for the drunkenness of their husbands.

In relative importance, neglect to provide is the fifth cause, this reason having been assigned in 3.7 per cent. of the divorces granted. In alleging this grievance women would have had a monopoly had it not been for six gentlemen in Utah who were actually granted divorces because



their wives did not provide them with the necessary clothing, shelter and nourishment.

Combinations of the five preceding causes were responsible for 9.4 per cent. of the divorces, and other grievances, not here enumerated, caused the other 6.1 per cent.

Some interesting facts were also discovered with regard to the relative speeds at which the various causes for divorce are increasing.

In the case of women cruelty heads the list with an increase in 40 years of 1,609.8 per cent. In the case of men cruelty shows an increase of 959.3 per cent. Cruelty, in fact, holds first place among increased causes in both sexes with a climb of 1,035.3 per cent. But on the whole, neglect to provide takes

even these figures probably give only an imperfect idea of the relative longevity of those who have voluntarily sundered the matrimonial tie, since it is reasonable to believe, so he declares, that the real suicide ratio of divorced persons is less than 20. But what's the difference? Anyone who is determined to commit suicide will probably do so, anyway, even if he might be reconciled to life by yielding up the price of a decree.

In the United States 73 divorces are annually granted to every 100,000 of population. To the same number of persons Ireland annually grants less than one, England two, Italy three, Austria one, Scotland four, Germany 15, France 23, Switzerland 32 and Japan 215. As a matter of fact, the divorce ratio in Japan is probably not now as high as our own. The ratio of 215 was revealed by the Japanese census of 1898, since which the divorce laws of the country have been made more stringent. Switzerland, with a ratio of 32, comes next to us. In the long gap between Switzerland's 32 and our 73 there is no competitor.

The question now arises. If the United States does not like so high a divorce rate what is it going to do about it?

There was a time when it was believed that if we had uniform divorce laws the question would be settled. It was the opinion of those who favored this method that a large number of persons took up temporary residences in lax divorce law states for the purpose of obtaining decrees that they could not get at home.

But the present investigation disproves this theory by showing that the proportion of divorces granted to non-residents in any state is insignificant. Comment is general when some rich person goes to Nevada, throws up a couple of boards as a home, plants a geranium in front of them, and settles down to attain a

legal residence with which to obtain a divorce. But such a person counts only one in the statistics—and there are not many such persons.

South Carolina prohibits divorce—will not grant one for any cause. But there are many desertions in South Carolina—and does anyone believe there is more domestic happiness in South Carolina than anywhere else?

Women seem to be getting their courage back. Their increased cruelty heads the list of increased causes, and their ability to bid the home an unceremonious and final farewell exceeds anything that men are doing in the same direction.

Again the question arises, What is to be done? Ask somebody who knows.

The Leading Lady

By CHARLES L. DOYLE

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There was much surprise and no little consternation in the ranks of the Sterling stock company, when it was announced that the star of the cast, Miss Halliday, had been taken suddenly ill and that the part of "Iris" would be given over to the merces of a substitute that night. Gerald Morrison, who sustained the principal male character of the play, was particularly worried over the unfortunate occurrence. He looked about him inquisitively as he stepped upon the dimly-lighted stage. The new leading lady was not visible and the only strange face he observed was that of a pretty young girl, who had apparently been brought by some friend in the company for a peep behind the scenes.

"Ready for the first act!" cried the stage manager, and Gerald was surprised to see, when the stage was cleared that the strange young girl remained. He was about to go forward and warn her that the rehearsal was to begin and that the leading lady would want the stage to herself, when he was amazed to hear her repeat in rather nervous tones, the opening lines assigned to "Iris." The act proceeded and the girl became more nervous as each new character appeared, until when Gerald approached her, she greeted him with trembling voice and tearful eyes, instead of the gay flippancy assigned to the part. This annoyed him and he spoke his lines in a rough, careless way that made her almost forget hers. She glanced at him appealingly and whispered: "Please forgive me; I'll do better tonight." Gerald left the theater in anything but a pleasant mood. He looked forward to all sorts of unpleasant happenings during the evening



She Hastened Forward, Breathlessly.

performance and when the time came for his appearance before the footlights he had worked himself into a state of nervousness almost rivaling that of the debutante.

Iris made up very well, he thought, as he came forward on the stage, but it remained to be seen how she would act. He advanced repeating his lines in a jerky, irresolute fashion and mixing the sentences so that the cue was lost. Much to his surprise and relief, however, Iris saved him from the consequences of his lapse of memory by an extempore word or two that brought the play back into its proper groove.

On the following morning the newspapers spoke in highest praise of the opening performance of the Sterling stock company in "The World and a Woman." To Gerald Morrison was given the greatest credit for the success of the play, although mention was made of the clever work of Miss Margaret Deane, who, owing to the sudden illness of Miss Halliday, took the leading lady's part of Iris, and rendered an admirable performance, considering her extreme youth and the fact that she had appeared on such short notice. Before Gerald left the city for a tour in the south he signed a contract with the Sterling Stock Company for the next season. When the members of the company assembled to be cast for the play which was to be produced at the opening of the season, the new manager turned to Gerald.

"I want you to meet Miss Deane, who will play opposite to you, Mr. Morrison," he said.

"The introduction is scarcely necessary," responded that young lady, in a freezing tone of voice. "I have had the honor of meeting Mr. Morrison before."

"Our acquaintance was rather short," remarked Gerald. "I am happy in being able to resume it so soon." Miss Deane merely bowed and was silent. They met constantly at rehearsals and Gerald was surprised and annoyed at the hauteur and disdain with which he was treated by the girl whom a few short months ago he had looked upon as little more than a child. There were moments when he thought he could detect a little more cordiality in her tone or glance, but any encouragement thus derived was quickly overbalanced by her coldness, if he presumed on it. He overtook her one morning as they left the theater.

"Our ways seem to lie in the same direction; may I accompany you?" he asked, somewhat timidly.

"No, thank you," she answered, indifferently.

Despite his repulse, Gerald, who by this time was willing to admit to himself that he was really in love with her, continued to seek Margaret's society. One morning on his way to rehearsal he noticed in a florist's window a pretty bunch of Marguerites. Acting on the impulse of the moment, he purchased them, and on arriving at the theater sent them to Miss Deane's dressing room. When she stepped on the stage she carried the box containing the flowers in her hand.

"Some foolish person sent me these," she remarked to the company who stood around her. "I am not particularly fond of Marguerites, as they remind me too much of my own name, which I won't have the misfortune to dislike. Won't you all help yourselves? I might not be so generous if they were roses."

As the ladies present availed themselves of the invitation and plucked clusters of the pretty blossoms on their gowns, Gerald received a defiant little glance from Margaret, that convinced him that she had discovered the donor, and that her dislike for Marguerites was of recent and sudden growth. The dress rehearsal which took place on the night preceding the presentation of the piece in public was a long one, and it was nearly one o'clock when the weary performers emerged from the stage door. Margaret Deane felt decidedly nervous as she walked along the lonely cross streets, which were practically deserted. Every footfall in the distance made her start, and when she fancied she heard a cautious step behind her, as of some one following in her track, her heart beat painfully. She glanced hastily back and caught sight of the tall form of a man who was evidently watching her.

She hastened forward breathlessly, conscious all the time that her pursuer was also hurrying on. At last the thought of calling a policeman entered her mind, but there was none in sight. A light in the window of a house close at hand caught her eye, and she decided to appeal to the inmates for aid. Mounting the steps, she was horrified to hear the rapid approach of her pursuer's feet close behind her. Desperately she reached for the bell, and was about to pull it, when a familiar voice said:

"Do you wish to see anybody here? I have a latch key handy."

"Gerald! Mr. Morrison," almost screamed Margaret, in surprise and immense relief. "Is it really you? I thought it was some awful highwayman following me. Oh, I am so glad!"

"So am I," said Gerald, earnestly, "glad because the barriers are broken down between us, even if you were a little bit frightened. You foolish child, did you imagine that I would allow you to wander through the streets alone at this time of night? And, of course, Fate ordained that you should run up here, where I live. Now I am going to see you home."

Margaret slipped her little hand confidently through his arm, and they started off together. "I was horrid to you, Gerald," she said, falteringly, "but I never will be again."

During the following week the announcement was made in theatrical circles of the engagement of Margaret Deane, leading lady of the Sterling Stock Company, to Gerald Morrison.

"Queer," commented the stage manager, "I thought she hated that chap but you never can tell. I suppose she was in love with him all the time."

Old Custom Abolished.

The British army council has decided to abolish the old custom of "crying down credit." Under the king's regulations, commanding officers, on arriving at a new station, are required to make proclamation warning tradespeople and others that a soldier's pay cannot be stopped for a private debt and that those who allow soldiers to contract debts do so at their own risk. The custom in the old days after gave rise to a picturesque ceremony the commanding officer, accompanied by a detachment of his regiment and the drums, reading the proclamation in the market place. The last occasion on which the ceremony was performed was a year or two ago. The old proclamation is now to be replaced by newspaper advertisements.

Trial of Radiotelegraphy.

A powerful radiotelegraphy plant has been contracted for by the navy department. This plant will be at Washington, D. C., and will be guaranteed to transmit messages 3,000 miles across seas. The aerial transmission system will be supported by a 600-foot steel tower. The plant is guaranteed to be operative under all atmospheric conditions and to be proof against all interference from all present radiotelegraphic apparatus in use anywhere. It is reported that the navy operators unsuccessfully tried for four days to interfere with the operation of a preliminary arrangement of the type of apparatus to be used. The cost of the plant is stated as \$182,600.

Australia Needs Settlers.

Australia has more unoccupied area in proportion to the population than any other country.