

THE CHARLOTTETOWN GUARDIAN

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Morning Daily (founded 1887) \$2.00 per year (delivered) in advance. 1.50 per year (mailed) in advance in Canada, and \$1.50 in U. S. A.

FRIDAY, JULY 29, 1921

SUMMER ABANDON.

"I will not wash my face. I will not brush my hair; I'll lie around the place. There's no one here to care." The inspired poet was evidently spending his holidays by the seashore, perhaps alone—as poets are not usually gregarious—but more probably in the company of kindred spirits who had, like himself, found themselves outside the bounds of civilization and given themselves up to the full enjoyment of the glorious privilege of doing as they darned pleased. In this excess of delicious freedom they took a savage delight in going to the extreme opposites of civilized life, discarding all the usages of civilized society, doing all that was forbidden in the ten commandments of home life and so enjoying the free life of the savage and the untamed animal. Such is summer life by the seashore and many are enjoying the reversion to savagery around the shores of Prince Edward Island, a reversion that appears to be an essential part of all animal life, a reversion that makes for rest and recuperation along the strenuous upward road of modern civilization. Even the domestic animals enjoy an occasional relapse as is evidenced by the fact that those of them that are not bound down by the trammels of business or necessity, take to the woods, their ancestral habitat, in the spring, returning later on renewed and refreshed by the temporary communion with nature in the wilds. The summer break to freedom is a necessity, a natural corrective to the congestions and the poisonous secretions resulting from too strenuous hunt after dollars or after the wolf, as the case may be. It is refreshing to note that this season there are more people than

usual enjoying the relapse to savagery. There is still room for thousands more, thousands who are playing with death in congested cities and who could renew their lease on life by spending a few weeks or even a few days on the outskirts of civilization by the seashore.

THREATENING SECTIONALISM.

The Toronto Globe professes to see a gleam of hope for the Liberals in the return from Alberta. The truth is that that election means the eclipse of Crerar (a camouflaged Liberal) and the sudden and spectacular rise of Wood, the Missourian. Here is a Province that has been overwhelmingly Liberal since its formation, rejecting its first love in terms so emphatic as to leave not a ray of comfort. All is Stygian darkness. Crerar, like Drury, would "broaden out," but Wood, like Morrison, will have none of such perfidy. Wood is for complete farmer-control, and to hades with all manufacturers. He has proved that among the agrarians of the North-West the detestable methods of American machine politics work to perfection. It is a new and sinister development and the anti-thesis of our immemorial British usages. Where it will end, who shall say? We have faith that in the end, the old, well-tried British theory of government will emerge triumphant; but just at present, the sinister combination of the grain business, with politics is triumphant. And the Globe speaks of these men as Progressives, and goes so far as to gloat in anticipation over their possible union with the King-Edwin combination in the next Parliament. What do the sound business men of the country think about it? It is about time they woke up to the menace.

Current Comment

For several years prior to the election of 1919 there was very much ado made by the Hon. John H. Bell and the Liberal contingent generally over what they were pleased to characterize as neglect of our island's interests in the matter of our claims against the Ottawa Government. It was an especial feature of their program, upon which they harped most vociferously, to collect these large amounts, mounting away up in the millions according to their computations, and with this vast wealth to give us an administration of public affairs, WITHOUT TAXATION, on a scale so elaborate that even the gods would be tickled with delight. They are now on the rapid wane of their existence, with the term of their misrule nearer to the end than to the commencement, and only a few short months from the final bursting of their bubble. What have they got to show towards the fulfillment of those oft repeated pledges? The taxes are here in redoubled and quadrupled force, but where is the big haul from those claims which was promised as the panacea of relief from these intolerant burdens. Have they dotted an I or crossed a T, or even voiced their views in their Ottawa pilgrimages, on this subject. The Hon. Premier Matheson, and his then colleague, Hon. A. E. Arsenault, presented the case before the Borden Government with such force of argument and fact as to receive from the then Premier of Canada a complete recognition of our claims, SO COMPLETE AND DECISIVE IN ACTUAL FACT THAT BUT FOR THE DISTRACTION PRODUCED BY THE OUTBREAK OF THE WAR THEY WOULD HAVE BEEN SATISFACTORILY SETTLED AT THAT TIME. It was because Premier Bell and his clique knew this, and recognized the securing of this money as a certainty after the war was over, that he made those promises, with the further object of trying to embarrass both governments during their efforts to help the nation out of its distress, and difficulty. The war is over, the claims are just as

valid now as they were when Premier Borden practically accepted them, the facts and argument and memoranda are on record at the capitol, and the Federal powers are financially able to hand out to Premier Bell and his Government every dollar that is due us. And why are they not getting after it? Is it that they don't want the money, or that they hate to keep a promise, or that it is easier to tax the people? Of course they did do something. There were similar elections pending in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick and this scheme of "claims" which had worked so well in P. E. Island was trotted out there by the Liberal premiers as splendid catch votes, and to put the force in good shape Premier Bell was invited over to a conference on the subject. But those elections are now over, and the "claims" are shelved, until next election. These Maritime Premier did get together since, and they did go to Ottawa in a matter of "claims," but it was not these claims, but some others out of which they thought they could make some political capital, that they took with them. On our claims for compensation for western school lands and our capital investments in the west, and Hudson Bay territories, were relocated to the background, never to be heard of again, unless perchance they can resurrect something out of it of a political nature on the eve of an election. Premier Bell went to Halifax instead of to Ottawa on his promised collecting tour, and he might just as well have stayed at home. But an end must shortly come to this dodging. In a very brief time he and his Government will be called upon to answer at least two electoral districts as to what he has done about the collection of these "claims." When he gets before the people of Murray Harbour and Malpeque, he will be up against something that his sophistries of the past will open up to him no avenues of escape. The question will not be so much as to whether he got the money or not, but whether he didn't get it, as to what effort, if

Marriage and Divorce Now Worry England

It's a long time since England had nothing to worry about. For some years it was the war, and since then it has been Ireland, the coal strike and a dozen other domestic problems. No sooner is one problem disposed of than another shows itself on the horizon, the latest to appear being that of marriage and divorce. It is true that for many years the divorce laws in England were scandalous, and that they still fall far short of the standards that are generally accepted in civilized countries. Nevertheless, the laws then were such as to madden nearly those persons who wished to put them into operation, and not the public generally. The public generally was rather proud of the fact that so few divorces were granted, and enjoyed reading the evidence in the comparatively few cases that came before the courts. Now the public shows a disposition to worry about the great number of divorce actions that are announced and at the corresponding decrease in the number of marriages. If both these tendencies continue it is plain that the country's increase in population will be much less than might have been expected.

Blamed on the War.

Increases in divorce are ascribed to two causes. One is the greater facilities for having marriages annulled, the other is the war. Though the war is over, its effects upon the marriage and divorce statistics will likely be felt for years to come. There were thousands of marriages made in the war years, especially in the year 1915, between couples utterly unsuited to each other. As the London Daily Telegraph notes, "Young men in civil life were called up for service in an unfamiliar sphere; many of them found themselves for the first time in their lives with a considerable income, and when on

Marriages Decline.

At the Easter sitting of the Divorce Court there were 2,373 petitions awaiting trial, of which 2,000 were not defended, nine-tenths of them, in the opinion of the Lord Chancellor, being traceable to the influences of the war, and this tendency, in his opinion, is likely to continue for a generation. The Westminster Gazette believes that the way by which marriage can be restored to something like its old sanctity in public regard is not to make divorce harder, but to make it easier. Just now, it says, "opinion is ripening toward a rebellion, and the present state of the Divorce Courts should warn the legislature that if it will not put the matrimonial law on a reasonable footing, the institution of marriage will suffer a severe shock." That it has suffered some sort of shock is plain enough from the dwindling marriage rate. In the final quarter of 1920 there were 18,000 fewer marriages than in the preceding quarter, and nearly 10,000 fewer than in the fourth quarter of 1919. That year was the last of the marriage boom years, the rate having reached 21.5 per thousand of population in England and Wales. The peak year was 1915, when the marriage rate was 22.5 as compared with 16.5, which was the rate in 1913, the last normal year.

Fewer Births and Deaths.

In the view of the Times, the reason marriages are declining is because of the increased cost of living. Marriage is a good deal more of a luxury now than it was in the war years, when there were millions of pounds distributed weekly in pay and allowances. The birth rate too, is declining, and in the first quarter of this year was 22.6 per thousand, which, according to the London Times, is the lowest for any first quarter since the establishment of civil registration, with the exception of the quarters affected by the war. Increased taxation is also playing a part in the reduction of both marriage and birth rates. About the only cheering piece of news in the vital statistics is that which shows that the death rate is extremely low, being slightly less than 15 per thousand, as compared with 20.1 in 1915, and 21.2 in 1919. The figures for 1919 are puzzling, and we must assume that many of the deaths were the result of injuries sustained in the war.

Daily Selections Guardian Readers

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SEEING LIFE

There are always a number of people, not always youthful people—who think they are not "seeing life" unless they are rushing day after day from movies to restaurants, to theatres and to dance. If flung upon their own resources they are miserable. If they go to the lakeside for the week-end they play bridge or dance all night, and get all day. Paradise to them is found in an atmosphere of pink lights, chatter and champagne. Such people have never lived at all; they have mistaken the shell of life for the kernel. The understanding mind will find a feast far richer spread before it in the quietest country town or wayside village. To understand humanity—to "live", it is no more necessary for us to exist in a whirl of vain excitement than it was for Jane Austen to go to Honolulu to write a novel. Humanity begins at home. Life lies upon our doorsteps. It is for us to stoop and pick it up.

MY TASK

To love someone more dearly every day. To help a wandering child to find his way. To ponder o'er a noble thought, and pray. And smile when evening falls. This is my task. To follow truth as blind men long for light. To do my best from dawn of day till night. To keep my heart fit for His holy sight. And answer when he calls. This is my task.

leave, with time and opportunity for spending it freely. Every social foundation seemed to have been undermined and life depended on uncertain chances. In these circumstances thousands of marriages were lightly and sometimes thoughtlessly contracted, on a foundation of little mutual knowledge. The separation allowance to wives paid by the Government contributed to encourage the stream of young men and women to the altar or the registry office.

Left All Alone Again Blues.

No wonder many of these marriages turned out unhappily. Everything seemed to conspire to make most of them a failure. The young husband, in all likelihood, was ordered abroad. His young wife remained at home with more money than she had ever had before in her life, and with little experience in the handling of money. The likelihood was that she should fall in with other young women in similar circumstances, and that they should try to escape the boredom of their lives by whatever means came to hand. Perhaps loneliness perhaps desperation, made many of them easy victims to the first personable chap who came along. In many cases they would discover, after the husband's first leave, that they made a mistake in choosing partners. There would be mutual disappointments, quarrels, with no common habit of life and mutual respect to tide over the critical period. Unfaithfulness proved, there remained the door of escape through the Divorce Court. Had this door not been opened then there would have been desertion and the setting up of illicit households, such as had happened in thousands of instances in the years before the war.

Others' View Points

(Toronto Telegram.)

Jazz Music and Cubist Art.

Jazz music has had its day. According to the Sheet Music Dealers' Association the once popular jazz has lost its grip and is fast sinking into obscurity. It is not surprising that jazz is on the down-grade—the wonder is that such a grotesque imitation of music should have been tolerated so long. Jazz music ante-dates the Great War, but it blossomed during the days when men's minds were so over-balanced with catastrophic events that jazz music seemed to provide a sort of safety valve for overcharged emotions—as a good cry often relieves the over-wrought nerves of a tired woman. There was more psychology than music in the jazz regime. Future generations may marvel at an age advanced in so many ways which delighted to dance and sing to the accompaniment of cow bells, sand paper, police whistles and automobile horns. It is at least as easily explained as futurism and cubist art which offends the artistic eye much the same as jazz the musical ear.

Twenty-Five Years Premier.

(Vancouver World.)

The history of responsible government in the British Empire affords no example of continuous office holding approaching that of the Hon. George H. Murray, who today completes his twenty-fifth year as premier of Nova Scotia. When Premier Murray was a very young man he sat for a short time as leader of the government in the legislative Council. He was already Premier when he was first elected to the House of Assembly in August, 1896, and Premier he has remained ever since. It is the greater tribute to the success with which he has carried on his administration that he never underwent the salutary experience of sitting in opposition. He knows parliamentary life from one side of the House only. Two months ago, before prorogation, the members of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly passed an unanimous resolution signaling the approaching completion of a quarter of a century of leadership. As the Morning Chronicle, of Halifax remarked editorially. The issues which divide the parties were for the moment laid aside, all controversy was banished and the members of the House united with one voice in paying tribute to and recording their appreciation of the great Nova Scotian and his great services to the state. It was one of those happy incidents—perhaps far too few and yet not uncommon in public life—when men who agree to

differ on questions of public care plad to unite in applauding and signaling worthy public service." The Chronicle goes on to say that Premier Murray has not been spoiled by success, but remains a "plain, courteous and approachable man, without pretence, assumption or effort to exalt himself, in any way." Its concluding wish that he may have many more years of health and happiness as the first citizen of his native province, will be shared today by the many Nova Scotians who have found their way to this province

Dover-Calais Tunnel

(New York Times.) Work will be started this fall on the Dover-Calais tunnel on both sides of the Channel and when it is completed, inside of

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ten years, travellers will be glad to go by train from London to Siberia and watch the camels in the desert go sauntering by with their big loads as they have done for thousands of years.

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