



THE Lemieux law has had two trials in Montreal of late, to say nothing of the trial at Fernie. In Montreal, it scored one success and one failure. In the case of the Grand Trunk against its machinists, a Board of Investigation and Conciliation, with Prof. Adam Shortt at its head, heard and settled a series of very difficult and intricate questions to the satisfaction of everybody concerned. In the case of 'Longshoremen's trouble with the shipping Federation, Mr. Acland went down from Ottawa and did everything that a man could to bring the two parties together. But he failed. And the reasons for his failure are illuminating. To begin with, he found the 'Longshoremen in a resolutely unyielding frame of mind, while the Shipping Federation made what looked like a capital offer to the men—that is, they offered to grant half the demand at once and arbitrate for the rest. To end with, the 'Longshoremen accepted and even asked for a board of arbitration; but the shippers apparently thought the backbone of the strike broken by this time, and were not ready to join them then. At no time did either the 'Longshoremen or the Shippers display any trust in each other.

* * *

Mr. Acland is criticised because he did not try to punish the strikers under the Lemieux law. But what could he have done? Only a small section of the strikers belonged to the Union, and the others were a disorganised mass of workers, some of whom probably did not know the Lemieux law from the law of Moses. To arrest or fine such men would accomplish no good. It would only embitter the relations between the men and those whom they regard as their oppressors, and finally destroy any confidence they might feel in a Government official. If they had all been union men, with a union man's training in industrial disputes, they would have been more amenable to reason; and it is altogether likely that they would have accepted arbitration at once. Moreover, if they had had a union, the shippers would have had a more dependable body to deal with, and probably would have dealt with them in the past in such a way as not to forfeit their confidence. It is a fair inference that the Lemieux law is workable only when there is a reasonable amount of mutual confidence between the parties, and when the men have reached a standard of intelligence and organisation which is usually embodied in the formation of a union.

* * *

The marriage of Corey, the Steel Magnate, who threw off the wife who had been good enough for him when he was poor, with Mabelle Gilman, the dancer, has set a lot of clergymen and church bodies talking of the sanctity of marriage and the wickedness of divorce. The covetous clergyman who took Corey's fee has been badgered into giving it back again; and most of us have added ten cubits to the stature of our sweet consciousness of our own comparative rectitude by hurling hard language after the exiled pair. And some of the hard language has come from Canada. Now Canada is the country where divorce is kept as a luxurious privilege for the rich and is denied on any terms whatever to the poor—except in certain godless Provinces where they have divorce courts. If the Corey episode means anything, it shows the ability of much money to laugh at the safeguards with which the Americans have surrounded the marriage relation. That is bad enough in all conscience. But in the United States, it is an accident. In Canada, it is a system. The American accident may tumble its victims deeper into the mire than our system will permit, for the Senators will only grant

divorces on certain grounds; but even in Dakota they have not had the effrontery to make divorce a permanent monopoly of the wealthy. We should think of these things before we assume any "holier than thou" attitude toward the divorce evil of our neighbours.

* * *

Once there arose a man in the House of Commons who besought our law-givers to rescue the country from this shameful position. He boldly proposed that we establish divorce courts on the sacred ground of Canada. You will imagine at once that he must have been, like Kipling's General Bangs, "a most immoral man." Reminiscences of the "women, wine and graft" charges will come back to you, and you will wonder which of the black sheep it could have been who desired to weaken our legal defences of the institution of marriage. Well, the name of this "foe to morality" was Deacon John Charlton, of the Presbyterian General Assembly, one of the most clear-sighted public men whom this country has ever produced. But Sir Wilfrid got up and said that he did not think there was any demand in the nation for easier divorce, and the old system of keeping the yoke on the poor wife and letting the rich profligate escape, was continued. There are streaks in Sir Wilfrid that are as Tory as the Stuart Kings.

* * *

Still we must remember that with Roman Catholics the question of divorce is one of conscience. Marriage is with them a sacrament; and no power short of that of the Pope can set it aside. For this feeling, I have the utmost respect. Every man's religion must be respected by every other man, and especially must we be careful to respect it when it commands a line of conduct which we ourselves do not follow. Thus when every Catholic member of Parliament votes against every divorce bill, I have nothing but praise for their courageous consistency; but surely the logical deduction from their position is "no divorce," not divorce purchaseable by the rich. They must vote against every divorce bill, and they must vote against the establishment of a divorce court; but no more against the one than the other. Now if the Protestant majority in Parliament takes it upon themselves to over-ride the consciences of the minority and grant divorces on any terms, they ought surely to be careful to grant them on just terms—not on terms of systematic and flagrant injustice. The only just terms upon which divorces can be based is an even application of the law—be it strict or loose—to the poor and to the rich alike. That can only be accomplished by empowering judges to grant divorces under a fixed statute and without exorbitant charges, as they do in Britain, in British Columbia and in the Maritime Provinces. Make the law severe; but give no favours to the wealthy.



Miss Mary Mannering,

Who is the wife of Mr. James K. Hackett, the actor-manager. Miss Mannering will appear at the Princess Theatre, Toronto, next week, in the delightful comedy, "Glorious Betsy."