

The Reno Divorce Mill

By MYRTOKLEIA CHILDE

Judge George A Bartlett, of Reno, sat in the lobby of La Playa Hotel and told me his views—of marriage, love, separation—evolved from eleven years on the bench of the divorce capital of the world. A spry, gallant little figure, the Judge endears himself to one at first sight. His daughter, Dorothy, who is with him here in Carmel says herself that he is best father she ever had.

"I have lived in Reno most of my life," said the Judge, "although I went over to San Francisco in order to be born, I returned to Reno immediately. You will find that I'm a heterogeneous conglomeration of incongruities. A 'dyed in the wool' Democrat, I voted for Hoover and if Al Smith runs again I will again vote for Hoover, providing he runs. Born and raised a Catholic, I received a degree at Georgetown Law University; I am a thirty-second degree Mason now, and perhaps I won't go to heaven if I die."

Judge Bartlett served two years in Congress; didn't care to run again and has enjoyed being a judge. Divorce is not his sole concern on the bench—he has handed down decisions on several of the more important water and mining cases in Nevada. Two years ago he published a book, "Men, Women and Conflict" which was put out by Putnam. Speaking of Reno he said:

"Divorce has not brought influences into Reno conducive to the lowering of the moral tone. Most of the people who come there are highly cultivated and we profit by them; the sensationalist doesn't worry us, they are food for the reporters who are always looking for front page copy. As a matter of fact, Nevada by reason of its very liberal law, attracts the very interesting and courageous people from all sections of the world who find this world impossible because of the narrowness and bigotry and arm-chair sophistry of preconceived communities to afford them a remedy for matrimonial mistakes. Marriage is nothing but a legal contract; it is justified only on happiness; no happiness, no union. There is no reason and justice in any law, religious or legislative, that insists on misery."

Speaking of alimony, Judge Bartlett firmly stated that he had no patience with it. "It should only be given if found necessary in a particular case for a reasonable time to enable the person to learn a vocation in order to maintain herself. Where there is community property it should be fairly divided. Suits for alienation of affection are asinine; love belongs to him who has it to

give. The one who claims money for its loss is suing for something he or she does not own and therefore is not entitled to so-called 'damages.' Besides which there is absolutely no way to measure its value as you can a ton of hay or a cake of soap."

Somehow the subject turned to various laws and in particular to the prohibition law. The Judge was very decisive in his views on this form of legislation; he said: "Intemperate restriction encourages intemperance and violation of all laws from which the whole country is suffering today, as is amply evidenced by the tremendous increase in our criminal records."

Judge Bartlett is an aviation enthusiast. He is governor for Nevada of the National Aeronautic Association; does most of his traveling in the air. He said: "It is my only enthusiasm except that of interest in humans, principally women, with whom I like to talk, but you might say," he added whimsically as he exhibited a large rusty nail upon which had grown a fine bit of patine, "that my favorite pastime is picking up rusty nails. I may want to build something some day and I have a wonderful collection."

"Why did I come to Carmel? I have been a frequent visitor for a number of years. There is a distinctive charm in the people, they are more natural and less constrained to bow to the narrowness of recognized conventionalities."

ANOTHER SIDE OF RENO

"Everything you pick up in the newspapers and magazines about Reno features the sordid side; there is a delightful—charming side." So says Florence Frances Curtin, a Carmel resident for several months who has decided to spend her winters here indefinitely and her summers at Monte Cristo Ranch, thirty-five miles north of Reno.

"Bud" and "Ike" Blundell who have run the cattle and horse ranch since they were knee-high, are in charge. Three years ago Mrs. Bud Blundell added to their establishment the "dude ranch" feature. Horse-back riding swimming, hiking, picnicing and other wholesome sports are the daily fare. Three miles north of the ranch is Pyramid Lake, whose blue, pellucid waters are bordered by a government reservation, the home of Piute Indians.

Several local people have enjoyed the the hospitality of the ranch. Ferdinand Burgdorff, Pebble Beach artist, has spent much time sketching in the vicinity of the ranch. Kit Wilkinson, now an instructor at the Rancho Carmelo School, was for many months at the Monte Cristo.

GOLF

F. Stanislaus (Bill) Heron won the Washington's Birthday golf tournament at Pebble Beach for the second consecutive year. Last week he won the Freshman flight of inter-collegiate golf, thus another a cup to his collection.

CARMEL WOMAN'S CLUB

The garden Section will meet with Mrs. R. G. Brooks, Lincoln and Ninth, next Thursday morning at ten o'clock. Book section, Girl Scout House next Wednesday morning at ten.

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Illustrations from "New Russia's Primer"

Love, Marriage and Divorce

MEN, WOMEN AND CONFLICT.

By George A. Bartlett . . . *New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons . . . \$3.*

Reviewed by
MORRIS L. ERNST

MONOGAMY is a persistent dream of mankind. Every man at one time or another in his life has yearned for some woman to whom he could apply the image of a perpetual spouse. Each woman has thought of some man as her exclusive emotional counterpart until death do them part. The consistency of this pattern of human desire gives some justification for the concept of monogamy. And still I have never known a man or woman who, just previous to the marriage ceremony, has not contemplated backing down or shying away from the formidable vows. And further, I believe that there is no married person who has not at some time in at least a fleeting, suppressed, barely conscious mood contemplated the possibilities of the dissolution of the marriage.

And this is the flux which Judge George A. Bartlett has described in his book redundantly called "Men, Women and Conflict." The actual subtitle "An Intimate Study of Love, Marriage and Divorce" is happily more accurate than the subtitle carried on the jacket "Is Adultery a Sin?"

proach and that Nevada has arisen to give partial haven to those condemned to stupidity and ignorance to believe that infidelity—only recently was insanity put in the category with adultery—is the sole basis for martial unhappiness. In fact this volume fortifies those who are opposed to uniform national laws. Should we not continue our forty-eight separate laboratories?

The causes for couples parting are innumerable. The objective evidence of incompatibility may come down to dislike of neckties, to constant playing of radios, to radical thoughts, to over-attention by the husband to one of the Siamese Twins, or to any other action within the capacity of mankind. Such outward manifestations of maladjustment are only the visible causes for divorce. At least 167 out of every 1,000 married persons publicly complain in courtrooms of some such behavior. But Judge Bartlett looks underneath and, although finding no common disrupting denominator, indicates his belief that bickering and disagreements are not unrelated to sexual dissatisfaction. I myself have seldom heard of a divorce case which could not in part be traced to ineptness of expression or ignorance of an art too long deemed a mere intuition. Judge Bartlett pleads that "men should know more about women" and "women should know more about marriage." To the judge, the college widow is no myth. She attains a status of dignity and wisdom as the sexual educator of the young. Surely Ben Lindsey should feel like an old-fash-

In 1929 more than 400,000 persons procured divorces in the courts of these United States. There must be 5,000,000 adults living in a state of divorce or in a state of desertion which is merely divorce without legal sanction. And this army is increasing at a striking pace. In New York the increase of divorces is about 60 per cent in each decade. And the Empire State is not alone in this procession; in fact, South Carolina, which since 1878 has denied divorce, is the sole remaining haven for those who subscribe to "Better Hate Than Sever."

The author of this volume sat for years on the reviewing stand. As a judge at Reno he acted as high priest to the unhappy, and guardian of the welfare of troubled children. Nevada has made a real social contribution to the emotional life of the nation and from this volume, written with humility, humor and wisdom, it is evident that Judge Bartlett has not been an unimportant factor in this marital laboratory. Because only 20 per cent of Nevada's divorces go to natives, the question of State's Rights takes on an added significance. I am always shocked at Dean Pound and other legal luminaries when they attack Nevada as bringing the law into disrepute. They urge that Reno's beckoning forefinger invites people to avoid the dire stringency of the law of other communities—and then say "For Shame, Nevada." To me it seems that the sham and shame of New York is worthy of re-

ioned conservative when he reads, "I am frank to say that I believe the young man who has as a temporary mistress an attractive older woman—say a woman of thirty—who is clean, respectable, intelligent and who is gifted with imagination, such a young man is blessed indeed."

This volume coins no new phrases, creates no new definitions, but nevertheless presents an emotional cross-section of American life in terms more definite than ever used by Lindsey. Here you read how to get a divorce; the frontiers of the bugaboo of collusion are sharply drawn; adultery is put in a category of integrity; the child's relation to divorce is disturbingly presented; and birth control is urged with calmness by a man whose two children were baptized into the Catholic church.

I have sent innumerable couples out to Reno—people with a taste that shied away from New York's cant and hypocrisy. I therefore say "Hats off to Reno, and Bartlett's work." I hope that some Eastern state will follow the example of Nevada. Six weeks and two thousand miles are penalties for the poor. Marital adjustability should not be a vested right of the rich.

To the credit of the author, it may be said that he has cast his eyes away from the distortions and distractions of legal forms and technicalities and has been able to approach gonadic urges with objective considerations.