



BY EVERY TRAIN THEY ARRIVE—BAG, BAGGAGE,
AND BABIES

MINE signed a waiver."
"Mine gave me his power of attorney."
"Mine, the pig, refuses to do anything. He says I can languish out here till—well, what he said was not polite. So here I am, having 'done time' for three months, with forty-two days more to go."
"Mine says if I ever marry again in New York State he will have me arrested for bigamy. He should worry! After ten years with him marriage has no charms for me."
"I learned one lesson from mine—marriage is not necessary to a woman's happiness. But one has to get married to find that out."
"I expected too much from mine. The sign over the door of matrimony should be, 'Abandon hope, all ye who enter here.'"

THE place is Reno, Nev. The time, every day and almost any hour on its streets, in its restaurants or shops, or about its hotels and apartment-houses. The subject, of course, is husbands. Speaking are the wives whom every transcontinental train deposits by tens and twenties and even thirties in that colorful little Nevada town tucked away between the Sierra Nevada and the Virginia Mountains at the end of the Western desert.

They are everywhere to be seen and heard, these weary wives and some few disheartened husbands. From New York, Delaware, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida, the District of Columbia, wherever their own States deny them the right to freedom from untenable marriage, they come as exiles to a promised land where the mills of divorce grind fast if not always exceeding sure.

And Reno is glad to have them. At its very gateway, strung above the street leading from the railroad-station, "Welcome!" in bright lights flashes to greet them as they alight from the train, bag, baggage, and often babies. This welcome never wavers, by day or by night. When the sun settles to rest behind the jeweled hills, the lights come out in Reno, and they stay out until the sun comes again in glory. Like wine to the drooping spirit is the air—Reno is forty-five hundred feet above sea-level.

The sun shines in a turquoise sky a full three hundred days of the year. Hearts must be gay where the eyes rest always upon hill rounding upon hill of lapis and gold and amethyst, running away to treed ridges veiled in the blue haze of a beautiful distance, and where a jade-green river laughs as it leaps on its way from lake to lake. Everywhere one looks in Reno one meets beauty. Everywhere one walks there are laughter and light. Life appears there as a continuous fiesta.

Virginia Street, with its smart hotel, its chic women, its exclusive shops, its high-powered motor-cars, is a bit of a metropolis. In the large department-store the latest jazz rings out the day long. Farther down, on North Virginia Street, the town is transmuted into a farming-center, with automobiles parked in long lines as in other days horses and buggies and wagons were hitched to posts while the farmers marketed their produce and the farmers' wives did their shopping. Beyond the railroad-track it takes on the aspects of a



WHERE TWO OR THREE ARE GATHERED TOGETHER IN THE NAME OF DIVORCE SYMPTOMS AND DIAGNOSES ARE DISCUSSED

IN RENO—WHERE THEY TAKE THE CURE

By Genevieve Parkhurst

Drawings by Marion Hill



mining-town—miners in dungarees or dressed up in their store clothes, ready to spend their dollars earned with pick and shovel beneath the ground, cowboys in full regalia, "desert rats" there for a glimpse of a peopled world.

Painted women, ready to feed on the loneliness and the generosity of the men from the mines and lumber-camps and cattle-ranches, form their gay parade by day as well as by night. Indians in bright blankets, or ancient squaws in tattered garments, walk the streets, or, squatting at corners, beg pennies from the passers-by or seek to sell their wares of moccasins, basketry, or beadwork. Nickel- and dime- and quarter-in-the-slot machines take their stand in the drug-stores, the cigar-shops, the candy-stores.

There are dance-halls and night clubs, and on the roads leading to the desert or into the mountains of California are resorts set in groves of poplar and pine where those who will may dance the night away. There are no street-cars. The tracks were torn up because the road did not pay. Everybody has a car. For transients who have not, there are taxis held down to the maximum fee of twenty-five cents a passenger for any destination within the city limits.

And there is the constant stream of coming and going automobiles of eloping Californians who escape to Reno to evade what is known as the "gin marriage" law, whereby those wishing to marry must make application for a license three days before it may be issued. They arrive at the rate of five an hour.

In Reno it is taken for granted that any new face means a new divorce.

A clerk who was fitting me with a pair of shoes the second day I was there asked me with a broad and knowing grin, "How many days more to go?"

When I assured him that I was not "one of them" he said, "I hadn't seen you before—and of course most of us are here 'doing time.' I have twenty days more to go. But I think I shall stay here. Wages are fair, living is cheap, and you sure do get a lot out of life for your money."

At the manicure's the girl asked me the same question. She was working to pass the time, she said.

So was the waitress in a restaurant where I went often for luncheon. So was the taxicab-driver, a bit under the weather and with whom I had to remonstrate for reckless driving. "Sure, Lady," he responded, "you'll have to excuse me. I got my papers to-day and I been celebratin'."

So was the old man who tended the garden of a home I visited.

The poor are there as well as the rich and the merely comfortable. Waiting on table or presiding at the cash-register in the restaurants, behind the counters in the shops, at the wheels of taxicabs, in the garages, are those who are there working their way through the divorce court. A trained nurse I met said that seventy-five per cent. of the trained nurses there had come to take "the cure," and many of them, having achieved their purpose, were staying on because they liked the town.

Yes, at first sight one would say that Reno was run practically by and for divorce. It is

only first sight. There is something very different from all of this in Reno—its old and stable citizenry, which is quite unaware of the divorce population, and, when aware, remains completely aloof, casting upon it an eye of disapproval.

This conservative element is concerned entirely with keeping its home and social life sacrosanct from the invasion. It points with pride to its schools, its university, its homes. It resents the accusation that has come because of the traffic in easy divorce and easy marriage. It insists that the town has grown, not through any outside impetus, but because of the richness of the soil, the perfection of its climate, the beauty by which it is surrounded and of which it is a part.

Forsaking the spotlight of the town, and with a leisurely sight of its residence district, one sees that there is much to be said on this side.

Spreading out in a trim panorama of green lawn and clean white houses, with bright gardens and old trees, it might be a replica of any of those peaceful home towns that nestle between the folds of the New England hills. On the south bluff of the Truckee River, it is true, are ambitious new homes of Georgian, Colonial, or Moorish architecture, monuments, many of them, to the lawyers' fees and the merchants' profits that are pouring into Reno by way of the divorce courts. But for the larger part it reminds one of an old white house where gentle, quiet women lived, until one night, by way of a practical joke, some one added minarets and a dome and Moorish roof and the old house itself went unheeded because the passers-by were drawn only by the new garishness.

Seeing the two sides of the town, I knew there must be two sides to any story which would claim to do it justice. So I went to both sides for my material.

It was Mayor E. E. Roberts of Reno, known as the father of the three-months'-residence divorce law, who gave me the details of its making.

Tall, rangy without being meager in any way, sunny in manner, with a smiling tolerance in his blue eyes and yet a chin bespeaking defeat for those who go up against him, Mayor Roberts is a true character of that old West which is so swiftly disappearing. A lawyer as well as a politician, the motto on his ethical escutcheon is "Live and let live." His zeal for what he terms personal liberty bids him flout reformers.

His inner office, in which he received me, is a figure of his creed. Pack upon pack of playing-cards have contributed toward its mural decoration. The walls and ceiling are completely obliterated by them. Superimposed are snap-shots of himself and friends on hunting- and fishing-excursions, photographs of Indian chiefs, cowboys, miners, politicians, beauties of the stage of barnstorming days. Stacked against a wall are shotguns and rifles of various makes and eras. A doorway is framed in revolvers as various. Papoose cradles, sombreros, Navaho blankets of rare and ancient weave, bows and arrows, bowls of granite, stone water-jugs, Indian baskets, contrive a veritable museum of desert arts and crafts.

Sitting there in his swivel-chair, smiling, jovial, he gave me the information I was seeking. "It was like this," he said. "I knew that Wyoming was trying to pass a divorce law with a three-months'-residence clause. In fact, later it



"I HADN'T SEEN YOU BEFORE—OF COURSE YOU ARE 'DOING TIME'."

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IN RENO—WHERE THEY TAKE THE CURE

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missed passage in the Legislature by a very small margin. I thought we might as well get in on some of it. My partner agreed with me. We talked it over with another firm of lawyers, who felt the same way about it. The Nevada Legislature was in session. An attempt was being made to amend the divorce law by inserting another ground—that of insanity of two years' duration. Amending the law meant repealing it and reintroducing it with the addition of the new provision. We sent for a copy of it. Careful reading told us that the word *six*, in its application to the residence period appeared twice. We ran a blue pencil through it, replacing it with the word *three*.

"THEN we went to Carson City, the State Capital, and called upon George Wingfield. You know who he is—the richest and most influential man in all Nevada. We told him what we wanted. He was agreeable. A member of the Legislature, in accord with us, took charge of the bill as we proposed to have it. Close to midnight on the last day of the Legislature, after all the old long-hairs had gone home, or were half asleep, it was read and passed without a protest except from a clergyman who woke up after its passage, loudly lamenting that he had thought some other bill in which he was not particularly interested was being read.

"I had no compunctions about it. Every one who is intelligent and honest in his convictions knows that no law that was ever made can keep two people together who wish to go their separate ways. You can not legislate love into the hearts of a man and woman. Neither can you defeat human nature. The effort to do so leads to immorality and even crime. There is very little divorce among the people of Nevada. We are glad to welcome men and women from other States whose laws belittle the cause of liberty and justice.

"Reno is a benefactor. It is a sanitarium for broken hearts—and an ideal one. The climate is perfect—comfortably warm in Summer, with cool nights; just nippy enough in Winter to be bracing. We have good food, fine homes, interesting people, excellent schools. We are surrounded by the most beautiful desert and mountain scenery in the world. There are pools and lakes for swimming, hot and cold mineral springs and baths, tennis-courts, golf-links, perfect motor-roads, and night life for those who want it. We have few laws in Nevada. We believe that the free are happy, and the happy are not vicious. We have less crime here, in proportion to our population, than in those law-ridden cities where reform holds sway."

Having heard of the swift, road to wealth opened up to the lawyers of Nevada by way of the divorce courts, I asked him for figures.

"Under the six-months'-residence law the average was about eighty-five a month. Now it is around two hundred and twenty. I hold the individual record—twenty-seven in as many consecutive days. The minimum fee, established by the Washoe County Bar Association, is \$250 with costs. The maximum fee, where wealth and a contest are involved, may be as high as \$10,000."

THE other side of the story, one not, however, lacking in tolerance, I received from a woman of standing in the civic, intellectual, and social life of Reno. She and her husband belong to old American families dating back to Colonial days. They are both college graduates, have children who are attending Eastern colleges, and are identified with higher educational activities in Reno.

"It is not the law itself to which we object," she told me. "We feel that our Nevada laws are just and wise. What we resent is the commercialization of these laws. In order to understand what I

mean you must know the history of our divorce law.

"We have had the six-months'-residence clause for close to sixty years. It came into national notice only twenty years or so ago, when a steel magnate, wishing to divorce his wife, directed his lawyer in New York to investigate the various States' laws in order to find out where his decree might be facilitated and expedited. The result of the investigation was that he came to Reno and secured his divorce on the ground of mental cruelty—as you know New York had but the one ground, that of infidelity.

"The publicity which his position created drew attention to Reno. Unhappily mated men and women from States whose laws were restrictive began to come here for relief. Gradually what is termed the 'divorce colony' was built up. There were, of course, abuses of our tolerance. While the great majority of decrees were obtained honestly and with a minimum of suffering for both sides, there were abuses—such, for instance, as the evasion by the plaintiff of *bona-fide* residence.

"There were those who came here only long enough to rent apartments and to leave in them a few personal belongings. Going away, they returned shortly after the court hearing of their cases. The more respectable citizens of Reno were, in time, roused to action. We demanded a change in the divorce law. Some ten years ago Senator Oddie, who was the Governor, on the appeal of a large number of us, was instrumental in having the law repealed. The following election he was defeated through the power of politicians and merchants and lawyers and others whose incomes had shrunk because of it. At the next session of the Legislature their representatives descended upon Carson City, demanding the reinstatement of the six-months' clause. It carried by a large vote." The remainder of her version of the law was exactly as it had been recited to me by Mayor Roberts.

"BUT mind you," she concluded, "none of us feels that the main body of our divorce law, except for the two years' insanity ground, which we feel to be inadequate, and the three-months'-residence clause, which is more expedient than wise, is lacking in good judgment. We are a thinking and a tolerant people. The majority of those who come here are men and women of integrity and fine purpose, who have good cause for divorce. They are quiet and unobtrusive.

"So long as there are States lacking in understanding and mercy, Nevada is playing the part of a good Samaritan. But we do thoroughly resent the attitude of the outside world which looks upon Reno only as a wide-open and lawless town where easy divorce may be obtained. Nothing is ever said of our fine schools, of our university life, of the even high standard of our own domestic life—we have very few divorces among our own people—of the beauty of our surroundings, of all those things of which Reno may be justly proud and which render her fit to stand as a model of community life."

I asked this woman how the women who were interested in club and civic work felt about the divorce law. She answered, "I must say many of them, the wives of lawyers and merchants, are somewhat on the fence; while not exactly approving it, they dare not express their disapproval because of the effect it would have upon their husbands' bank-books."

In the month I was in Reno I came to see the truth of all that she had told me, and also the untruth of many of the stories that come to us out of what is termed the "divorce colony."

There is no "divorce colony" in Reno. While it has a floating population of several hundreds and even a thousand at a time, most of whom have come for divorce purposes, and sixty per cent. of

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whom are women, they have no restricted district in which they may reside. Some of them, only a small number, live at the smart hotel. The very rich usually rent one of the quiet homes and live as quietly. Others live in apartments or boarding-houses, or at the great ranches with which Washoe County is dotted. Among the women there is a spirit of comradeship reminiscent of boarding-school days. Ever ready to aid one another, they contrive to make the three months of waiting as happy and as pleasant as possible. If one of them is sick her rooms are filled with flowers and she is never wanting for care and comfort.

As many of the women are young, between the ages of twenty-five and thirty-five, their mothers are often with them, quite unconsciously taking under their wings those who are "doing time" alone. Men enter very little into their calculations. They have their tea-parties and luncheons, their motor-picnics and dinners, among themselves; their conversations are veritable clinics of ways and means.

Listening in on these discussions, I came to see that this Nevada divorce law is as much to be honored by its use as dishonored by its disabuse. While there are occasional cases whose justice might be questioned, the majority of divorces secured there are justifiable.

ONE afternoon I sat at tea served under the trees on a lawn which looked toward the rose-and-purple hills. Present were six young wives—they were scarcely more than girls. Playing about us on the lawn were the babies of three of them. As usual, they discussed diagnoses and symptoms.

A mother of two darling babies came from the District of Columbia, where divorce is procurable only on the ground of infidelity. She had been very happy for the first three years of her marriage. Just before her little boy was born, there entered a glamorous young widow. The husband, who was attractive, was also attracted. There followed a long year and a half of neglect. When his wife remonstrated with him he said he was in love with the widow and that he could not and would not give her up. He wanted a divorce.

At home she would have had to name the correspondent, or resort to the distasteful subterfuge of manufacturing evidence. In either case, because of the prominence of the families concerned, there would have been unenviable notoriety. The parents of the widow were fine old people who were deeply grieved at the situation. "I have known them all my life," the wife said. "They have been sweet and sympathetic with me. I could not hurt them, any more than I cared to stigmatize the father of my children. I have come here in order that my divorce may be respectable."

A young wife from New York State with a dear little girl was getting her divorce on the ground of extreme cruelty. Her husband had not done one stroke of work since the day they were married. He had lived on her bounty, frequenting night clubs, and was in an almost continuous state of intoxication. "I suppose if I had spied upon him I could have found evidence of infidelity and would not have had to come all the way out here. But I think it is despicable for one human being to hire detectives to follow another about for the purpose of securing evidence of this kind."

A woman from South Carolina, where there is no divorce, told me her story. She had been married eighteen years, and was the mother of three children, a boy of seventeen and two girls of fourteen and sixteen. For thirteen years her husband had maintained another establishment in the suburbs of the town where they lived. The other woman had borne him two children. He was not willing that his wife should have a separation. She had no money. Her parents were dead. She feared that if she took things in her own hands she would be left without support or forced to intermittent court procedure in order to secure it. And the attendant notoriety would have stigmatized her children.

Through these years he came home for respectability's sake—he was a successful business man—once or twice a week, when he scarcely noticed her. He gave only enough toward his household to keep it in bare comfort. The other woman had a maid, an automobile, a chauffeur, and expensive clothes. Her children were sent away to expensive boarding-schools. Luxuries were lavished upon them. His wife was most of the time without help. If she spent money on clothes he nagged her about the bills. She had no automobile. Her children were poorly dressed and went to public schools. A year ago an uncle in a Northern State died leaving her a comfortable fortune. At first she had thought to secure a legal separation. But the notoriety and the effect of it upon her children again held her.

On a visit to another State she met a man who grew to love her. She returned his affection. He wanted to marry her. "I could not make up my mind to it at first. The idea of divorce and a second marriage was so alien and opposed to my traditions. My children made the decision for me. They argued that I was still young and good-looking and had the greater part of my life ahead of me. They are very fond of the man I am going to marry. He is fond of them. He is gentle and fine and generous. So here I am. I can never go home even to visit, for a divorced woman is without honor there. My husband, because he is a man, is untouched; his honor is still intact. For the first time since I was a girl I shall know happiness."

Over black coffee one evening a man from New York State grew confidential. He was a doctor, an unassuming, mild, and quite gray little man, who looked as if he had been robbed of all resistance. "I stood fifteen years of nagging," he volunteered. "My wife was so jealous that she ruined my practise. No woman patient escaped her suspicions and her tongue. She used to sit in the reception-room during my office hours, hounding me to know the details of the case of every woman who came in."

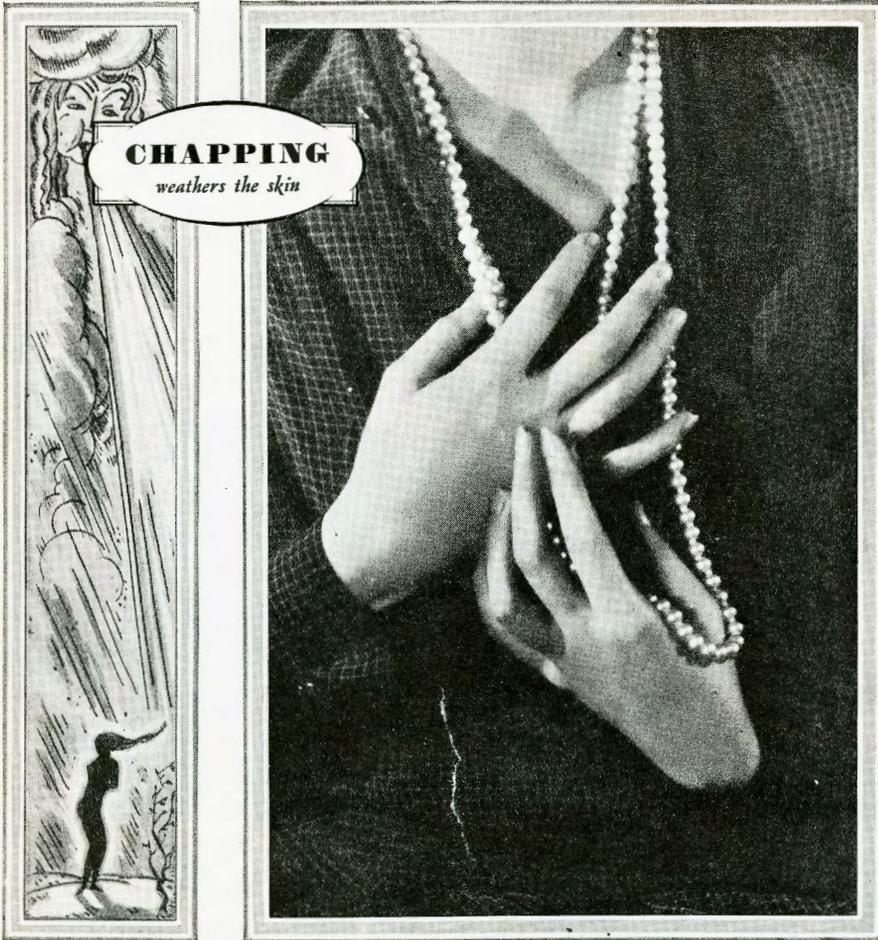
"For the sake of peace I had to take her with me in the car when I made my calls. If I were detained in a home more than a few minutes she rang the doorbell, wanting to know what was the matter. She called up the husbands of my woman patients, causing all kinds of trouble. She created scenes on the street. Twice she smashed every bit of furniture in my office. She would have no children because she said she would not divide my attention with any one. She loved me, I suppose, and I loved her when I married her. Love does not survive under those conditions. A separation would have involved charges and counter-charges, bringing in the innocent."

"Before coming out here I told my wife of my intentions, begging her to accept service. She refused. I shall have to remain here not only to establish a three-months' residence, but I shall have to wait forty-two days additional for publication of summons and default. My wife has sent me word that if I return to New York State she will have the divorce annulled. My practise is ruined anyway, so I shall go to another State and start a new one. I have stood enough, and, mind you," he concluded with an equivocal smile, "my wife is a good woman."

IN PAST years I had heard much of the subversion of law and justice by the Reno courts. Under the old law it was possible to establish a spurious residence. Under the new law this is no longer the case. The three-months' residence must be *bona fide*. The prospective plaintiff must reside within the county where the divorce is to be brought, every day of the three months. If he or she leaves even for twenty-four hours that much longer time must be "done" before the suit can be filed. When a case comes up for trial the landlady or landlord becomes a State witness with complete memoranda of dates establishing the plaintiff's *bona fide* residence in Washoe County.

Neither is there any loophole whereby

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the respondent may be left unaware of the impending divorce. Usually the proponent, before leaving for Reno, consults a lawyer, who notifies the respondent that divorce is intended, seeking a power of attorney permitting the appointment of a lawyer to represent him, or her, in court when the case comes up, or requesting him, or her, to sign a waiver, acknowledging causes of divorce and signifying the willingness to be divorced.

It is endeavored, also, to settle all property matters and the custody of children by agreement in the town where the couple have resided together. Where this is not done the Nevada lawyer for the plaintiff takes the same procedure. Where these matters are mutually adjusted the suit is tried the day it is filed, which is the day after the establishment of residence, and is over in less than five minutes.

Should the respondent refuse to cooperate, either by signing a waiver or by representation by counsel in court, forty-two days are required by law for summons and default. Personal service is then attempted. If this fails, then the application for divorce is published for thirty days in a paper of general circulation in Washoe County, after which there is ten days' waiting. The case then comes up in court and is disposed of in a short time.

When the plaintiff comes from New York State, where the courts have often reversed and annulled divorces granted to its residents who have gone outside of it to secure their freedom, declaring that such a divorce can be recognized in New York only when it has been secured on the grounds that come within the New York law and after service has been accepted by the respondent and he, or she, has been represented in court, the grounds and procedure in the Reno courts concur with this law.

When it is impossible to secure personal service or representation for the respondent, every reputable lawyer warns his client that, altho the divorce will be legal and is recognized in all other States, there is a risk of its being reversed in the New York courts.

There is little sharp practise among lawyers in Reno, for the reason that the Washoe County Bar Association keeps a close detecting eye on all those who are suspected. Disbarment is the penalty inflicted upon one who attempts to evade or juggle with the law, or to deceive his clients.

Sensation is rare in Reno. Divorce is

no longer news. However, strange things do happen. There was the woman who left her children with their nurse in an automobile in front of the hotel while she went up-stairs on an errand. When she returned the nurse was standing on the sidewalk, screaming at the top of her voice. The children had been whisked away by their father, who had kept his presence in Reno a secret.

He did not get very far with them, for there are only four roads out of Reno, two into the desert, going south or east, and two into California, going north and west. In the desert the slight traffic and the distances between towns do not facilitate escape. Detection by airplane is immediate. Two transcontinental trains a day and two locals to San Francisco, departing from an uncrowded station, make it a difficult exit. To California by automobile is no less trying, as all vehicular traffic is held up at the State line by officials who enforce the law against the importation of fruits, flowers, or plants which might introduce pests into the orchards or farms.

This husband was held up for inspection. Before he could get away the constable was upon him and he was returned to Reno in jeopardy. There are instances, too, where the respondent has not been heard from, and at the last moment has come into court with an attorney ready to fight.

I heard, before going to Reno, much of the gaiety and the abandon of its night life. That it exists I do not doubt. From what I saw I can only say that nothing more happens in Reno than in any other prosperous town, except that what is done in secrecy and outside of the law in other places, may, perhaps, be there done openly and within the law.

It has been said too that most of those seeking divorces in Reno have second marriages in view. Judges and lawyers maintain that this is less than twenty per cent. true.

In my opinion, whatever may be said for or against the Reno "divorce mill," it has its fair side. Just so long as there are States which refuse to broaden their view-points and thereby make reasonable divorce accessible to all classes, rich as well as poor, any State which practises tolerance in its laws is playing the philanthropist. Reno, as it is to-day, is a vital spokesman for a National Marriage and Divorce Law, one untainted with religious or personal prejudices, which will temper justice with mercy and which will work alike for the rich as well as the poor in every State and Territory of the Union.

HOME—THE CENTER OF THE WORLD

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Home-making is essentially ladylike; it takes more character than does fortune, fame, or money-making. It demands delicacy, self-control, and humor to a degree that only a gentlewoman can give. It demands vision and a true sense in youth of the values of life.

At forty these values are suddenly clear. The well-furnished apartment and the solitary trip to Europe are satisfactory as far as they go. But they do not go far. The heart demands more; it demands love, it demands service for the beloved ones, it needs pitifully to be needed. The giddy years when mild flirtations and new gowns were all of life are over, and the lonely woman with a trail of wreckage behind her awakens to a vital hunger—a hunger for a home. She wants to go home again.

She wants some comfortable, informal place with voices and footsteps sounding in it, with faces brightening when they see her own, with favors done and favors demanded on all sides. She wants some one to care about what she does, be sorry with her, be glad with her. She wants a child to slip up from behind and plant a shy little kiss on her hair when she is at the piano; she wants young feet to thunder up her stairs, and some sweet old woman, when she enters an upper

chamber, to look up from a book and say, "Ah, Mary, I hoped it was you, dear."

What if every one of them has faults and deficiencies? They are her own people—uncles, aunts, cousins, nephews, nieces, sons, and daughters—and from the battered muffin-tins in the big kitchen to the Copley portrait over the dining-room mantel, and from the majestic oak over the side doorway to the old, dim, penciled heights and ages on the barn door—the place they inhabit is home.

Christina Rossetti called fame "a gathering jeer," and she was right. Wealth is a delusion, and beauty what the Irish call a gift from the old lady's left hand. A lone, bitter, angry success of any sort is a wretched thing; hundreds of men and women never know any better, and some of them pretend to be content, but one knows that they are not.

The building of a family remains the great adventure, the road that is always new. It is not for every man and woman to undertake it; it is a happiness, a fulfillment not granted to all. But, ah, the glory and the beauty and the triumph of the dreaded fifties and sixties and seventies to the man and woman who begin them deeply established in a real home of their own creating!