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WRECKED HOMES IN AMERICA

AMAZING DIVORCE RATES

Divorces in the United States in 1916 numbered 109,000, against 42,000 in 1890. American homes are dissolving at the rate of 300 a day the year through.

Here's a pretty kettle of fish for Christian America.

One marriage in every nine in the United States winds up in a divorce court.

In twenty-three states of the Union the ratios of divorce to marriage are still more amazing.

One marriage in five ends in divorce in Oklahoma, Montana, California, and Idaho. In Washington state every fourth couple is divorced, in Oregon every third, and in Nevada every second. Naturally the ratio of divorces to marriages in Nevada is high because of the divorce mill at Reno. It is fair to say that nearly three fourths of the divorces in this state were granted to non-residents in 1916.

But this is not the worst of it: the divorce rate in the country-at-large steadily increases from decade to decade. In 1890 it was 53 per hundred thousand inhabitants; in 1916 it was 112, or more than double. The marriage rate moved up some 15 percent during this quarter century or so, but the divorce rate increased more than 100 percent.

Things are getting steadily worse in every state in the Union, except Maine, West Virginia, South Carolina, Alabama, Mississippi, North and South Dakota, Colorado, and the District of Columbia.

More than a third or nearly 37 percent of all divorces the country over were granted for desertion; and it's the wife that most often deserts. A full half of the divorces granted to husbands was for this cause alone. Nearly three-fifths of the divorces were granted to childless couples, while cruelty accounts for more than a fourth or 28 percent of the total, and infidelity for only 11.5 percent.

It is fairly easy to rank the states according to the number of divorces granted in 1916, but it is difficult or impossible to compare the social status of the states and to rank them according to the prevalence or absence of the social ills that give rise to divorce; so because of the lack of uniformity in the legal grounds for divorce, and also because of the varying attitudes and humors of judges and juries. Thus, in 1916 South Carolina granted no divorces for any cause whatsoever, neither did it require marriage licenses or marriage records of any sort. Nevertheless it is possible that South Carolina has wrecked and wretched homes due to the same social ills that break up family groups in her sister states. Divorces do not exist in that state, but separations are common enough to cause alarm.

Divorces in Carolina

In 1916 the divorces granted in our own state numbered 668, not including the divorces in eleven counties not reported by the court clerks. Some of our most populous city-counties turned in no divorce figures—Forsyth, Cumberland, and Lenoir, among others.

North Carolina had a smaller divorce rate than any other state of the Union except South Carolina where divorces were abolished by law in 1878.

Nevertheless our homes are being wrecked by divorce at the rate of about two a day the year around.

But even more alarming is the increase of the evil. Divorces in North Carolina have multiplied more than two and a half times over in the twenty-six years between 1890 and 1916. The increase is from 12 to 31 per hundred thousand of population during a quarter century!

Our increase in population in twenty-six years—from 1890 to 1916—was 50 percent; the increase in marriages was 65 percent; but the increase in divorces was 253 per cent.

The rates for North Carolina counties in 1916 range from zero in Alexander, Gates, Davie, Jones, Pender, and Tyrrell where no divorces were granted in 1916, to 119 per hundred thousand of population in Transylvania.

Transylvania is the only county in the state with a divorce rate higher than that of the United States, 119 against 112. It makes the student wonder what the matter can be in Transylvania.

Other high divorce rates appear in

Wilson and Swain—they are around three times the average of the state-at-large.

In Carteret, Hyde, Durham, Camden, and Buncombe the divorce rates are more than twice the state rate.

The rates in 28 counties are higher than the average for the state.

Nine of these 28 counties are in the foot hill and mountain regions, where a very few years ago divorce was almost unknown.

What Are the Explanations?

So far we are not venturing to consider the causes of our increasing divorce rates in North Carolina and the United States. Divorce is an exceedingly complicated social problem everywhere in Christendom. We are simply giving the bare facts as they appear in Marriage and Divorce, a Federal Census Bureau Bulletin that has just reached our desk.

There is no more important problem in this or any other state. If the American home goes to pieces under the stress of increasing industrialism and urbanization, then our civilization is doomed.

There are other tables in our work-shop that have been figured out of this bulletin: showing (1) the states ranked in order from low to high according to the ratios of marriage to divorce, (2) the counties of North Carolina ranked according to divorce rates; and so on.

If there be any manifest public interest in this vital matter these tables will be given to our readers in subsequent issues of the University News Letter.

HEALTH WORK IN CAROLINA

Brief History

In every land and country, public health work means a hard long haul upward out of the age-long debauchery of man, the shame and secrecy of social sins, widespread ignorance, superstition, paralyzing fatalism, and stolid inertia.

For fifty years little bands of gallant pioneers here and there in the world have been warring against preventable disease and postponable death, fighting for an unlistening folk, fighting against criminal unconcern, against prejudice, against shameful and shameless ignorance.

Such a band has the North Carolina State Health Board been, and it has taken just 42 years for these representatives of the people to place public health work at last on something like a respectable basis, measured in terms of money. In terms of unselfish devotion, the services of men like Wood, Lewis, and Rankin never can be measured.

Around the year 1880 when the population of the state was rather less than one and a half million souls, the State Health Board was given \$100 by the legislature, or only one cent for every 150 inhabitants. The health appropriation for 1919 provides \$192,000 for a population of two and a half million, or nearly eight cents per inhabitant, with which to fight disease, vice, filth, inertia, and prejudice. It is the same old fight that must still go on against the same old foes. But the forces of war against disease are immensely better organized, supplied and equipped in North Carolina.

Achievements

North Carolina organized her State Health Board in 1877 ahead of 36 other states of the Union. As early as 1879 its members were discussing the Disinfection of Drinking Water; Drainage; Sanitary Engineering; the Limitation and Prevention of Diphtheria.

The registration of vital statistics began after a fashion in 1881. Its first bulletin was published in 1886 and the leading paper in it was on Care of the Eyes and Ears. Eighteen hundred ninety-three ushered in legislation for improved reporting of contagious diseases; the protection of school children from epidemics; the examination of public water supplies; and the regulation of common carriers. In 1894 health conferences were held in several parts of the State and the next year two bacteriologists were added to the staff of the Board. The first examination of municipal water supplies was ordered in 1896, under Dr. Francis P. Venable at the University. The same year Doctors Anderson and Pate made

SHE RULES THE WORLD

Senator Carmack

It is not the throned and sceptered king; it is not the dark statesman with his midnight lamp; it is not the warrior grimed with smoke and stained with blood—it is the queen of the home who, under God, rules the destinies of this world.

There is a center from which radiates the light that never fails. For I say unto you the sweetest wisdom of this world is a woman's counsel, and the purest altar from which human prayer ever went to heaven is a mother's knee.

the first bacteriological tests of the Board. The hookworm campaign began in 1903, in 1904 resolute field work against tuberculosis got under way, followed in 1907 by the foundation of the State Tuberculosis Sanatorium.

The ten memorable years beginning with 1909 produced so much that was effective in legislative enactment, in education, in disease eradication, and in general health improvement that North Carolina today enjoys positive distinction in the health columns of the United States. Collection of vital statistics, public water company regulation and supervision, whole-time town and county health officers, free diphtheria anti-toxin, the State Health Bulletin with 50,000 readers monthly, persistent hookworm eradication, county boards of health, inclusion in the United States registration area—these are but a few of the activities of the Board during this period.

The death rate has been steadily beaten down, the physical stamina of the people has been patiently built up, and now the people speaking through their legislators have agreed to spend nearly eight cents per inhabitant in behalf of health and high courage in North Carolina.

War-Time Lessons

Yet what was it, one may ask, that made the legislature of this year so generous? Was it the well-being of the people? Was it their complete freedom from all the ills the flesh is heir to? Was it pride in the upstanding physical qualities of the men and women of the State?

Two facts must deny any such comfortable assumption. The first we find in the revelations of the draft boards. Thirty-eight young men out of every hundred were refused admission to the army for physical reasons—young men whose age should have insured the most robust health. The second was the influenza epidemic with its hideous toll of death. There were nearly one million cases in North Carolina alone, says Dr. Rankin, and nearly fourteen thousand deaths. These are two stubborn facts that showed the weakness of our defenses against disease and death. Showed us, too, that we must about-face and build up still better breastworks of health behind which to fight the battle of life.

Two other factors lent their aid in helping the State Health Board to put its program across; one was the showing of effective service it was able to make, and the other was the now almost irresistible social trend toward better health conditions for all the people.

The war has done one thing for human kind which may well find mention: it has broken down at last the immemorial silence between men and women about the diseases of vice. And it is a pleasure to say that it was largely through the sweet and womanly courage of Mrs. Josephus Daniels, who chose this for her subject last May at the National U. D. C. Convention in Chattanooga. Her frankness and bravery have spread everywhere, we think, and certainly throughout the South. All of a sudden women find that they have always wanted to say that they abhorred the double standard. All of a sudden they see that it is as much their job to try to get a single standard as it ever was their part to share in any of the business of living. Women of two generations are now keenly aware of limitations in their physical inheritance; they are putting two and two together as to why they have less vitality than their mothers, and why these, in turn, had

less than their mothers.

The action of the North Carolina Assembly, prompted by the North Carolina State Health Board, in passing a model social disease law, is notable. The appropriation to combat social disease in North Carolina in 1919 is \$10,000 and for 1920 it is \$24,000.

The other three major health laws of our last legislature cover sanitary surface closets, state-wide school inspection, and radical enlargement of Board authority and activities.

Our Public Hospitals

Eighty private, semi-public, and public hospitals in 45 cities and towns of North Carolina minister to the ills of two and a half million people. These hospitals are private, church, fraternal, city, county, or state institutions. Mainly they are private and semi-public. Not counting our state institutions of benevolence only four of these are completely public.

Altogether these 80 hospitals contain less than 6,000 beds. When the hospital beds for two and a half million people number fewer than 6,000 all told, it will be seen that North Carolina has still a long way to go in hospital facilities, especially in hospital facilities that are public.

In 1916 the number of hospital cases treated was around 30,000. The waiting lists were enormous, particularly in the state insane hospitals where hundreds were kept out for lack of room. In his report for 1918 Dr. Albert Anderson, of the Raleigh Hospital, speaks of the pity and very great menace of this bed shortage. He says that in many instances acute but curable cases of insanity are made chronic and incurable because the time element plays such a vital part with these patients.

In the state-at-large the hospital facilities for negroes are so meagre as to be barely short of scandal. Usually there is a free ward or two for the negroes in our public and semi-public hospitals, but in all the State there are only three negro hospitals—in Raleigh, Durham, and Wilson—and the beds in these number fewer than 200 for the 830,000 negroes of the State.

Considering the fact that our state hospitals for the insane are kept on a basis of minimum support, it is clear that their management is superb. Reading the reports for 1917-18 one finds carefully laid plans for sanitary improvements, for recreational equipment, for preventive work, and enlarged facilities.

An orthopedic hospital is being erected near Gastonia for the state cripples. North Carolina is one of the few states in the Union to take such a step. The state support for the first year is \$7,500. Whatever care the Tiny Tims of North Carolina may have lacked yesterday, they will begin to enjoy tomorrow, but the bill will be many times \$7,500 a year as the years go on.

Ounces of Prevention

A few items in the 1918 report of the Superintendent of the State Insane Hospital at Raleigh—more than verify the wis-

dom of the State Health Board in its legislative and educational work.

Where North Carolina spends one dollar for disease prevention in general, she spends \$11.60 for the care of her insane. Sixteen percent of the insanity of the State is directly traced to one of the social diseases, and there are 500 such patients in our three insane hospitals. The cost per patient for 1918 was \$230 or a total bill of \$115,000 a year in North Carolina for insanity due to one social vice alone; and this cost is not for one year only, but for as many years as the patients happen to live. It is high time we were spending a few thousand dollars a year to combat the ravages of social sin—this year \$10,000 and next year \$24,000. Think of it—50,000 cases of social disease were reported in North Carolina for the last biennial period as against 45,000 cases of all other diseases, according to the Council of National Defense.

In 1914 Dr. Charles V. Chapin surveyed the State Boards of Health, and reported to the American Medical Association that only 11 states of the Union made a better showing than North Carolina. But the time comes when some Southern state must stand first in public health work. North Carolina stands a fair chance to reach this proud pre-eminence. How can it be done?

Firstly we must socialize the idea of health. Secondly we must make use of every means provided to accomplish it. We have a law permitting the sale of bonds by cities, townships, or counties for the erection and maintenance of community hospitals. Fewer than a half dozen of our cities and only one of our counties have established free public hospitals on a tax basis. Thirdly we must help to bring the medical inspection of school children into the very highest possible effectiveness. Our backward, wayward and abnormal children must have the only sort of care that their own welfare and that of their communities should permit—namely watchful, special, growth-providing care. In his 1917 address before the State Medical Society Dr. Laughinghouse said, these children are the future of humanity's horrors. We must not let those horrors be. Lastly we must have the sort of health insurance, personal and public, that will protect us all alike, the clean from the unclean, and the unclean from their own ignorance and vice. It is a sort of sacred, privileged promise that we owe to the future. —Miss Ernestine Noa, before the North Carolina Club at the University.

LENOIR COUNTY WISDOM

Lenoir county announces that as she has bought \$2,000,000 worth of Liberty Bonds, Uncle Sam will send back into the county year by year coupon money enough to take care of the interest on the road bonds about to be issued, leaving the county clear. It might have been suspected that a county that could make the advances Lenoir has been doing had already been doing something for the country, but it is a surprise to know it is so big.—News and Observer.

DIVORCES IN THE UNITED STATES

Per 100,000 Inhabitants in 1916

Based on the 1919 Federal Census Bulletin on Marriage and Divorce. Rate for the country-at-large, 112; for North Carolina 31—the lowest rate in the United States except in South Carolina which abolished legal divorces in 1878. The rate for the District of Columbia is only 13.

University of North Carolina					
Rank	States	Rates	Rank	States	Rates
1	South Carolina	0	25	Tennessee	127
2	North Carolina	31	26	Kentucky	129
3	New York	32	27	Nebraska	132
4	New Jersey	40	28	Illinois	139
5	Georgia	54	29	Kansas	143
6	Pennsylvania	58	30	Ohio	148
7	Massachusetts	63	31	Iowa	149
8	North Dakota	65	32	Florida	152
9	West Virginia	67	32	Utah	152
10	Wisconsin	69	34	New Hampshire	158
11	Maryland	74	35	Oklahoma	168
12	Connecticut	77	36	Wyoming	170
13	Louisiana	78	37	Missouri	171
14	South Dakota	84	38	Michigan	174
15	Minnesota	86	39	Idaho	189
16	Virginia	91	40	California	190
16	Maine	91	41	Texas	198
18	Delaware	98	42	Indiana	201
19	Alabama	101	43	Arkansas	217
19	Rhode Island	101	44	Washington	225
21	New Mexico	102	45	Arizona	240
22	Mississippi	104	46	Oregon	255
23	Colorado	113	47	Montana	323
24	Vermont	116	48	Nevada	607