THE LAW CODE OF HAMMURABI

Brief Analysis of This Remarkable Monument of Antiquity Which Is the Oldest Known Code of Laws—Character of Its Provisions—Class Legislation Revealing Social Conditions—Marriage and Family Life—Protection of Industry—Sections Dealing with Procedure—Later Influence of Code, etc.

By Erwin J. Urch, A. M., B. D.
Instructor in Ancient History, University City, (Mo.) Senior High School

THE extent to which a study of the ancient code of Hammurabi[1] arouses and satisfies intellectual curiosity will in itself be the measure of the practical value of such a study. The students of historical jurisprudence are not the only ones who experience pleasure and profit in studying the oldest known code of laws, for it contains much that is familiar through similarity to modern law and much that is curious because it is crude and primitive. Therefore, one who aims to make accessible a new analysis of the Hammurabic laws is not necessarily guilty of pure effrontery or even of stupid repetition, especially since some of the better known histories of jurisprudence do not give adequate consideration to these laws.

Hammurabi was the sixth king of the first dynasty of Babylon.[2] That is, he ruled the city-kingdom of Babylon (2125-2080 B. C.).[3] Scholars have long been familiar with the name "Hammurabi." "Hammu" probably signifies a god. "Rabi" is common in the Bablyonian language and means "is great." The adoption of such a name was, therefore, an act of piety, quite consistent for kings who also functioned as chief-priests. Only a few hundred years before Hammurabi's time Babylon had grown from a mere village to the city of first importance in the Plain of Shinar. The new dynasty of kings under whom Babylon arose to power represented a newly arrived Semitic race. The new Semitic element retained names and words which they brought from another location. The first dynasty of Babylon is designated by some scholars as Arabian.

Of the kings of this dynasty Hammurabi was the most energetic. He established an empire which included the Tigris-Euphrates valley and territory north of the Arabian desert extending from the valley to the Mediterranean Sea—that is, all of the region known as the Fertile Crescent.[4] Much of his time was spent in warfare. But he also busied himself with digging and repairing canals which were used both for irrigation and transportation. He built and repaired walls, or fortifications, also shrines and temples, and often personally supervised the work of construction. His government was a benevolent paternalism. He retained most of the duties of government in his own hands, and did much of the work which in modern times would be distributed among subordinates. He was chief-executive, chief-engineer, head of the treasury, chief-priest, and supreme judge as occasion demanded. His agents and secretaries were personal employees or slaves in complete subservience to him. Of all the officials in his realm only the vassal-kings retained anything like the power of independent action.

Numerous letters,[5] besides the code itself, reveal the operations of the Babylonian government, the social conditions of the times, as well as the industrial activities. These letters probably were dictated to secretaries by the great king. They were written in cuneiform on clay-tablets as small as they could conveniently be, then covered with a sprinkling of sand and wrapped in clay-envelopes, baked hard in an oven, and finally delivered to letter-carriers. The letters represent Hammurabi directing the collection of temple-revenues, the care of the royal flocks and herds, the audit of accounts, the regulation of food-supplies, shipping and other transport, labor on public roads, the settlement of questions about debts and loans, and numerous other matters of greater or less importance. He carried on an extensive diplomatic correspondence with his governors and vassal-kings.

In the administration of justice Hammurabi was more equitable than would be expected in view of his opportunity to be otherwise. As far as possible he made himself accessible to all. He went so far in his effort to be fair and just as, for example, to enforce a merchant's claim against that of a city-governor. He dealt with bribery promptly. He was severe against money-lenders. He sent out instructions explaining how specific cases were to be tried. In cases involving large sums in debts and loans he ordered that the parties should be sent to Babylon, giving instructions that they should be guarded. The cases coming under the forms of legal procedure were essentially civil cases only. Criminal cases were dealt with in such a summary manner that the process could hardly be graced with the term "legal procedure."

In the second year of his reign Hammurabi began the reforms which culminated toward the close of his career in the promulgation of his code. No code of laws is ever strictly a new invention. The greatest historical significance of Hammurabi's code lies in the fact that it portrays customs which had prevailed among the Babylonians for several generations before his time. His contribution to jurisprudence consisted in transforming a chaotic mass of customs into something like an orderly sys-

1. Though there are numerous books on the subject, the following are some of the best in English: Harper, R. F., *The Code of Hammurabi* (2 vols., containing a translation and an exposition of the code); Johns, G. H. W., *The Oldest Code of Laws in the World;* Cook, S. A., *The Laws of Moses and the Code of Hammurabi.* The best general histories of Babylon are: King, L. W., *A History of Babylon;* and Rogers, R. W., *A History of Babylonia and Assyria.*

2. See Rogers, *op. cit.*, 312f.

3. See King, *op. cit.*, chap. III; and Rogers, *op. cit.*, chap. XII.

4. The extent of this empire is shown by the place-names mentioned in the Prologue of the code; so also the ways by which the several cities were held in subjection unner Babylonian control.

5. See King, L. W., *Letters and Inscriptions of Hammurabi* (3 vols.)

tem. Much that had been meaningless in the old customary law was either brought into workable relation to the rest or else discarded. Undoubtedly, the law-giver introduced into the code his own rulings and enactments which as a result of experience in the administration of justice seemed necessary to improve and supplement the old customs. Considerations of the gods and religious institutions of districts other than Babylon itself imply that the code contains parts of the customary law of these other districts.

The monument depicting Hammurabi's code was unearthed at the Acropolis of Susa during December, 1901, and January, 1902, by J. de Morgan. "There are many reasons for believing that this Code of Laws was published in many places."[6] That there were several copies of the code is shown by the existence of fragments of duplicates, many of which were found before the discovery of the fuller text. The British Museum contains a number of fragments of an Assyrian edition, prepared by scribes of Assurbanipal (668-626 B. C.). The text of several fragments of late Babylonian copies is in the Berlin Museum.[7] The code, therefore, was widely published and used long after Hammurabi's time. The discovery of the monument bearing on its front and back nearly all of the code greatly extended modern knowledge of ancient Babylon (2500-2000 B. C.).

The copy of the code found by de Morgan was engraved on three large fragments of a block of black diorite, which when fitted together formed a stele about eight feet high and about six feet wide at the bottom and tapering to about five and one-half feet wide at the top. On the upper front surface a sculptured bas-relief represents Hammurabi receiving his law from the seated sun-god Shamash. This bas-relief is about two and one-half feet high and about two feet wide. The Semitic inscription in cuneiform begins immediately below the sculptured figures. The text is arranged in parallel columns, each written belt-wise across the curved surface of the stele. On the front surface sixteen of the original twenty-one columns are preserved, five apparently having been cut off by an Elamite conqueror. On the reverse surface twenty-eight columns[8] are preserved, with only a few breaks. It is estimated that originally there were forty-nine columns, four thousand lines, and about eight thousand words,[9] and that there remain forty-four columns, three thousand, six hundred and fifty-four lines, and about seven thousand, three hundred words. Needless to say, this is one of the longest written records of so remote a time—four thousand years ago!

The code of Hammurabi is essentially a civil code. Compensation to the injured party paid by the accused party in cases which are now regarded as criminal, reveals the failure to look upon any act, except perhaps treason, as an offense against the State. The idea of an act being an offense against the community rather than against an individual and his family was of relatively late origin. Moreover, many offenses that would now be classed as public crimes were subject to correction through the agencies of religion; this practice helped to postpone the rise of public law. That is, the custom of treating certain acts as offenses against the gods, which, therefore, contaminated the community, carried with it the motive merely to appease the wrath of the gods and to remove their displeasure by inflicting punishment upon the guilty party. Under such conceptions, the court only indirectly served the interests of the State, for the State was not regarded as a party in the cases.

The essentially civil character of the code appears in provisions which not only required compensation as a form of punishment, but must have required self-help as the chief means of securing justice. For example, if an aristocrat should die as a result of a blow struck unintentionally, the offender "shall pay one-half mana of silver," or if a freeman should die under the same circumstances, the offender "shall pay one-third mana of silver." A "law of retaliation" seems to have been involved in some modes of compensation. For example: "If an aristocrat knock out a tooth of a man of his own rank, they shall knock out his tooth."[10] But again: "If one knock out a tooth of a freeman, he shall pay one-third mana of silver."

Class-legislation is a feature of the code. There were three distinct social classes, the highest class, comprising the aristocrats, or nearly all of the free-born citizens. Potters, tailors, stone-cutters, carpenters, and builders, who were paid a daily wage, but still belonged to old trade guilds, were in this class. But physicians, veterinary surgeons, and branders[11] were not so classed. A man was an "officer," and so at least temporarily in this class, while performing military service.

The next highest social class was made up of the common people.[12] They were not necessarily poor, for they possessed goods and slaves. They had no special association with the courts, except as they were summoned to answer charges brought against them. The code held this class, in comparison with the highest class, liable to smaller compensation for injuries inflicted and subject to less severe penalties for the more serious criminal offenses. The "commoner" made a smaller offering in the temple. He seems to have been obliged to serve in the army.

The third class was a numerous body of slaves. A considerable portion of the code provides for the recovery of runaway slaves, for the punishment for failures to return slaves to their rightful owners and for mutilations of the brands of slaves, and for the punishment of the runaway slaves themselves. Such extensive consideration of the status of slaves signifies that, since they were naturally not satisfied with their lot, some difficulties were experienced not only in maintaining the institution of slavery, but also in maintaining the status of slaves as chattels. They could be sold or pledged as securities. Damages done to them had to be paid for, the compensation going to the master. Although masters did not have the power of life and death over their slaves, they could punish them by mutilation. The slaves seem to have been recruited from captives taken in war. The code specifically regulates the status of slaves of different nationalities. There is

6. Harper, *Intro.*, xi.
7. Peiser, P. E., *Jurisprudentiae Babylonicae quae supersunt.* Côthen. 1890.
8. That is, the original number of columns.
9. An average of two words to the line, for cuneiform words engraved on the hardest of rocks could not be confined to smaller space.
10. This must have been a figurative manner of referring to minor bodily injuries.
11. Branders of slaves and cattle were common.
12. Harper's translation of the cuneiform is "freeman."

no trace in the code or in contemporary documents, of serfs, such as were so common in Assyria and in the district around Harran in the seventh century B. C.

Slaves could acquire wealth and act in business as freeman, but their masters had to be cognizant of their transactions. Many slaves married and had homes of their own, in which cases the masters acted as patrons and recovered their slaves' debts for them. "A slave who married one of his master's slave-girls was able to acquire wealth, but his master was his sole heir, and his children were slaves."[13] Especially if a slave was in the service of a "great house," or of a freeman, that slave could marry a free woman, in which case the children were free and the free woman's dowry became hers at her husband's death and was to be distributed among her children at her own death. A slave was sometimes able to purchase his freedom with his savings. If a female slave became her master's concubine, her children were free, and so was she at her husband's death. "If her master chose he could acknowledge her children, and then they inherited equally with the children of his free wife; but these had first choice in the sharing of his property."[14] The code provides further stipulations as to such relationships between a master and his female slaves and between these and the master's free wife.

Not only does the code treat separately aristocrats, commoners, and slaves, but it legislates for specific classes within the three social classes. The first of such sub-classes comprised the feudal land-owners who held land controlled by the government. The "levy-masters," or "officers," whose holdings seem to have been regarded as a part of their salaries, and who seem to have rendered local services to the government in return for the use of the land, enjoyed certain privileges of exemption from service and of protection from possible oppression by the governor. Associated with these "officers" were "fishermen," "hunters," and "catchers," whose duties seem to have been to provide food for the palace. Though less privileged than the "levy-masters," they, like their superiors, might be sent on special missions by the king, from the performance of which they could not escape by sending substitutes without incurring the penalty of death. Others held crown-land, not by rendering personal service to the king, but by paying rent or tribute. Both forms of land-tenure were inalienable and yet hereditary. But land held by foreign residents, merchants, and votaries had to be alienable; and yet the duty of service of some sort was required even of these occupants of the land. Some land was freehold, though the feudal status of property was the most common.

Votaries, or priestesses, were the subject of special legislation. A votary of Marduk was exempted from "duty," or feudal service. Votaries had complete control over their property, or not, according to their fathers' wishes. In any case they had a life interest in it. The code provides various ways by which such an estate should be administered. The votaries usually lived in a common home. Severe rules concerning their behavior comprise a part of the code.

Even the conduct of persons of certain professions was regulated by the code and the courts. The keepers of beer-shops, usually women, were not to sell above the lawful price and were otherwise restrained on pain of death for violation. The physician did not enjoy a high standing; he was never an aristocrat. The fee for a successful surgical operation was fixed by law, and the failure to succeed in a case was severely dealt with, even to the point of cutting off the offender's hands so as to prevent repetition of such failure. The veterinary surgeon, the brander who was frequently also a barber, and the builder were treated similarly. For example, the builder's fee was fixed by law, and his bad workmanship was punishable if it led to damage. He had to make good any loss, and repair at his own expense. If any personal injury was incurred by anyone, as, for example, by the collapse of one of the buildings or boats he had built, the builder had to suffer in a like manner, even to his own death in case the owner was killed, or his son's death in case the owner's son was killed. It is clear that property-owners were expected to take no risks.

Agriculture was also protected and regulated by law. Some land was regarded as private property, though subject to its owner's duty to the State. A tax was levied upon the crop in proportion to its amount. Land was sometimes given to a farmer to reclaim. For neglect to reclaim such land during a period of three years the penalty was that in the fourth year the farmer was to put it into a good state of cultivation, pay a legally prescribed sum as rental, and return it to its original owner. Rents for land, other methods of land-tenure, and the conduct of the farmers' business were fixed by law.

The Babylonian land-owners were often in need of ready money in spite of their great harvests. Floods often destroyed their crops. The land-owner who had borrowed and had his crops destroyed by flood could postpone payment of the principal and pay no interest for a year. In no case could a money-lender take the crop in payment of a loan. Money-lenders were forbidden to speculate in "futures." Floods had to be provided against by an elaborate system of ditches and canals. Yet in the summer irrigation was necessary. A man was held responsible for the loss in case his dike broke as a result of his neglect; all his possessions could be sold, if necessary, to cover the damages. Wages or hire were fixed by the code, such, for example, as the hire for the harvester, the laborer, a wagon with its driver, a working ox, or an ox for threshing. The care of the hired animals was strictly guarded.

Vast flocks and herds were owned by individuals, and the code states definite wages for herdsmen and shepherds. These latter were held responsible for loss in the flocks or herds, except, as in the case of working animals, loss caused by a god,[15] in which event the loss was the owner's. Other responsibilities of the herdsmen and shepherds were specified. In all cases carelessness made the guilty parties liable to compensations and refunds, as, for example, embezzlement was punishable by repaying tenfold. Obviously the owner's ran no risks.

The shipping trade of Hammurabi's empire was large. Canal-boats, at least, were numerous. Commerce and fishing along the waterways were exten-

13. Johns, *"Code of Hammurabi,"* in Hastings' *Dict. of the Bible,* Extra Volume, 589.

14. *Ibid.*

15. That is, loss by accident, such as by lightning, for example.

sive. The builder of a ship had to give a year's guarantee as to its fitness; if a ship proved defective within the year the builder had to replace it with a sound ship. The wages of boatmen, as well as the hire of passenger-boats and freight-ships, were prescribed by law. The boatmen, too, were responsible for losses, if these were due to carelessness. A great deal of business was done by caravan, as well as by ship, with foreign countries. The code refers to captives taken and carried away from Babylonia, who were bought abroad by slave-dealers and brought back. Slaves were sold and transported abroad. Consignments of gold, silver, jewels, or portable treasures sent by a man resident abroad were protected by definite legislation. The carrier had to deliver the goods or else pay fivefold their value. Other specifications regulated this phase of foreign commerce. Warehousing and deposit were features of commerce, especially in handling grain. The storage of corn was particularly dealt with, even to the point of determining warehousemen's responsibilities.

Much is said in other sources[16] concerning interest on money. But the code states no more than that interest had to be returned with borrowed sums. Loans were frequent at harvest-time to enable farmers to pay their harvesters. Such debtors could pay with grain, according to the royal exchange value; and creditors could not refuse to take goods in liquidation of debts. But debts might lead to various forms of restraint, all of which were determined by the code. In the case of a man who incurred debt to the community, resulting, for example, through the breaking of his dikes, and could not pay, he was sold with all his goods and the claimants shared the proceeds. The code does not deal with sale, except to forbid the sale of benefices and to provide the possibility of demanding back the sale-price of a slave having an undisclosed defect. Houses were often hired for periods of one to ten years, rents were specified by law, and payment of rent usually had to be made semi-annually in advance.

Marriage and family life were carefully regulated by a large portion of the code. Both dowries and bride-prices were subjects of law. Only those women who had once been married or had been seduced were free to marry the men of their choice. The others were given in marriage by their fathers who might accept or reject the suitors. Marriage was by contract; a marriage-contract was drawn up, sealed, and witnessed. Desertion of a wife dissolved the marriage-bond. Persistent worthlessness of a wife and mutual aversion justified divorce. A husband had the power to divorce his wife with the words, "Thou art not my wife." But he could not do so without a cause. The wife could secure a divorce if she could prove cruelty. The Babylonian could have but one proper wife, though concubinage was permissible and common.

The father had power over his children to the point of being permitted to pledge them for his debts. Adoption was common, and an adopted son was as difficult to disinherit as a real one. Persistent unfilial conduct justified disinheritance, and ingratitude on the part of an adopted son was punished according to his status before his adoption. Sons inherited equally, but adopted sons were usually heirs to a residuary portion. A married daughter whose share had been given in her dowry inherited nothing at her father's death. But if she had not previously received her portion she had a life-interest in a share equal to that of a son. A father might give a favorite son a free gift in addition to his rightful share. A widow took a share equal to that of a son, together with property she held in her own right. Detailed specifications as to inheritance again show the efforts of the Babylonians to protect property and the interests of ownership. But a full testamentary disposition of property was not permitted by the laws of Hammurabi.

The first five sections of the Hammurabic code deal with procedure. The chief seat of justice was the temple, a possible evidence of the involution of religion in the administration of justice. The judge is seldom mentioned in the code. However, such references as there are show that the office was not one of pure caprice, nor of arbitrary independence. If a judge retried a case or altered his judgment once given, he had to repay twelvefold what he had prescribed as the penalty. His duties included the examination into depositions, fixing a time within six months for production of witnesses, beng present at the execution of sentences, reconciling fathers with their sons, making inventories of the property of widows' children on their remarriage, and settling family-quarrels. No priest was ever a judge. The judge had only local jurisdiction and seems not to have received any fee. The king's judges are mentioned, but it is not certain that he appointed them all.

There were three types of witnesses—the "elders" who acted also as a sort of jury, the "deponents" who were put on oath and whose false witness was penalized, and the attesting witnesses to a document. In case such a document embodied a legal decision all the "elders" acting in the trial were the attesting witnesses. Aside from similar brief references, the modes of proof employed are not revealed by the code. Likewise, the steps in the procedure are concealed. Whether the procedure in the court was accusatorial or inquisitorial, whether or not the State relieved the plaintiff of the responsibility of bringing a culprit to justice, and whether the prosecutor was a private citizen[17] or an officer of the State—these are questions which the code or any other source do not answer. But the fact that cases had to be adjourned sometimes to permit the production of witnesses would indicate that procedure in other respects was not definitely regulated by law. Purchase from a minor, deposit, and even sale was invalid without witnesses, and so witnesses must always have been necessary in the proceedings of the courts. There were no professional advocates, and so the plaintiff must have pleaded his own case. There are evidences in the code that the legal procedure was largely one of private self-help, similar to that set forth in the Roman Law of the Twelve Tables.

Specifications as to the death-penalty are frequent in Hammurabi's code. In some cases, however, the manner of inflicting the death-penalty is not specified. Of the prescribed forms of death-sentences there was burning, drowning, impalement, dismemberment, and other special forms.

16. See King, *Letters and Inscriptions of Hammurabi*, and *A History of Babylon*, in the latter of which a liberal use is made of the Chronicles of the kings of the first dynasty.

17. As the practice was in Republician Rome.

Other penalties intended as less severe were mutilation, scourging, banishment from the city, multiple restoration, and simple restitution. By whom the sentence of the law was carried out constitutes a question which the sources do not answer. It may be that the "catchers," the subordinate associates of the "officers," acted as police rather than provisioners of the palace and also performed a service similar to that of the lictors of a Roman magistrate.[18]

The crimes and misdemeanors considered in the code are numerous and often peculiar. There is the repeated insistence that the offender must be caught in the act. Theft and receiving stolen goods were dealt with severely, though apparently through a process of private self-help. Harboring a runaway slave and kidnapping a slave were treated in the same way as theft. Theft at a fire and receiving of stolen goods by a slave were regarded as particularly offensive. Brigandage, or highway robbery, was a capital offense. Offenses against property of whatever form were severely repressed. The possible types of assault were matched by just so many penalties. From the summary manner in which the worst cases of assault were handled, it may be assumed that death was the penalty for murder, though murder as such is not mentioned in the code. The principle of retaliation was applied even in the case of an intended crime; false accusation and false witness were brought under this principle. Slander against a respectable woman was punished by degradation to slavery. Breach of contract had to be made good and was often further penalized. Neglect of duty was severely punished. Oppression, bribery, and misappropriation of public property on the part of governors and magistrates were capital offenses. All disputed or unclassified cases were left to the decision of the king.

Though the Prologue pays its respects to the gods of the realm, the code itself contains very little reference to religion. Frequent mention is made of "strokes of god,"[19] by which responsible persons were relieved of blame for that which otherwise would have been a crime or misdemeanor. The code protected temple-property, putting it on a level with that of the "palace." Among the duties of the temple was that of ransoming its townsmen who may have been captured in war.

Hammurabi's code affords a view of Babylonia's administrative ideal and standard of justice. His age was one of strenuous growth, in the course of which the long linguistic and racial conflict was decided in favor of the Semitic. Yet Sumerian culture had left its traces; though having yielded dominance to the newer race, it gave more to the sum-total of Babylonian culture because it had more to give. Hammurabi's code, in a sense the product of this culture, was not extensively original, though it was far-sightedly adapted to contemporary needs. How much of Sumerian customary law actually passed into the later Semitic law cannot be determined. But the older customs long attached to the land could not have been easily crowded out. The code and contemporaneous documents present extensive evidence of the social and political structure of Hammurabi's age. An analysis of this structure reveals the age as one of transition.

At intervals during the millennium following its promulgation, the old Babylonian code figured in the administration of justice in Babylonia and Assyria. The Elamites seem to have carried to Susa the stele that was found in 1902,[20] and the fact that they removed five columns of the writing as though to repudiate that portion of the law suggests that they regarded the monument with more than antiquarian interest. The existence of duplicate fragments of monuments similar to the one found at Susa presents evidence of the wide use of the code in later times. The Assyrian scribes, more than a thousand years after Hammurabi, were making copies of his law and writing commentaries upon it. There are those who believe that elements of the Hammurabic law found their way into the law of the Romans. At any rate, the millennium during which the Twelve Tables were cited by Roman courts followed fast upon that during which Hammurabi's code was cited by numerous courts of Asia.

18. Actual execution in Republican Rome was by these lictors.
19. Unavoidable accidents.
20. Scholars base the assumption that Elamites defaced the stele on the fact that it was found in what had been their country.

Department's Anti-Trust Expert Appointed

Members who attended the Buffalo meeting of the Association will recall John Lord O'Brian of that city as one of the most active and indefatigable of hosts and also as one of the most pleasing speakers at the annual dinner. They will therefore be particularly interested in the announcement by Attorney General William D. Mitchell that he has been appointed Assistant to the Attorney General, in charge of anti-trust cases, succeeding Col. William J. Donovan, who retired on March 4. The announcement states that the new appointee has already represented the United States in a number of anti-trust cases, including U. S. vs. Eastman Kodak Co., U. S. vs. New Departure, U. S. vs. LaMar, Von Rintelin et al. It adds that "Mr O'Brian is a seasoned lawyer of high reputation and wide experience. He was not a candidate for the position, but has consented to accept the post at the request of the President and the Attorney General. In this respect he is like Charles Evans Hughes, Jr., who was not a candidate for the post of Solicitor General, to which he was nominated."

High Cost of Heart Balm

"Amounts sued for, as well as the judgments recovered, in marriage promise cases have tended substantially to increase during the past ten or fifteen years. In the gay '90s $10,000 was, by comparison, a very large award in a breach of promise action, and the case of Campbell vs. Arbuckle, decided in New York in 1889, in which a verdict for $45,000 was sustained, attracted wide attention both for the liberality of the verdict and because it was allowed upon the theory that the amount was 4½ per cent of the defendant's total estate. The damages claimed were $250,000. Within recent years a female plaintiff in a breach of promise case who demands less than half a million dollars for heart balm is rare indeed. And juries have rendered some very large verdicts which have been, in whole or part, sustained by the courts. About ten years ago a jury in Brooklyn awarded a disappointed woman plaintiff, 29 years old, $225,000 damages against a reluctant fiance of 84 years of age. This verdict was reduced by Justice Cropsey of the New York Supreme Court to $125,000. The wealth of the aged defendant in this case was reputed to be from $15,000,000 to $20,000,000, so the percentage rule of the Arbuckle decision was not applied."—*New York Times.*