

When South American Marriages Meet Northern Perils

"America Makes a Wife a Pal; Latin America Holds Her a Chattel," Says Attorney Mahler, Explaining Why the Transplanted Family Tree Wilts Up North.



Mrs. Elida Piza Crane, Costa Rican beauty, who denies her husband's charge that she eats lizards, but says he refused to duel with her father.

EAST and west have been known to meet on ground of marital felicity.

Like seeks like naturally excepting at the marriage altar. And at the marriage altar two points of the globe so closely related as the Americas, North and South, are united in holy bonds of matrimony, and go their stormy ways and come quickly to grief!

Why is it that the Latin-American marriage seldom succeeds in the United States?

In its own country it rarely is unsuccessful; in ours it rarely is anything else! "Oil and water; light and darkness; ice and flame." The new and the old; progress and retrogression!

"America makes a wife a pal; Latin America still holds her a chattel. Dark eyes see and covet; other eyes see and resent. So the husband and the wife find separate ways and there is another divorce or annulment or separation in the land of Latin-American adoption!"

This explanation is offered by an expert who has given years both in this country and in Latin America to study of the strange sociological problem.

He is William Mahler, who began and still maintains his position of specialist on maritime law. But into his office in the heart of New York's trillion-dollar district just east of Wall street, there long ago began to drift the results of the astonishing inability of Latin-American marriage to mix with American life. Husbands and wives who might have lived happily in Peru or Mexico or Porto Rico or any of the dozen places tried to make a go of it in America and failed. And after Mahler had taken case after case through the divorce court he came to be regarded as something of an institution and a protector in the Spanish-Latin-American colony, which stretches along the west side of Central park and continues for many squares on up town. Eventually he earned the sobriquet of "El Padre del Desencantado"—the "little father of the disenchanting"—because of his rare success in helping out of their difficulties brides caught in the queer jam between the country of their adoption and their domestic life.

Mrs. Carmen Kolster de Borgia, loveliest senora ever to stand a suppliant at the bar of justice in this city, was one of the clients of "El Padre." Mrs. Trinidad Rodriguez Lenares, whose "moral marriage" and its subsequent shattering was the sensation of its day here, together with Senora Sasport, whose charges against her husband, editor and planter of Mayaguez, brought many a gasp from a thrill-loving public, were others of Mahler's most notable clients.

And in Boston, where Latin-American wives are less at peace with their environment than are those in New York, it is said, gossip still runs on the spectacular action of beautiful Yvonne Laos, who appealed to the police for protection from her husband, Mariano A. Laos, the Peruvian attache at Washington, when all he asked was that she accompany him home to South America on a diplomatic errand!

In Chicago Mrs. Guillermo Borganaro has



Attorney William Mahler, known as "the little father of the disenchanting."

been in trouble since her husband fled to his home in Mexico and left her without a word.

What might have proved the most successful or otherwise marriage of the kind in San Francisco never came to the test. Before the vows actually were taken Elaine Lit-tel, the daughter of a wealthy Porto Rican planter, found it necessary to bring suit against her wealthy admirer, August R. Oliva, for alleged breach of promise.

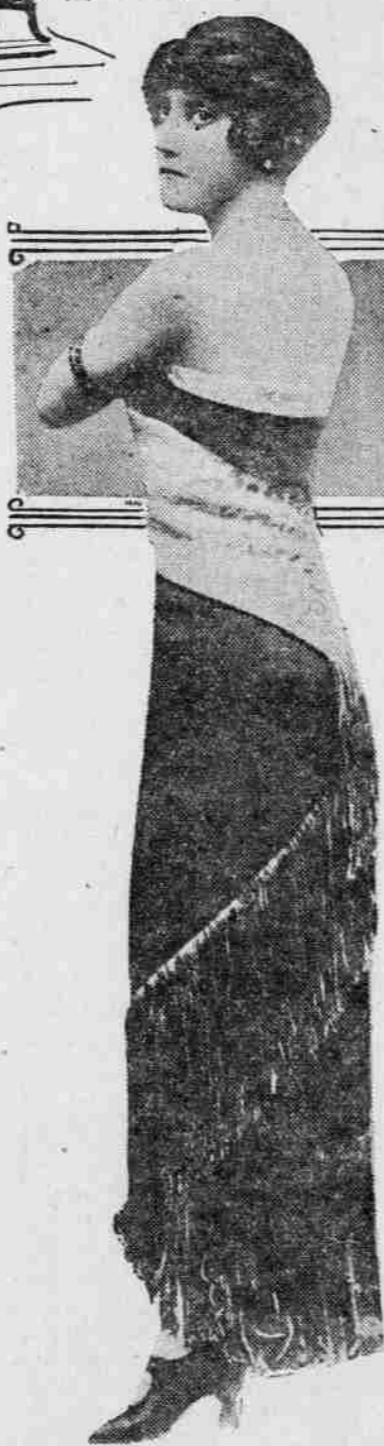
These are instances; straws pointing the direction of the Latin-American wind in America!

"The Latin-American mind works slowly along any path of progress. It is not given to changing ideas or revising habits of thought or conduct. It moves just as the birds before it have moved for generations. So the Latin-American attitude toward marriage remains at the stage when the wife was considered a chattel and the husband the lord of her life as well as his own!"

This is what "El Padre del Desencantado" had to say further about the failure of Latin-American marriages in America.

"Women of Spanish type are hot-tempered," he continued, "and their brains do not work as fast as their feelings. Consequently they are incredibly unreasonable. They are unwilling to take the hard knocks of life, but quite willing to accept what can be obtained easily."

"The men are totally without conception of the husband's duties as we understand them. The women of their country had not secured privileges of equality. In fact, the status of American womanhood has not yet been approached in any Latin-American country. Accordingly the Latin-American husband and wife in this country are unable to orient themselves. "The wife sees the different status of



Mrs. Carmen Kolster de Borgia, wife of Rene de Borgia, Venezuelan poet. He said she was a "tearing wildcat" and she said he was a "raging barbarian," in divorce suit.

the women from those of her own land and, without giving any logical thought to the real cause for the greater freedom of our women, she jumps at the conclusion that she, too, wants liberty of the sort and that it all is up to her husband. And she tried to talk him into giving it to her, and then their marital disaster begins.

"On the other hand, the Latin-American husband makes little attempt to establish a basis of companionship with his wife. He is not domesticated in the way American husbands are. He never would consent to dry the dishes, for instance, if his wife were ill—something American husbands rather enjoy any time! "And still another angle of the prob-



Mrs. Guillermo Borganaro, whose Mexican husband abandoned her because he couldn't get acclimated to American home customs she wanted to practice.

lem is the attitude of Latin-American married women toward going out to work. If they do go, they come home and make themselves unpleasant about it, and then there is more trouble.

"The farther American womanhood advances the more incapable is Latin America of co-ordinating itself. And the final movement of a group of American women, by which they expect to obtain public endorsement of sex equality in customs as well as in politics, industry, business and the professions, will be the final barrier to the Latin-American marriage succeeding in America. I am of the opinion that after this husbands and wives of that nationality must remain in their native land if they wish also to remain husbands and wives—to each other, at least!"

"A raging barbarian" is the manner in which Mrs. Carmen Kolster de Borgia characterized her husband, Rene de Borgia, a Venezuelan poet and novelist.

"A tearing wildcat," was his return compliment.

So their marital career, that began when she was 17, went up on a pyrotechnic display of words. Mrs. de Borgia was awarded her decree recently and now she states with emphasis that if ever she

marries again it will be with an American!

Perhaps the only exception to the rule cited by "El Padre" is the strange case of Mrs. Elida Piza Crane, the Costa Rican beauty who married Herbert P. Crane, millionaire manufacturer and iron magnate of Chicago, and whose marital happiness was wrecked not long after it was launched and who thereby proves that perhaps the American Latin-American combination doesn't always succeed either!

Two interesting features of her disagreement with Mr. Crane were brought out by the senora in her action. One was that she did not eat lizards, and the other that she considered it impolite on the part of her husband to refuse to oblige her father, the owner of a coffee plantation, with a duel, which her father demanded.

BULGARIANS WANT THEIR KING TO WED RICH AMERICAN GIRL

ONCE upon a time it was said that American women were title hunters and could be won by the display of a coat of arms more easily than by any attribute of brains or physique, but within the last few years Europe's nobility having suffered a depreciation with the immense new crop of titles granted for political reasons, in most of the nations, and the surplus of grand

dukes and counts and other noblemen dumped on the matrimonial market by the middle of Europe, it is now said that their desire for titles has lost ground.

Which of these two statements is true will be seen in the test proposed by what is undoubtedly the most remarkable government in Europe, the Stamboullski farmers' government in Bulgaria. The test is this: Bulgaria has a new

king, although it is not exactly dotty about royalty, and had sent its former monarch packing with considerable haste.

He is a young and very likable chap—husky, handsome and winning—a king to be proud of provided he does not find divine right notions too attractive.

He is now 28 years of age and since his marriage is a matter of state, the thrifty farmers who are called his subjects, but who really are his masters, want to be certain that he marries no impossible grand dame of the old school with lots of royal blood in her veins but not much of anything else.

Having a high opinion of this country they have decided that the best sort of a bride for him would be an American girl of good family, a woman who can bring with her a democratic tradition that Bulgaria wants to develop within her own borders, having grown quite sick of kings of the old-fashioned sort and all that goes with them. Incidentally, since Bulgaria has no desire to support royalty it would welcome an heiress whose own income could help pay the bills.

Now there is no joke about this. According to a dispatch from Geneva this proposal has been seriously made by Premier Stamboullski in the name of the very blunt and outspoken Bulgarian government, which is providing greater shocks to the political world than ever the soviets hoped to produce.

Here is a romance of the finest sort in the air, and it is up to some healthy, wealthy and wise young American girl, ambitious to win herself the highest title of all, so far as rank is concerned, to take up the challenge. Don't all speak at once girls: Who wants to be queen of Bulgaria?

The lucky one will have a big royal palace in Sophia, which as a capital is considered the rival of Budapest, Bucharest and Vienna as the greatest of central European capitals. In fact, a mighty nice place to live.

She will have for her husband a young man who has been considered one of the handsomest members of royalty in Europe, and who is romantically inclined and has been relieved of much of his kingly responsibilities and duties, for Bulgaria wants her ruler to be like the English king—a master of ceremonies and emphatically not an absolute ruler. The less he has to do with international political affairs the better she will be pleased, so he will have plenty of time for honeymooning and real romantic loving of the old-fashioned kind.

And for her subjects she will have about 5,000,000 hard-working farmers, very much like the rural classes of her own country and known as the soberest and most industrious people of the Balkans, if not of all eastern Europe.

But if she has any movie conceptions of royalty then she better not apply, as if there is anything this little country does not want it is a queen who meddles with affairs of state.

It is almost impossible to imagine a more remarkably governed state than Bulgaria.

What Struck Him.

Like the dyspeptic who said that the only food he ever liked was the food he couldn't get, a certain Patrick—a soldier in the late war but now a family servant—seems to have been especially susceptible to what may be called negative impressions. This son of Erin brought an honorable scar or two from France.

Once he described his part in a battle, and when he had finished was asked by someone:

"What struck you most forcibly when all was over and you looked back to it?"

"Ah," said the old servant, reflectively, "I think, sir"—with simplicity—"that what struck me most forcibly, sir, was the shells that missed me."