

GOING PLACES

with C. Vanderbilt, Jr.



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Miami on a New Throne as the Queen of Divorce

By JAMES A. KELLY.

MIAMI, Fla., Feb. 18.—Styles and scenery for divorce have changed.

Dude leather chaps and sombreros are out, while bathing suits and beach apparel are in.

Prickly cacti have been traded for cocoanut palms and desert stands swept aside by the sparkling ocean spray of sunny south Florida.

Miami—long queen of the Eastern resort cities—has donned additional ermine and ascended a new throne as queen of divorce.

For the second successive year Miami has defeated ex-Queen Reno in number of divorces filed, even though the time necessary for residence is just double the six-week period required in the Western city. Score for the past two years is: Miami, 1940, 4406; Reno, 1940, 2314; Miami, 1939, 3687, and Reno, 1939, 2231.

Variety of Diversions.

The new divorce queen rules a contented people. The prospective divorcee finds in tourist-minded Miami all the diversions of "wild and woolly" Nevada and the polished refinements of drawing-room and cafe society as well. Riding stables and golf abound in the Miami area—just as do judges and eager lawyers.

Big names of the theatrical world entertain nightly in Miami and in her brightly lighted sister city, Miami Beach. Night clubs and bars throw open their doors from dusk 'til dawn, and there unhappy husbands and wives drown their sorrows amid the click of roulette wheels and dice.

The world's best thoroughbreds run daily at beautiful Hialeah and Tropical Parks throughout the season and prospective divorcees may be seen gambling with their prospective alimony.

For Any Pocketbook.

Whether a divorce-minded wife is a scullery maid or a society matron at home, Miami has a housing and entertainment range to suit her whim and pocketbook. From furnished rooms to ocean-front mansion—from hamburger stand to world-famous restaurant—from juke-joint to bistros comparing favorably with the nation's best, any dissatisfied wife or husband may be comfortably diverted while awaiting the signature of a circuit judge on a divorce decree.

There are nine grounds for divorce in Florida. For proof of any of the following, a disgruntled wife or husband may take advantage of the modern marriage clause—"until death—or the circuit court—do us part": They are adultery, violent and ungovernable temper, habitual drunkenness, divorce granted the other party in another state, kinship within degrees prohibited by law, natural impotency of the defendant, that either party had a husband or wife living at the time of their marriage or desertion for one year.

395 Attorneys.

By opening the telephone book, the prospective divorcee may find listed the names and phone num-

bers of 395 attorneys and law firms—more per capita in proportion to the population than any other city in the world.

Six circuit judges are available to sign divorce decrees. It is significant in the light of Miami's ever-increasing divorce business, that two new circuit judges were appointed in recent months, due to population increases revealed by the 1940 census.

What does a Miami divorce cost? The answer to this question depends upon several things. The simplicity or complexity of the case, the prominence and capability of the attorney—or the client—and the necessity for taking testimony before a master in chancery all are factors to be considered in determining the cost.

Decrees from \$50 Up.

Divorce decrees have been "signed, sealed and delivered" in a few hours for less than \$50, while others have run into thousands of dollars and months of litigation. An average rate, where the case requires only the filing of usual papers and a single court hearing, is \$50.

These judges agree the necessity for divorces is lamentable, but since judicial severances of marital knots is permitted under the law they are sworn to serve, they grant divorces wherever the facts and grounds warrant.

"Sad—but often the only way out of a difficult situation," sums up the opinions of Miami's divorce judges regarding the legal separations which have made of Miami the divorce capital of America.

Send to Circuit Court St. Rev.