

Great Composer's Dependents In Needy Condition

Cosima and Siegfried Wagner, widow and son of the musical composer are living in actual want. The recent production is Munich of Wagner's first opera, "Des Liebesverbot" led to a few music-lovers making a pilgrimage of respect to Bayreuth, and to their dismay they found that the vague report which had circulated about the deplorable economic plight of the surviving members of the Wagner family were more than justified.

Frau Wagner and Herr Siegfried Wagner are struggling to exist on a joint income of 240,000 marks a week, scarcely \$12.50 at the present exchange and not more than \$40 in terms of the inland purchasing power of the mark. Owing to the exchange depreciation the substantial fortune which Wagner left has been reduced to a pittance in paper marks.

Two schemes have been started to remedy the scandal represented by the fact that whereas opera companies make handsome profits from the production of the Wagnerian operas, the relatives of the great composer find themselves confronted with hunger.

One scheme is that a small proportion of all profits from the Wagnerian operas should be sent to Bayreuth for the maintenance of the surviving members of the Wagner family; the second is the formation of a limited liability company to take over the control, administration and risks of the Bayreuth Festival from Siegfried Wagner, a small proportion of any profits so accruing being also used for the purpose.

Urges People To "Keep Cool"

Discussing business conditions the National Bank of Commerce of New York in its weekly letter on Money and Markets and The Outlook for Stable business, says:

"While the satisfactory credit situation is one of the important factors justifying an expectation of stable business, other favorable factors are caution on the part of manufacturers, jobbers and retailers, and improved facilities for accurate knowledge of national and international conditions now at the disposal of every executive who desires to use them. Conditions abroad also promise to be fairly stable.

"The most important offsetting factor is the wage situation. The manufacturer faces on the one hand rising labor costs and on the other the probability that consumers will stand out against price advances.

"Although higher wages result at first in increased purchasing power on the part of wage earners they afford no grounds for expecting further business expansion. According to the Bureau of the Census there are now about 30,000,000 persons gainfully employed in the United States, exclusive of those engaged in agriculture. However, about half of the entire population is directly dependent on the prosperity of agriculture and the buying power of this immense population is not measured in terms of a flexible wage scale, but in terms of the international market for farm products.

"Another considerable section of the public is dependent upon relatively fixed incomes. There is not the least hope that wages and prices can advance indefinitely without curtailment of consumption in the United States. The effect on export is certain to be adverse.

"There is no question that a considerable proportion of the industrial output of recent months has been absorbed in replacing stocks of consumers, retailers and jobbers. The point has now been reached where future output must increasingly be absorbed by current demand. It therefore seems not likely that production is now at peak and that it may recede

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somewhat, but with stable credit and money conditions the favorable factors should assume a continuance of a profitable volume of business. In fact a slight recession may well serve to prolong activity through heaving wage and price advances, thereby lessening the danger of a buyers' strike.

"It is necessary that every individual and every institution in a position to exert any influence on the business situation should keep cool. Final consumers should neither hesitate to buy for normal requirements nor buy excessively in fear of price advances. All classes of purchasers should pursue a similar policy, refusing to be stamped by cries of shortage, at the same time not hesitating to make reasonable future commitments. Producers from farmers to manufacturers, should endeavor to gauge their output by what seems to be a fair rate of consumption under ordinary conditions when stocks are adequate. If this means tailment in some lines such curtailments should be courageously made. Wage earners must realize that steady work at stable wages is much better than irregular work at abnormally high wages and that there is absolutely no hope of continuously rising wages and full employment."

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GET WAGE INCREASE

Sydney, N. S., May 2—The clerical staff of the Dominion Iron and Steel Company received a surprise with their monthly salary cheques recently in the form of a ten per cent increase. Several hundred men and girls are affected.

MAY DEVOTIONS

Beginning last Tuesday evening and continuing each evening throughout the month, May Devotions are being held in St. Mary's Church.

TERRIBLE FLOOD CONDITIONS IN N.B.

The worst flood conditions which have obtained since 1887, prevailed last week in New Brunswick and Maine, according to reports received from all over the Province. Transportation facilities were at a standstill so far as trains are concerned, and it will be several days before things are back to normal. C.P.R. trains were routed over the Canadian National Railway lines to Montreal. There are no trains over the St. John Valley Railway. The loss by flood at Woodstock is placed at \$150,000. Word from there was that the water was dropping.


The first loss of life as a result of the floods was reported from Musquash when it was learned that Charles Spinney, of Musquash had lost his life in an effort to save some of his stock when his house barns and outbuildings were carried away during the night. The abnormal rainfall of thirty-six hours together with the flow of water from the hills into the feeders of the Musquash resulted in the failure of a portion of the earthen dam which formed the eastern wing of the West Branch head dam of the New Brunswick Electric Power Commission plant to hold, and it went out in the night. This resulted in one of the three turbines being put out of commission, although there is still sufficient power left to supply the demand and to have cared for the city of St. John if it had been depending on Musquash.

Three houses with barns and outbuildings were carried away and much damage resulted to the surrounding lowlying country.

ENGLAND ONCE BURNED WIVES

Along about the second day after a judge has pronounced sentence in some sensational case in the British Court of Justice people begin to speculate just what would have happened to the prisoner had she or he lived a thousand years ago. Enterprising editors detail reporters to dig up parallel cases, and as British justice of the eighteenth century was a primitive affair these make

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enlightening reading.

In one recent week sentence was pronounced in three murder cases, each one ending with the judge donning his black cap, and in each case a woman was in the dock. In the case which has aroused the most comment Mrs. Thompson, who was found guilty of helping to murder her husband, would have been burned at the stake had she lived a hundred and forty years ago.

In those days, the murder of a husband by a wife, of an employer by a servant or a bishop by a clergyman was called petty treason; that is, the murder of a superior to whom the offender owed special fidelity or from who he received special benefits. If a man killed his wife that was not petty treason, it was merely murder. High treason, of course, was and is an offence against the King, or even at one time against his coinage, makers of "bad" money being accused under this head.

In the 1700's men convicted of high or petty treason were hanged, drawn and quartered, while women convicted of either offence were burned at the stake. This difference in sentence was thought to be a great privilege to women. The law said, "As the decency due to their sex forbids the exposure and public mangling of their bodies, the sentence is to be drawn to the gallows and there to be burned alive." In late years the cruelty of this



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punishment was mitigated by strangling the criminal before the flames reached her. A stake of about ten feet high was planted in the ground and the culprit suspended from an iron ring so that the fagots were kindled under her feet. Parish registers in various parts of the country contain records of cases of burning of wives as late as 1782, that is 140 years ago. The parish register of a Somerset village contains this entry under "Marriages" "5 March, 1753, John Brufford, of West Monckton, to Susannah Davis, of Huntslie. An unfortunate marriage. She poisoned him and was burned for so doing at Wells the ensuing autumn."

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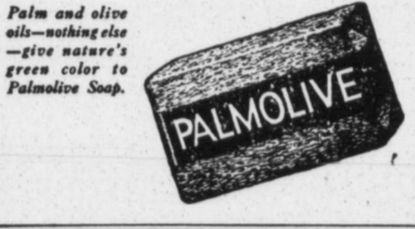
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