

Science Explains Why Chorus Girls are Suffering from a Love Famine



PHOTO © BY PAUL THOMPSON

Mrs. Henry J. Delaval Astley, Formerly Miss May Kinder of Manayunk, Philadelphia, the Last American Chorus Girl to Marry Into English Fashionable Society.

Dr. William Lee Howard, the Well-Known Social Philosopher, Finds War the Reason Why Wedding Bells Have Stopped Ringing for a Class of Women Formerly in Great Demand as Wives

By William Lee Howard, M. D.
The Distinguished Social Philosopher.

IN the past year there have been almost no marriages of chorus girls. Even those girls who found happy marriages in mating with men of moderate means and those who work daily, are not being followed to the altar. In fact, there has been almost a complete stoppage of marriage among a class of young women heretofore in demand as wives.

Also there are a greater number of unemployed chorus girls than in any period known to the modern stage. Even during financial panics, during the lean years when retrenchment is necessary, the chorus girl has had no difficulty in obtaining positions. But to-day she is struggling the best she knows how to make an honorable living.

Strange as it may at first appear, the causes are due to the war and not to any fault of the young women. Neither is it due to any experiences proving the usefulness of these girls to fulfill wifely duties.

Quite the contrary. The majority of girls going from stage to the domestic hearth have been successes. These girls differ from the girls brought up in family seclusion or in worldly society, in one matter only—they have had experience which either makes or breaks them. In the majority of cases it makes them, causes them to value a good reputation, to sense the true from the false, to recognize hypocrisy, to appreciate a home and all that this word means. The few who go "the easiest way," the exceptions whose frailties are given publicity, are no more numerous or unmoral than those in other walks of life. To come out with the blunt fact—not nearly so numerous.

The war has had a greater and wider effect in the United States than is generally recognized. It has had a tremendous effect upon our social and national institutions, as well as upon individuals. Putting aside its good and its injurious effects upon business and financial affairs, the world war has brought about moving psychologic factors and states in those who believed themselves to be indifferent to it.

No normal, active man or woman can remain uninfluenced by the outburst of ancestral blood lust now dominating the greater part of the civilized world. There is no such mental state as neutrality among those who have brains to think and hearts to suffer. The individual who talks loudly about being strictly neutral is lying to his real, inner self—and he is now commencing to know it. Uttering statements coming from tongue, and forced from an unwilling mind, injures the true self. One cannot be untrue to self and be loyal to self any more than one can lie about a neighbor behind his back and praise him to his face.

At the beginning of the war many men tried to be neutral in words while really they were partisans in mind and feelings. The effect was mental restlessness, uneasy conscience. This attitude brought new thoughts, strange self-inspection; finally, among those with decent brains and conscience, a new mental life.

But what has all this to do with the slump in the marriage of chorus girls? A great deal. Follow the mental and social trail as I mark it and you will see.

No matter what sort of social state man lives in, however, much he may have progressed in cultured and moral attainments, he still retains the primitive instincts of his savage ancestors. That is, man to progress must do so upon the foundations nature furnished.

The foundations is the instinct to fight for home, family and country. This may be temporarily suppressed. It is, as man progresses. It is also controlled and governed by reason and a desire to preserve honor through every self-respecting means. But there comes a time when only the primitive method will avail; then man must fight if he is to have and to hold.

Now, given a country such as the United States—the only one of its kind—where present men and their sons have never been brought face to face with danger to homes, wives and daughters; where energy has been used to accumulate dollars and the mind of the young men turned to methods of spending these dollars, and we have a brain soil upon which can be implanted such new and strange seeds of anxiety as to drive out all the old indifference and ways of viewing life.

Gradually, but surely, the men of this country have had their thoughts turned into new channels. Men of all ages and conditions have been on a tense mental strain the past year. This tension is increasing in force. Hourly excited, anxious, uncertain, not knowing what the next day will bring to them, is causing a state of seriousness and a realization that the future is perilous and that the old order of living will be forced out of the land.

Men go to the theatre, but talk war or rush to read the bulletins between acts. They greet their women friends in the same outward manner of old, but way down deep in their hearts and gripping their minds is a feeling of uncertainty.



PHOTO © BY FULSHAM & BANFIELD LONDON

Lily Elsie, Now Mrs. Ian Bullough, the Last Famous English Beauty to Enter Matrimony Before the War Cut Off the Market Both in England and America.

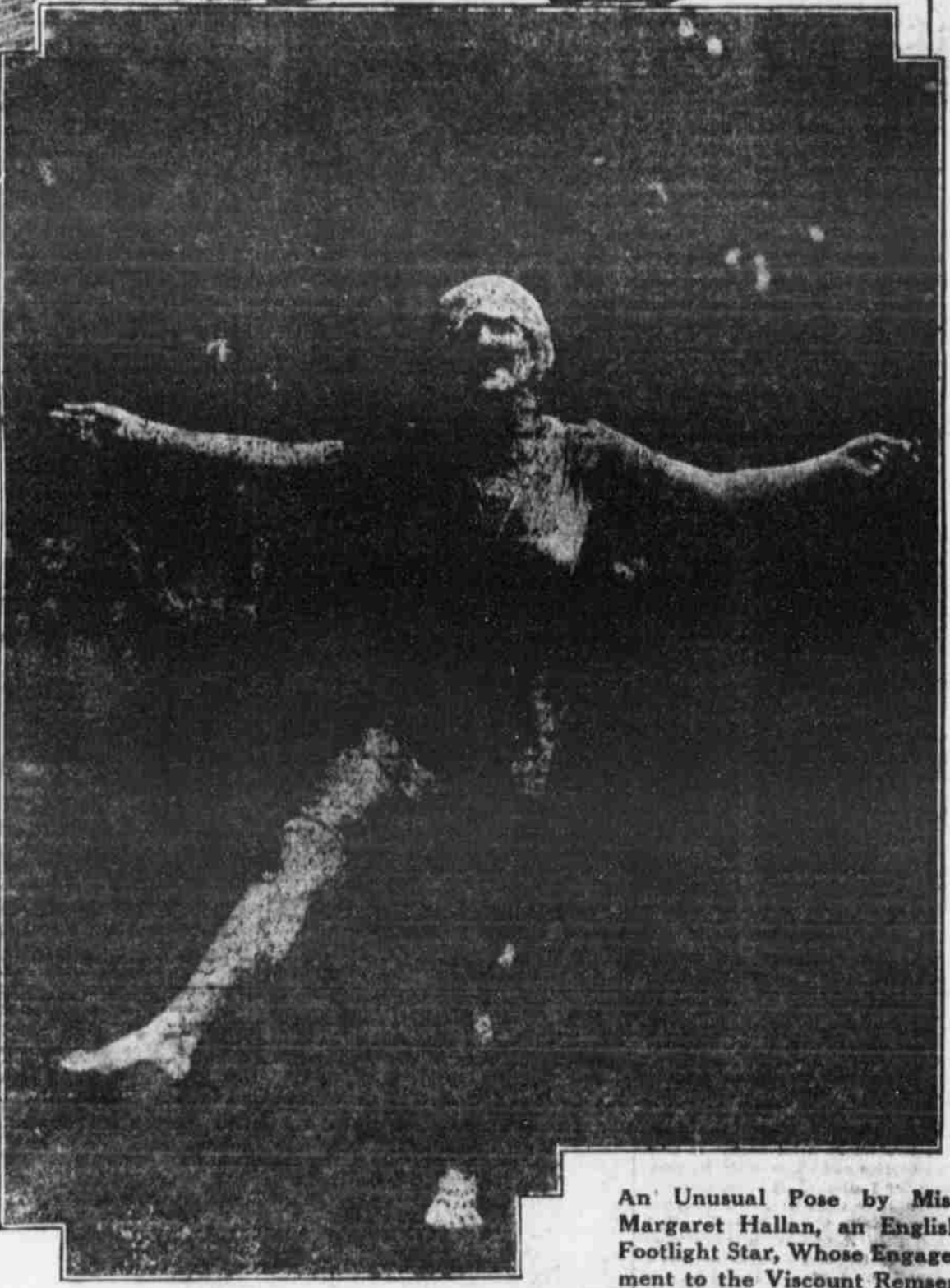
They are not in any mental condition to think of quietude, of taking on the responsibilities of a married man.

A man whose house and property are in the slightest danger of being taken from him does not go off in search of a wife nor does he spend his time in thinking of such matters. And no matter how remote such a fate may seem to some, the fear and anxiety is in the air and affects the motorman as well as the millionaire. The men who under normal conditions have the mental quietude to woo and contemplate marriage are now mourning friends upon the battle fields, some are nobly occupied in hospitals or driving ambulances, others are striving to help in various ways. The public would be astounded if it knew the number of wealthy and well-to-do young American men with the armies. Here in our country thousands of this type of

young men are in instruction camps, thousands are getting in condition to go to them now and to-morrow; older, but marriageable men are using their time and energy to forewarn and wake up the lethargic of this land.

It is a great change in our past social state. It is a state of mind new to us. Men are now thinking in a martial way; not marital. War has brought about a national restlessness which affects every full-blooded man. There is an indefinable impression of a serious life ahead of us all. It is a seriousness heretofore lacking in the men of America.

In the days of our early ancestors and in the savage races to-day no young man is permitted to marry or to woo a maiden until he has been in battle. We have abolished these really admirable laws, but nature has not. We cannot change nature's laws unless we can



An Unusual Pose by Miss Margaret Hallan, an English Footlight Star, Whose Engagement to the Viscount Renssen Was Ended by His Death on the Battlefield.

change all the laws of biologic origin. If danger threatens, the biologic instinct to get ready to protect takes hold of man.

Sub-consciously the same law works in women. They do not want for a husband and father of their children a man who in times of danger thinks more of marriage than in fitting himself for marriage—and this means to them proving fit to defend wife and home.

Stage girls do not differ in any way from any other girls—they are endowed with all the primitive instincts of the first woman. Most of them are true to the female mould to the core.

In some details the present state of anxiety affects women more intensely than men.

The woman lives in the present. She takes the shortest way out of trouble; she fixes her eyes upon what is before her. Man sees beyond; often overlooks the thing at his feet. Under these circumstances a woman's counsel is valuable, for she can bring us to the right perspective.

Women are quick to be moved by suggestion; they see things in the concrete. A girl misses her admirer and discovers he is off to be trained for a soldier's duty. This appeals to her, and another young man equally acceptable, but indifferent to his country's needs, will be refused as a husband.

Men preparing for war think only of war. In the United States the mental attitude is a subjective one, but nevertheless an operating one. The real man says to himself: "If war comes, what ought I to do?" The man to-day who hangs around the stage door or sends his motor car around to the girl's flat is not wanted by the right kind of girl. She knows in her woman's heart there is something for him to do. If he is one who would make a good husband he certainly must be occupied by other thoughts than wooing

and spending. It is nature's way of preparing the warrior. Through this way he is physically and morally prepared.

All these conditions have brought earnestness to the young women of the stage who are worth while. It is a psychologic law—that dangers threatening men and country affect sub-consciously all active women. These no longer strive to unduly attract; thoughtless frivolity is suppressed. There is an earnestness among the mentally bright girls of the stage to-day never before seen in this country. In a milder form it is the same psychic state affecting all the men and women of Europe—serious things to think and do.

A young man in Paris, Berlin or London who will pursue a chorus girl even for marriage will get short shrift. If he is too cowardly to fight, she doesn't want him; if he has been declared physically unfit, she won't have him. It is the same here in the passive state. The real man is mentally on watch for the probable. He has no time for those things one can indulge in when the door is locked and all is safe.

It may seem a bit humorous to some to speak of the chorus girl becoming serious under any conditions free from worry and want, but such do not realize that underneath every woman is an inherent instinct to know and realize danger to her and hers. To-day she is demonstrating her inborn and rightful inheritance, for she does not wilfully demand that man shall woo her when he has serious duties to perform for his country and its woman.

So that the reason chorus girls are not marrying is that man has other important matters on his mind and the young women are aiding him to work them out.