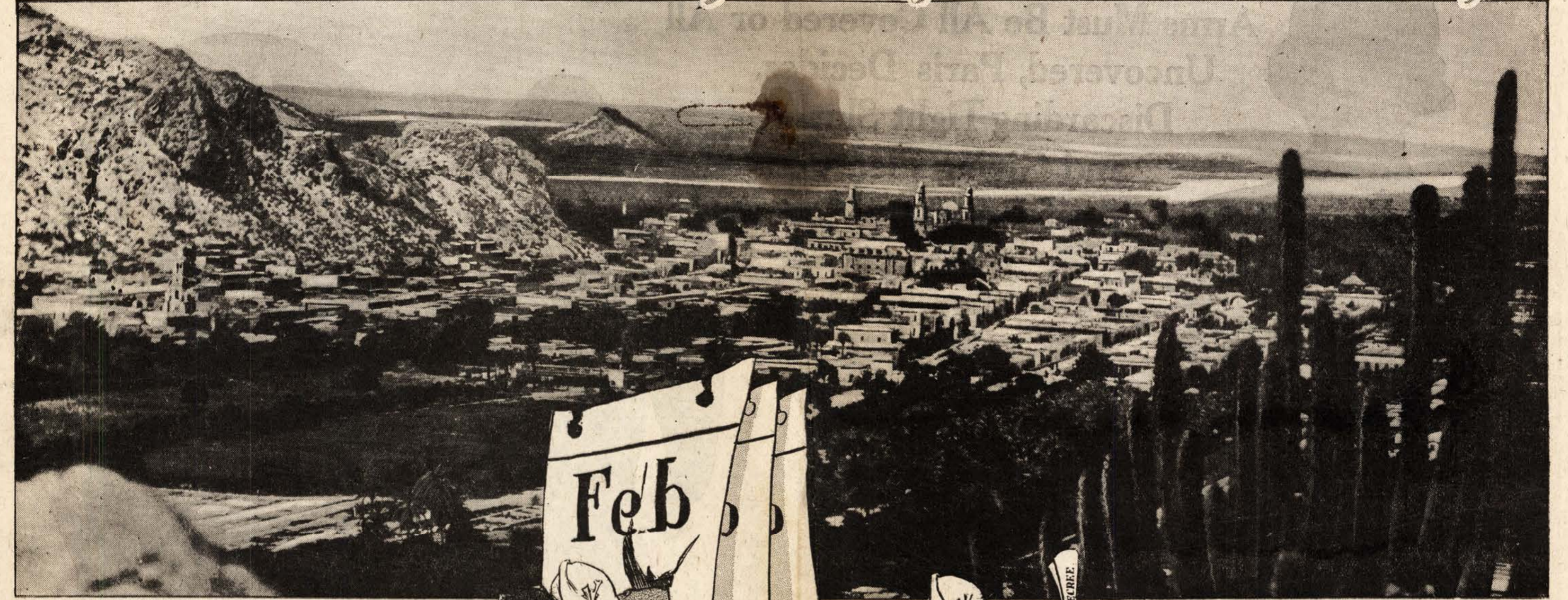


A Divorce for Anybody in Three Days



The Picturesque Town of Hermosillo, Sonora, Where the Sympathetic, New Mexican Divorce Mill Breaks All Previous Records by Turning Out Guaranteed Decrees in Seventy-two Hours.

MEXICO has just passed a kind, new divorce law that will enable anybody in the United States to get a divorce in three days—anyone, that is, who has the price.

The law is most tender toward the sore hearts of those who marched to the marriage altar with high hopes and then had them blow up. There are no embarrassing questions, no necessity of witnesses to run up expenses, no tiresome waiting, no publicity, and the divorce is guaranteed to be good anywhere.

How did this most accommodating divorce mill ever invented by man come into being? Well, for several years the Mexican Government, which has given up revolutions and become a settled and business-like country, has looked enviously at all the rich Americans who were flocking to Paris and other places where more liberal divorce laws exist than in their own States.

Why couldn't these desirable tourists be attracted to Mexico, which is so much closer to any part of the United States than Paris?

It seemed to be an opportune moment. It takes from three to six months to get a divorce in Paris and the French courts, a little startled by the bulk of American business coming their way, had begun to put up some bars. You had to establish a bona fide residence, for instance—no longer could you just stop a day or two and then go on to the Riviera, coming back now and then for a brief examination. Furthermore, the French courts recently decided that they could consider as causes for divorce in each case before them only causes which would operate for divorce in the State from which the applicant came.

It did seem the psychological moment to divert to Mexico this profitable traffic.

American expert divorce lawyers were consulted. Senor Arturo del Toro, wealthy land owner and legal authority from Sonora, Mexico, made careful note of just what each State in this country requires for divorce. The experts drafted a law which made each and every one of these causes for a divorce in the States also a cause for divorce in Mexico! Besides, they added two new causes. The draft of the law was then taken to Mexico City, was politely passed by the Mexican Congress and was courteously approved by the Governor of Sonora, which State had been selected as the pleasantest and most convenient one for the prospective visitors from above the border.

The strict secrecy of the French proceedings was preserved, but the necessity for establishing residence was blotted out—how unneighborly such a provision would be!

And then just the other day Senor del Toro returned to the United States to explain to divorce seekers exactly what they had to do to spend a pleasant little three-day vacation in Mexico—or longer, of course, if they preferred—and come back home happy with a thoroughly good divorce decree.

"In the United States," says Senor del Toro, "divorce is often a disgraceful proceeding. Why? Because of the unpleasant complaints which one must make here in order to secure a decree. Often entirely respectable couples who happen to live in a State like New York find themselves dragged into nasty scandals when they decide that they would be happier if not married. New York and a number of other States will not grant a divorce unless the husband or his wife will go on the stand and accuse the other of immoral conduct. Further, they are cruelly expected to furnish evidence as to the truth of their complaints.



"Three days only does it take to get a divorce in Hermosillo—the applicant crashes in with her marriage certificate one day and seventy-two hours later crashes out with that certificate safely exchanged for a divorce decree."



Mrs. Joseph Blake, Formerly Mrs. Clarence Mackay, Who Was the First American Woman of Social Prominence to Take Advantage of the Quiet, Easy, Paris Divorce Law—Which Is Now Neither So Quiet Nor Easy As Then.

"What are the grounds for divorce in Sonora? Well, in the first place Sonora grants a divorce by her new law for any cause that is recognized by any of the American States.

"But we add two more grounds on which divorce may be granted. The first is mutual consent and the second irreconcilable incompatibility. Consider the first. If both the husband and the wife sign a paper saying that they want to be divorced, that is all we require. We do not force the husband to swear that his wife is a hussy, or the wife to assert that he has thrashed her every night."

But what if only the wife, or perhaps only the husband, desires to be divorced? In that case the kind new law is just as helpful to whichever it is that pays for its succor. All he or she needs to say is that although the other is a very fine person there is an "irreconcilable incompatibility" between them.

How must this incompatibility reveal itself to be sufficient justification for a decree? Well, if the husband has a habit of reading his morning paper at breakfast and grunting at instead of conversing with his wife, that is sufficient if she

swears it makes her unhappy and that he won't stop it. Or perhaps he snores or smokes about the house or apartment.

Everything is comparative. These reasons are not really trivial, only to the unthinking. Many a woman can be made more unhappy by neglect at the breakfast table than by being beaten. Some women like to be beaten! What is trivial and what is not? QUIEN SABE! Who knows?

And now exactly what is the procedure, day by day, an applicant must follow until the marriage certificate is exchanged for the divorce decree? Take up chronologically, hour by hour, the case of a supposititious Mrs. Smith, of New York, who at 1:55 on the afternoon of Tuesday, January 26, decides that she will get a divorce in the quickest possible time from Mr. Smith on the "incompatibility" ground, Mr. S. being willing.

2 P. M.—Mrs. S., if she has had any luck with the telephone, will have either her own lawyers or Senor del Toro on the wire and will announce her intentions, giving as specific grounds, perhaps, that she and her husband do not like the same kind of books, cannot agree upon the same plays and cannot tolerate each other's friends, because of which she is dreadfully unhappy and life has become a burden. If she has spoken to her own lawyers they will call up Senor del Toro.

10 A. M., Jan. 27.—Mrs. S., having been looked up as to responsibility, standing, etc., a messenger arrives from Senor del Toro and is given either by Mrs. S. or her attorneys, a certified copy of her marriage certificate, a signed copy of her complaint, and an affidavit by her best friend that it is regrettably true that neither Mrs. S. nor Mr. S. can agree upon books, plays and friends.

Noon—New York Post Office receives mail package containing certificates, complaint and affidavit and letter from Senor del Toro to his office in Mexico City.

9 A. M., Feb. 2.—Representative at Mexico City opens registered letter.

9:30 A. M.—Files it before the Divorce Court at Mexico City.

11 A. M.—Mails other copies certifi-

cate, complaint and affidavits to Hermosillo, the capital of Sonora.

9 A. M., Feb. 4.—Legal representatives in Hermosillo receive and file the papers before the divorce court there.

11 A. M.—Wire is received by Senor del Toro from Mexico City that everything is set.

12 Noon.—Mrs. S. instructed to hold herself in readiness for immediate departure, any day is notified by phone that a drawing room has been engaged for her. She may have a traveling companion if she wishes, but need not take along any witnesses.

6:40 P. M.—Mrs. S. leaves on the train. Husband is served with notice of action as this is required by the divorce laws of the State in which he lives.

6:03 A. M., Feb. 8.—Arrives Tucson, Arizona, and changes to Mexican train.

10:27 P. M.—Arrives at Hermosillo, where she is met by a handsome limousine with uniformed footman and is driven to a picturesque hotel.

8:45 A. M., Feb. 9.—Mrs. S. is driven to the Court House.

9 A. M.—Meets a kindly judge who apparently knows all about her case and has her papers before him. "Are you the Mrs. S. who signed the petition before me?" the judge asks. "I am," says she. "And everything contained herein is true?" "It is," she answers. "And there is no hope of reconciliation between you? Neither of you will give up your friends, books and plays and try to like the others?" "No, indeed," replies Mrs. S. The judge instructs her to appear before him again in 72 hours.

9:30 A. M.—The charms of Hermosillo begin to woo her. There are excellent golf courses, good hunting, bathing and fishing, drives, music and dancing, orange



Mrs. Elise Bartlett Schildkraut, wife of the Well-known Actor, One of the Divorce Seekers Whose Disappointment Over the Failure of the Yucatan Divorce Mill Helped to Speed Up the Creation of the Guaranteed One at Hermosillo.

groves and date palm orchards of Old Spain to drive away sorrow from these delicate victims of man's brutality. Also there is no Volstead law.

9 A. M., Feb. 12.—Mrs. S. again presents herself before the judge. "Has there been a reconciliation?" he asks, hopefully. "No," she answers after a whispered conference with her counsel. "And is there no hope whatever of a reconciliation?" again asks the judge, a little more sadly. "None whatever," she replies, firmly.

And that is all. A painless, silent operation. What chance has the party of the other part if he wants to resist his wife's application? Simply none whatever.

Does he protest against his wife securing a divorce? All right, that in itself, according to the sympathetic Mexican law, is only additional evidence of stubbornness and incompatibility, and the decree is signed!

The Fast Mexican Mill That Accommodatingly Will Grind Out Your Decree (No Inconsiderate Questions Asked, No Embarrassing Publicity) If You Only Have the Price

After her second appearance Mrs. S.'s divorce is strictly O. K. She can go right back home to the United States, or—and this the Mexican Government hopes she will do—she can continue her vacation in Mexico. It is true that about fifteen days later the judge again asks her attorney if there has been a reconciliation, but this is only a matter of form and the newly freed ex-wife does not have to be present.

How much the decree will cost depends largely upon how much the applicant can afford to pay. Like many doctors, most lawyers base their fees upon the wealth of their clients. Carfare and expenses to Hermosillo from the furthest points in the United States would amount to less than \$300, including the going and coming and stay at the hotel. The court charges altogether come close to \$100, but the lawyer's fees—ah! that is another matter. Senor del Toro says that "one millionaire in Chicago" paid \$10,000 for his decree. This seems to be a maximum price. The minimum appears to be around \$1,500.

The new divorce mill was created when it was discovered that the product of the old one at Yucatan was not being accepted in the States. In the first place, the Yucatan law never did have the support of the Mexican Congress; it is a Socialist State and is not so popular with the Government. When several of the Yucatan divorces were declared invalid in certain sections of the United States, and it was widely published that Mrs. Elise Schildkraut, wife of the stage's "most perfect lover," had started to Yucatan for a divorce, had been warned on the way that the decree would be no good, and had thereupon come right back to the United States and started suit by slower process in Pennsylvania—when all this became public those interested decided that the time had come to put through a divorce law which would be legal in the States.

And, as has been said, the increasing difficulties to easy divorce in Paris helped also to speed up the action in Mexico. It is interesting to note, by the way, that the first American to take advantage of the liberal French law was Mrs. Clarence Mackay, now Mrs. Joseph Blake, whose daughter Ellin has figured so largely in the prints recently after marrying Irving Berlin, song writer.

Movie stars, millionaires and others of public life will be interested to know that the only place in which the decree is published is in the Diario Oficial, which is printed in Spanish and is snatched away from the hand press while still hot and filed away at once incommunicado among the Hermosillo courthouse archives.