

THE MATRIMONIAL MARKET.

THE economists tell us that it is the price of the surplus of any product placed on a foreign market that determines the price of the entire mass produced. The farmer in Minnesota whose wheat is sold, ground, and eaten in the next town gets no higher price for it—so long as the whole country raises more wheat than the people of the country can eat—than will yield a profit if it be sent five thousand miles to Liverpool. Clearly then it is to the advantage of the wheat growers all over the land that the population should increase and multiply and wax fat on wheaten bread—that the demand for what can be raised should keep pace with the supply, or, as the acute French put it much more simply and completely, with the offer. This may seem a crude, even rude, law to cite as underlying the marriage customs of the Republic and closely and directly affecting the happiness of millions of women and men and their offspring. But such a law there is, and, on the whole, I am enough of an optimist to believe that it works steadily for the bettering of the condition of the race.

Whatever else marriage may or ought to be, and however the fact may be concealed or modified by associations—religious, social, literary,—there can be no doubt that it is, for a very large part of the women of the country, a means of livelihood. No one knows what the proportion is, but no one will deny that a very large number of girls regard a husband as the only sure source of such means as are required for their support, and that this view is frequently correct. Of course other conditions are involved and often are controlling; some more refined and pleasant, some perhaps decidedly less so, but for a very considerable number it remains true that they expect to be supported through marriage and know of no other way. I do not now argue for or against the desirability of such a state of things; I do not assert or deny that it is a law of nature, or of human society, or of Providence: I simply cite the fact and venture to point out some of its results, and the bearing on them of the simple economic law that governs the disposition of marriageable women as it does of Minnesota wheat.

To begin with, in all thickly populated and settled communities the

number of women born tends slightly to exceed the number of men. Here, then, is produced continuously and without chance for evasion or hope of any facile change, a slight but appreciable surplus of women. So far as their destination is marriage, and supposing the tendency to marriage equally strong in both sexes, and the Christian institution of monogamy to prevail, there must be an offer (an offer, in the strictly economic sense only) somewhat greater than the demand. This discrepancy, slight in itself, is liable to be increased in the ratio that men may be unwilling or unable to take unto themselves wives; and thus the intensity of the desire, the need even, of marriage among women, other things being equal, tends to become greater. The only way in which it can be—I will not say corrected, for some of my readers doubtless think it a divinely ordained force in the regulation of human progress,—but let me say that the only way in which it can be reduced, is by reducing the necessity to women of marriage as a means of securing a living. This, I think, is precisely what has happened, and in increasing ratio within the last half or even quarter of a century. Of course the process has been going on more or less regularly since the dawn of historic civilization. But it has been more rapid and general and therefore more obvious, especially in America, within the period mentioned.

Within the memory of any of us who has passed middle age, a woman in America who did not marry and had to support herself, generally and almost exclusively did so by domestic service or sewing or some form of teaching. The woman, whatever her class, who remained what was then far more ungraciously than now termed an “old maid,” and who gained her own living, did so in one or other of these pursuits. It is very different now, and in two ways. First, in the old callings there is far more scope and an increased demand, which is, I think, out of proportion to the increase of population. More servants are employed, their duties are more varied, more skill and intelligence are required, the pay is better, the average standard of comfort is higher, and a number of peculiar services has been added in which women can engage with a standing greatly improved and less undesirable to those who formerly shunned all service as “menial.” Very probably many of the women under whose eyes these remarks are likely to fall will still see in any form of service a means of livelihood to be accepted only as the last desperate resource, and some of them perhaps will think that the changes I have noted ought not to be considered for a moment in comparison with the advantages of marriage,

as they know it or imagine it. But I am speaking not of their class, which in mere point of numbers is not overwhelmingly important, but of the great body of women who must live and may have to marry,—in short of the marriageable product.

On that the increased desirability or scope of any employment yielding a living may have some influence. As to the occupation of what was formerly the sewing woman, it has developed widely in many directions. Far greater numbers of women are employed in the simpler processes, and even in these the statistics show that there has been an advance in money wages which has been enhanced in practical value by the decline in the cost of nearly all the necessities of life except rent. Passing from these processes to those that require something more than patient industry, that require dexterity, ingenuity, taste, we find a very pronounced advance in the number of things that women can do in the way of "sewing," and get wages for doing which, either in actual amount or in what they will purchase, are far beyond what could be earned say in the 'fifties. Closely allied to these employments and growing out of them are those connected with the higher branches of the business of providing women's apparel or the materials for it. There are numerous business houses in the United States to-day who pay to women in certain positions connected with the manufacture and sale of clothing a salary that forty years since would have supported at least a score of sewing women. It is hardly necessary to point out the very great demand for women as teachers, chiefly in the public schools, which is unquestionably greater than the mere growth of the population requires, and which, as in the other occupations, has developed more exacting and better paid positions.

Here, then, is one of the two modes in which the situation is changed. The old employments afford more and more satisfactory chances of livelihood. The second mode is, perhaps, more important and is certainly more striking. It consists in the rapid development of entirely new employments.

This change has been more recent, more rapid and extensive than the other. The most important, so far as numbers are concerned, is in the employment of women in shops, at the sales counters, or as cashiers and bookkeepers, and as stenographers and typewriters in general business and the professions. Statistics are not needed to establish the immense progress in this direction. Any one who goes up and down in the land, and especially in the towns and cities, can see or learn it for himself. In the city of New York, for instance, in what may be

called the office-building district below Chambers Street, where the population of a good-sized town is gathered tier on tier within the ground area of a common city lot, young women swarm. Morning and evening the streets are crowded with them. Farther uptown, for at least a couple of miles, at the same hours a large proportion of the crowds that stream along the streets are young women also, these mostly of what is known as the shop-girl class. These are now common sights of city life, but a man need not be very old—at least I hope not—to remember when the sight of a half dozen young women in the neighborhood of Wall Street was a novel and exciting event, and when, in the uptown stores, even in those devoted to the sale of the most esoteric constituents of women's attire, women were found as customers only, and were waited upon, more or less skilfully, by persons of the superior sex.

Statistics, as I have said, are not required to prove the change. They are, however, useful to measure its extent. Take the figures of the census of 1890 with reference to the number of those engaged in what are classed as gainful occupations. The total is 22,735,661; it was 17,392,099 in 1880,—an advance of 30.72 per cent. The increase in the number of males engaged in gainful occupations was 27.64 per cent; but the increase in the number of females was 47.68 per cent. As the increase in total population for the same period was a trifle under 25 per cent, it will be seen how very marked was the influx of women in the income-earning occupations. If now we turn to the employments as classified in the census reports, we find the following ratio of increase prevail: professional services, men 48.53 per cent, women 75.84 per cent; domestic and personal service, men 15.97 per cent, women 41.15 per cent; manufacturing and mechanical industries, men 46.01 per cent, women 62.87 per cent; trade and transportation, men 71.75 per cent, women 263.25 per cent. These percentages would, of course, be misleading if the totals were disregarded, but they indicate clearly enough the direction in which the change has been going on, and the lines on which it has been most marked, while the totals show that women are now a little more than 17 per cent of those engaged in gainful occupations, whereas in 1880 they were a little less than 15 per cent.

The advance is still more strikingly indicated in the statistics of special employments. On the following page is a table the chief significance of which any one can take in at a glance. It shows the number of men and the number of women engaged in each occupation according to the census of 1880 and that of 1890:

MEN AND WOMEN ENGAGED IN GAINFUL OCCUPATIONS.	Census of 1880.	Census of 1890.
Artists and teachers of art, men.....	7,043	11,676
women.....	2,061	10,810
Authors, men.....	811	3,989
women.....	320	2,725
Musicians and teachers of music, men.....	17,295	27,636
women.....	13,183	34,519
Teachers, men.....	73,335	90,581
women.....	154,375	245,230
Nurses and midwives, men.....	1,189	6,688
women.....	14,422	51,402
Sales, men.....	24,535	205,931
women.....	7,744	58,449
Bookkeepers and accountants, men.....	57,425	131,602
women.....	2,365	27,772
Clerks and copyists, men.....	23,820	492,852
women.....	1,647	64,048
Stenographers and typewriters, men.....		12,148
women.....		21,185

The classification of the census of 1880 does not include stenographers and typewriters. The census states that among bookkeepers and accountants women counted 2,365, and among clerks and copyists 1,647,—in all, 4,012. The total number of women in these classes and of stenographers and typewriters in 1890 was 113,005. The number of women in all the occupations in the above table was in 1880 196,106; in 1890 it was 516,140. Speaking broadly five women were engaged in these occupations in 1890 as against two in 1880. In certain occupations the change in the relative number of the men and women is very noteworthy. In 1880 the women were less than a fourth of the artists and teachers of art, in 1890 they were nearly one half. Of musicians and teachers of music in 1880 there were only about two women to three men, in 1890 there were nearly four women to three men. It is to be borne in mind, however, that these changes are exceptional. In the occupations which women have "invaded" in the largest numbers, those of teachers, salesmen, bookkeepers, stenographers, typewriters, etc., the ratio of increase has been about the same with the two sexes. As I have already pointed out, taking all the gainful occupations, although the ratio of increase for women is 47.88

per cent, and for men only 27.64 per cent, yet the women are in 1890 but 17 per cent of the total as against 15 per cent in 1880. It is a fair conclusion that while many more women earned their own living in 1890 than in 1880, they had over the whole field to a very slight extent only displaced the men.

The change in the proportion of women who now earn an income, and presumably a living, is the important point. About one in three of the total population are engaged in "gainful occupation," and only one in about twenty of the female population. The proportion to females of marriageable age is, of course, much larger, and it is this percentage that produces the effect I have noted as to the necessity of marriage to women as a means of support. What the effect is upon society, I do not now propose to discuss. It is much too large and complex a question to be stated even with any fulness in a single article. Whether a smaller proportion of women will marry, whether they will marry at a later age, whether fewer children will be born, whether the average of happiness in wedded life will be greater, whether the offspring will be better cared for,—are the subordinate or associated questions as to which there is room for much honest difference of opinion and for endless discussion. The facts I have noted, the statistics I have cited—and they would undoubtedly be much more striking were they brought down five years later,—show that it is becoming clearly easier for the average woman in the United States to earn her livelihood without marriage—if she so choose.

EDWARD CARY.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CANADIAN ELECTIONS.

THE result of the Canadian elections has aroused a great deal of attention on two continents, and in the United States peculiar interest has been evoked by the fact that the bone of contention resembled very closely the one which caused the American civil war,—namely, States' rights. Since 1878 the Conservatives of Canada have held power, and always by large majorities. To the surprise of everybody, on June 23 last, however, the tables were turned, and the Liberals swept the country, the province of Quebec, especially, swelling the victory by an overwhelming vote, her country parishes, where the church is supreme, vying with the cities in the overthrow. The Government counted on Quebec for its principal support, and only a few days before the election the French leader telegraphed the premier to be hopeful, as he would guarantee him a majority in his own province of at least twenty. Had that prediction been verified, Canada would still be Conservative in politics, and the old fiscal policy would not be disturbed. But the Liberals won nearly every seat, and on the night of the battle the three French ministers were defeated, and fell with their comrades. One statesman, however, who after twenty-three years' hard service had been deposed by his successors, succeeded in carrying his constituency, and by the irony of fate becomes leader of the French opposition in the House of Commons.

There were two important issues before the people, though the Conservative platform embraced no fewer than ten planks. The Manitoba Schools Question was one of them; the other was the tariff. As the reader will probably remember, Manitoba entered the Union in 1870, and in the following year established, after the manner of the older provinces, a system of schools for Protestants and Catholics under the supervision of a joint school board, each managing its own schools. As time wore on, and the Protestant population materially increased, it was deemed advisable by the majority to change the system, and, accordingly, in 1890, public schools were established. Against the new plan the Roman Catholics interposed a strong protest. They appealed to the Governor-General in coun-