

**People . . .
who Get Divorces**

The granting of a dozen or more divorces and the filing of as many more during the past week serve to call attention to the popularity of Lincoln as a divorce center, although as a matter of cold statistical fact no more are being filed than in former years.

The people who get divorces are an interesting study. As a general rule they come from the lower classes of society. As American society is now constituted we have the aristocratic class, the higher middle class of professional and business men, the lower middle class of skilled workmen whose labor is of the rougher sort and the lower classes of day laborers and the uneducated. Education, outside of the aristocratic class, rather than occupation, is more of a determining factor.

It is from these two lower castes that nine-tenths of the applicants for divorce come. The other tenth are all the more prominent because of their standing. Most of the applicants are women. This is because men, when they are dissatisfied with their conjugal alliances, pick up their belongings and go elsewhere. One experience sickens them for the time being of matrimony, while women, being by nature dependent upon man and being more prone to throw up the struggle of self-support, heart-breaking as it is usually, are likely to accept the next chance that offers itself.

Second marriages are not always happy ones, despite the assertions of some sociologists to the contrary. The number of divorce applicants who confess to Council Bluffs marriages and second trials are numerous enough to prove at least that it is a rule with many exceptions. Desertion, cruelty and non-support are the usual allegations. If there are other grounds they are kept from the court. The wife never knows why her husband left her. The husband can't for the life of him recall any reason for his wife's packing up and leaving. All of the persuasiveness of the court cannot get the truth. It is evident in most cases that they are either lying or else they were encased in a garment of self-appreciation during their married life that convinced them they could do no wrong, that all they did they should have done.

Old men and young men, old women and young women, all pass in review before the courts. A girl of nineteen the other day got a divorce an hour after a woman sixty-two had left the stand. A young man of twenty-four was divorced the same day as a professional man of sixty-eight. White-haired old people with but a brief span of life left; young people with the bitter memory of a few miserable years still with them; men and women with faces heavy with sorrow, or blithe and gay; dull, sodden countenances or bright, inspiring faces—they are all seen there.



W. F. Ackerman, the newly appointed master mechanic of the Burlington company's locomotive shops at Havelock, Lincoln's most thriving suburb, was born in Mt. Pleasant, Iowa, July 6, 1870. He entered the service of the Burlington as a machinist's apprentice on March 19th, 1888, at the Plattsmouth shops. After serving four years as an apprentice he was promoted to the position of machinist and worked in that capacity at different points on the Burlington until February, 1895, when he was transferred to the engine service on the Wyoming division, serving as a fireman until the first of October of the same year.

He was transferred to Havelock as a machinist, where he worked until January, 1897, when he was promoted to the position of pit foreman. This place he held until February, 1901, when he was made machine shop foreman at Alliance. He was next advanced to the position of general piece work inspector of the system west of the Missouri. On September 1st of this year he was placed in charge at Havelock.

The Havelock shops are the largest on the Burlington's trans-Missouri lines and rank in importance with any on the entire system of the railroad company. The working force numbers about 500 men and the monthly pay roll approximates \$30,000. Mr. Ackerman's advancement has been unusually rapid and today he is one of the youngest men in the railroad world to occupy so responsible a place.

Some give their testimony freely and frankly; others compel it to be dragged out of them. Most approach the witness stand with apparent trepidation, that soon wears away either in the stress of their emotions, the mirrored mental reflections of happy, bygone days that start many women and some men to weeping; or else the recollection of insult or contumely that fire the eye and make hard the voice. Some give their testimony in a matter of fact way, as though it was but the repetition of an oft-told tale; others are debonaire and unimpressed. The latter are few in number.

Most of the divorces are heard either at the beginning of the morning session or just before that of the afternoon. The attorneys have the cases set down a few days in advance, and

notify their clients to be there. The testimony of the applicant alone will not secure a decree; there must be corroborative testimony. Usually one or the other is sufficient. The latter is usually a relative cognizant in a general or possibly specific way with the trouble between the pair. The couple slip into seats outside the space reserved for attorneys and sit there silent but interested in all that goes on.

Very few of the cases are contested. Where there is a quarrel in court it is over the amount of alimony or the custody of children. Only now and then does one party to the marriage seek to prevent the other from getting free. The judges do what they can in these contested cases to get an agreement to try it again, but the fires of hate have been kindled above the ashes of love, and seldom are they affected.

Poverty is perhaps the moving cause in most of the divorce cases. A young man with a slender wage marries a girl of no particular stamina or sturdiness of character. She develops shrewish tendencies, thinly veiled for a time by loving tenderness, a method in vogue to get what one wants without having a fight for it. She insists upon her own pleasures first, his desires last. When the glamor of first love wears off selfishness appears underneath. The insistence of the wife upon her own way jars soon upon the sense of fairness of the man. He begins to compare what he has now with what he possessed before his marriage, his freedom replaced by thralldom, the money he had to spend on himself that now scarcely suffices for two. Quarrels, little breaks, come and some day he picks up his belongings and departs. He cares no longer.

Or perhaps he is the selfish one. He keeps a tight hold upon the family pocketbook, spends what he pleases for his pleasure or the titillation of his appetite, grudgingly doles out to her what she can shame him into giving. He is convivial and the usual fate of

the good fellow awaits him. His wife may cling to him despite his conduct or his blows, or she may leave him. If she clings too long he takes the initiative. In both cases the lack of money or of the wisdom of wise expenditure is the wedge that splits the conjugal log, and makes two of one. Jealousy, hate, fickleness, cruelty, drink, lust, one or the other of the vicious tendencies of men and women, are present, of course, in many cases. Women who shrink from all the responsibilities of marriage, cold, passionless women who cannot or will not understand the nature of man, play their part, too, in this great drama of wrecked lives. This crops out now and then with sometimes startling directness.

Not long ago when the plaintiff's name was called in a divorce suit a dashing, well-dressed young woman stepped forward. She was the wife of a skilled mechanic who had deserted her side for another woman. Her demeanor and the flash of her dark eyes were the recreant husband's justification. They burned with the fire of jealousy, there was in the voice the ring of the termagant, in her gestures the impulsiveness of the domestic tyrant. She got her divorce, the law justified its giving, but it was not necessarily a judgment against the man.

Another distinctive character was an old man who had married a young woman, been properly bled for jewelry and presents of money and then flung aside. There could have been no other outcome. No woman with nerves—and who hasn't them—could have stood his fussiness or his general oppressiveness. Men with cold, fishy eyes, denoting the temperament of the miser and the disposition of the prying overseer, women betraying in their looks, tones and gestures the shrewishness of their disposition and the nagging character of their intercourse, come and tell their tales, one-sided ones at that, and go away with their decrees.

For what can the judges do? The law says that a divorce may be granted for certain causes. These are proven, there is no one to fully enlighten the court, he finds it hopeless to either induce or compel a reconciliation and a re-uniting. And so the decree is granted, but with a reluctance and an inward disgust.

The divorce court is not an elevating or very often an entertaining place. The stories are much the same, illumined now and then by some little bizarre tendency or trend. The people who seek its favors are not as a rule cheerful visitors nor does their appearance lend brightness to the scene.

"Here's a German theologian who denies the divinity of Christ."

"Well! well! The next thing somebody will deny the divinity of the Kaiser."—Town Topics.

A VANDERBILT TO WED



Reginald Vanderbilt, the latest photograph of whom appears above, will be the next Vanderbilt bridegroom. The date of his wedding to Miss Kathleen Neilson will shortly be announced. Young Vanderbilt's possessions are estimated at twenty millions.

GREEN GABLES.



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