

CHAPTER IV.

MARRIAGE RECORD 1831-1866.



MARRIAGE was not always the voluntary proceeding we now find it. It was compulsory among the Greeks. The Spartans could not tolerate celibacy, and by the laws of Lycurgus criminal proceedings could be taken against those who married too late or unsuitably, as well as against those who did not marry at all. It went hard with the latter. Should any man remain single beyond a certain age he was publicly scorned, and was made to do penance by walking naked in the winter through the market place, singing a satirical song on himself. In the French settlement of Canada women were sent over after the men, and the single men, that they might be forced to marry, were subjected to heavy taxation and to restrictions on their trade and their movements generally. Those who married were dealt with, on the other hand, in a generous spirit. Not only were they provided with a good wife and comfortable home, but they were awarded according to the number of their offspring. The father of ten children was pensioned for life at the rate of 300 livres a year. If he had twelve children the allowance was increased to 400 livres, and it went up to 1,200 livres when fifteen children blessed the union. The conditions were reversed in the English colonies, for there the settlers eagerly welcomed the other sex, and did not hesitate to pay traders heavily in tobacco weight for every marriageable woman they brought over. As far back, however, as 1695 the local authorities of Eastham in Massachusetts voted that every unmarried man in the township should kill six blackbirds or three crows yearly while he remained single, producing the scalps in proof, and as a penalty for not obeying the order he was forbidden to marry until he had made up all arrears. The requirement in this case was almost nominal; but it was not so in Maryland, where half a century later the Colonial Assembly imposed a tax of five shillings yearly upon all bachelors above thirty-five years of age (and on widowers without children) who were possessed of £300. There was a similar graduated tax on bachelors in England in the reign of William III. Any commoner who was a bachelor at twenty-five had to pay a shilling fine, yearly, and the amount was increased in accordance with rank or title, any ducal offender being taxed to the extent of £12 10s. yearly. The taxes grew heavier before they were removed, and the time came when bachelors were called upon to pay an extra tax on their servants. Thus we see the old states as well as young ones have found out that their prosperity depends upon its married citizens. The best subjects, as Lord Bacon

points out, are those in this relationship, the reason he gives for this conclusion being that single are "light to runaway," while "he that hath a wife and children hath given hostages to fortune."

The marriage record of Spoon River precinct of Putnam county, from 1831 to 1839, is as follows :

1832.

Feb. 16. Daniel Warren and Lucy Skeel, by Samuel D. Laughlin, J. P.

1833.

Jan. 1. Richard Hunt and Ruth Harram, by Samuel D. Laughlin, J. P.

1834.

Nov. 16. Emanuel Hitchcock and Rebecca Merrill, by Benj. Smith, J. P.

1836.

Mar. 17. Dexter Wall and Sarah Starks, by Benj. Smith, J. P.

April 28. Nero W. Mounts and Nancy Martindale, by Benj. Smith, J. P.

May 19. Geo. F. Thomas and Elizabeth Romble, by W. M. Stewart, J. P.

Oct. 10. Martin Batterton and America Taylor, by Benj. Smith, J. P.

1837.

April 5. Henry James and Margaret Wilkinson, by Luther Driscoll, M. G.

July 4. Jerry R. Larkins and Sarah Ann Davis, by J. B. Chenoweth.

" 15. Nelson Dugan and Mary A. Stroude, by W. M. Stewart, J. P.

Aug. 17. Wm. M. Young and Nancy H. Glenn, by J. B. Chenoweth, M. G.

" 24. John P. Judson and Maria Wattles, by J. B. Chenoweth, M. G.

Oct. 31. Isaac Baker and Eliza Ash, by J. B. Chenoweth, M. G.

Nov. 12. Joseph Cox and Catherine Edwards, by J. W. Agard, J. P.

Dec. 13. Langley Hall and Sarah Ligo, by M. G. Brace, J. P.

1838.

April 10. W. W. Drummond and Jemima McClenahan, by Jonathan Miner, M. G.

" 15. Samuel Love and Catherine Taylor, by J. W. Agard, J. P.

May 31. Jacob Zenor and Elvira Skeels, by B. Harris, M. G.

Sept. 25. Joseph K. Lane and Emily Chaffee, by J. W. Agard, J. P.

Oct. 2. W. A. Drummond and Ruth Cox, by J. W. Agard, J. P.

" 4. Samuel Sterne and Elizabeth Phenix, by M. G. Brace, J. P.

Dec. 16. Thomas Timmons and Mary Jane Davis, by J. W. Agard, J. P.

1839.

Jan. 3. Robert W. Clanahan and Lucy A. Richards, by Jonathan Miner.

" 8. David Currier and Rebecca Jane Parks, by W. G. Vail, M. G.

Feb. 28. Geo. Simmerman and Phoebe Richmond, by Jonathan Miner.

Mar. 13. Dan. Woodward and Mary A. Haditat, by M. G. Brace, J. P.

During this time a license was issued to Minott Silliman, but as the ceremony was not performed in Putnam county the document and certificate were recorded at St. Louis in 1833.

The marriage of Harris W. Miner and Miss Nancy Gross, in the winter of 1831-2, was the first between white American settlers within the bounds of Stark county. Squire Hiram M. Curry, of Peoria