

How British Laws Inflict Grave Wrongs on the Wife

THE sufferings over in England are commonly supposed in this country to be fighting more for an abstract principle than for any practical personal advantage to women. That there are still on the statute books laws which are astonishingly unjust to women was proved no longer ago than August of this year.

"Two wills proved during August," says the London Illustrated News, "have reminded us of one of the rights that a British husband possesses in cases of those enjoyed by the less fortunate married men of most other countries, the right of leaving the partner of his life penniless at his own discretion."

"One of the testators in question had a genuine sense of humor. He commanded his widow to enter a convent and spend the rest of her life in prayer. In which case he gave for her board with a lady of £1,000 to the superior of said convent, but if the widow refused this disposition of her future existence then she is to have no provision at all but to face the world with only her wardrobe and jewelry."

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"In France, Belgium, and some other countries a testator is compelled in the first place to leave a certain provision to wife and children before disposing of the balance as his own whim or reason may suggest; and surely this is just under the circumstances in which marriage places a woman."

CAN PAUPERIZE HIS WIFE.

But a man—an Englishman—does not have to wait until he is dead for the privilege of pauperizing his wife. Another English publication, the Gentleman, contains some interesting information about what John Bull can do to his wife while he is alive.

"Not only may a man refuse his wife any money at all to put in her pocket and use as she chooses," it says, "but he may legally keep her in a most miserable fashion as regards food and clothing, without reference to his means."

"The magistrate at the Southwestern London police court stated the law to be (in a case heard as recently as July, 1907), that a man who had an income of £5 a week might allow his wife to only 1 shilling a day to provide her own food."

"If the husband took exception to his wife having more than two days out of the seven," said this exponent of the laws of today, "that was not a matter in which the court could interfere."

"It is only a year since the working-men's wives were thrown into consternation by county court judge ordering some £40 that a woman had laboriously saved during many years of thrifty housekeeping out of the money allowed her by her husband for the household expenses to be paid out of the savings bank to the husband."

"The judge explained to the astonished woman, and thereby to all other married household workers, that if a wife had had no other source of income except money handed to her by her husband, not a farthing of that even belongs to her as her earnings or returns for her work in the home or for her child tendence. It was still all her husband's absolute property, and therefore anything that she had saved out of it was also his, not her own."

AN AGGRAVATED CASE.

"Another case followed still more recently to emphasize the position of a wife and her home tasks from the economic standpoint. In this case the man had been abroad for some years and had sent his wife for the family support such sums as he thought fit. This wife, choosing to devote her energy and ability to the economical conduct of her home rather than—as she had been

doing—to earning an income in a profession, saved some of the allowance.

"As in this case, at any rate, the husband being out of the country could not have been deprived of any home comforts the county court judge was rather doubtful if the law deprived the wife of her small savings. But the high court of justice, when appealed to, put the matter beyond all doubt. The judge repeated that the law is that if a wife has no other source of income she can own nothing."

"A lady had a dozen photographs taken at a cost of a guinea and had paid for them out of her housekeeping allowance. The husband claimed that he could suppress the negative, as it was paid for with his money, and this case (so trivial in one point of view, but so dreadfully important to women in another point of view) was settled in the husband's favor on the ground just recounted, namely, that a wife has absolutely no rights to any money at all as earned by housemaking and child-tending labors."

"Finally, not only does a wife not earn a single penny by her household work, but she may be left by will absolutely a pauper or her husband's death, though he may have quite a fortune to leave behind him, and she have been a faithful wife during the whole of her days of strength and earning capacity. Even if a husband die intestate the law does not give his widow his property—though it does give a widow the property of a wife who died intestate."

SLIGHT CONCESSION TO WOMEN.

"It was represented as a great act of grace when the house of commons recently ordained that the widow might have what was left by an intestate up to £200 in cash. In landed property also a wife has certain rights in intestacy, but she has none in case her husband makes a will and chooses to leave her penniless in her later days after a life spent in the service of his home."

"It is the laws that are unjust, in the way the position is regarded of women who could have, if they trained in youth and kept to work, made good professional incomes, but who have accepted wifehood, motherhood, and home-making for their occupation in life's heyday."

"I urge that these women actually do earn their living—that a husband has no more right to refuse a wife an

independent income. In proportion to his means, than the office partner in a manufacturing business who actually gets the money in hand has to refuse the proper share of it to the partner who overlooks the internal arrangements of the factory—and that a wife has a just right to spend or to save as she pleases from her portion of her wages for her homemaking work."

A RELIGIOUS AUTHOR'S STATEMENT.

Rev. Joseph H. Peeperman, Salisbury, N. C., who is the author of several books, writes: "For several years I was afflicted with kidney trouble and last winter I was suddenly stricken with a severe pain in my kidneys and was confined to bed eight days unable to get up without assistance. My urine contained a thick white sediment and I passed some frequently day and night. I commenced taking Foley's Kidney Remedy, and the pain gradually abated and finally ceased and my urine became normal. I cheerfully recommend Foley's Kidney Remedy." F. J. Hill Drug Co., "The Never Substitutes."

RAILROAD PRESIDENT WOULD RID SOCIETY OF THE HOBO.

PRESIDENT JAMES S. McCREA of the Pennsylvania railroad system has just inaugurated a campaign which has for its object the elimination from American society of the tramp and the hobo and the effective prohibition of the popular but dangerous practice of "dipping" tramps and sleeping in railroad yards.

As a remedy Mr. McCrea suggests the detouring of all tramps arrested by the police and the installation of some system that will keep the incorrigibles in prison.

Mr. McCrea's fight is unique in the fact that his attack on the hobo is based on humanitarian considerations. He appeals to the charity organizations of the country to aid him and indirectly to the county and city officials of the country. He is probably the most formidable opposition that the tramp has ever been called upon to face.

The president of the Pennsylvania road his first gun when he wrote a letter to Orlando F. Lewis of the charity organizations of New York, urging that he assist him in arousing public sentiment against the widespread evil of trespassing upon railroad property.

The appeal is backed by the statement that the Pennsylvania has failed to arouse the various municipalities through which its lines pass. That the evil of which he complains is an urgent and growing one Mr. McCrea shows by an appalling tabulation of the deaths and injuries on his road for two years.

During 1908 the trains of his company killed 673 trespassers and injured 731, and during 1907 it killed 832. Thus in two years the company's trains killed 1,505 human beings who would not have been killed had they not been trespassers without any legal rights.

And when it is remembered that the Pennsylvania is only one of a score of great railroad systems, many of which have a legal tender regard for the welfare of the tramp than Mr. McCrea evinces, it will be seen that the total of deaths and injuries for the two years reach a total of many thousands.

That the company made every effort to reduce this evil Mr. McCrea shows by the statement that during the past year it arrested 2,983 persons while trespassing, 442 for vagrancy and 10,457 for illegal train riding.

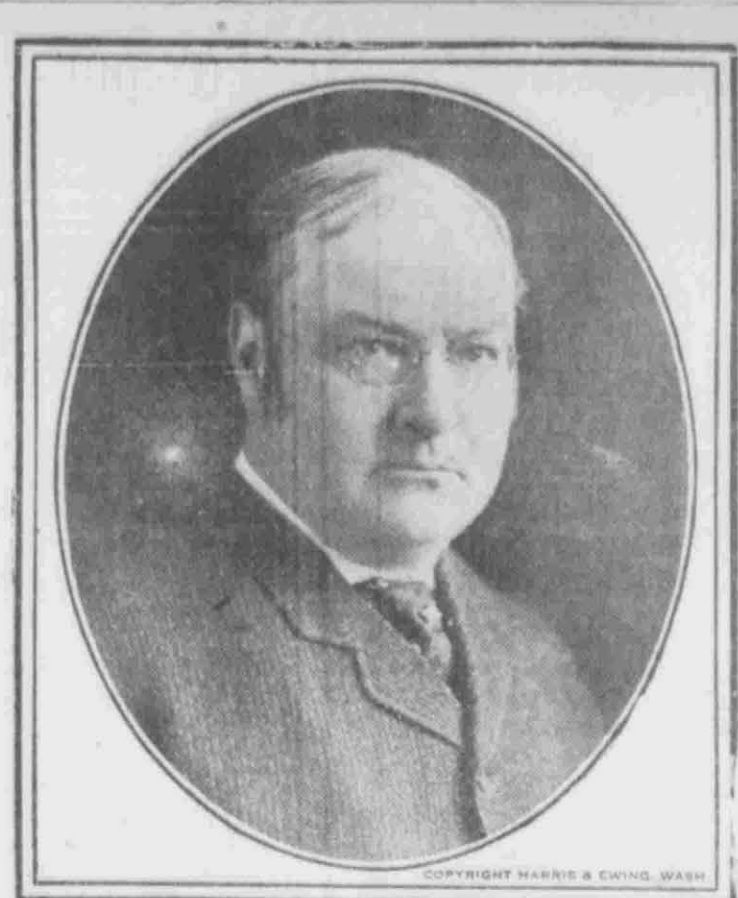
During 1907 the arrests for these cases aggregated 5,588, showing that the number of offenders vastly increased in 1908. In his letter President McCrea says:

"If we are to be at all successful in our handling of the vagrancy problem, it is essential that there be co-operation between the town and the county authorities and the public or private charitable organizations."

"One of the difficulties our railway police force meets with is that the country authorities will insist that a vagrant be permitted to move from one county to another before being arrested, and the county in which the arrest is made be charged with the maintenance of the prisoner."

"County authorities and their constituents object to the expense entailed in the maintenance of these people. When vagrants are arrested and incarcerated in the county jails it is seldom that any record is taken of them, and when they are released and again incarcerated in the jail of another county the latter county has no record showing former incarcerations."

"With co-operation the records of



VICE-PRESIDENT JAMES S. SHERMAN.

vagrants would be accessible to all county authorities and continued tramps could be singled out and given adequate punishment."

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