

Stokes' Crust Punctured He Hollers Nuff At Last

In Order to Avoid Further "Unnecessary Publicity" Multi-Millionaire Announces Will Not Start New Action Or Even Contest Wife's Suit For Separation

By ROBERT T. SMALL
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New York, Nov. 15.—The "old cove" is through. The thick crust of the man who sought in vain to prove his wife guilty of every possible degree of marital criminality has at last been punctured.

After parading before the public the most sordid story, the most motley array of witnesses, ever heard or seen in a divorce proceeding in New York city, W. E. D. Stokes, multi-millionaire hotel owner and capitalist, has announced that to avoid "further unnecessary publicity" he will not contest his wife's counter suit for a separation.

Back of this decision lies a study in human psychology. The last bitter trial through which he passed, and in which he was pictured as a monster was too much for Stokes. The attitude of the newspapers toward him, the constant reference to him as the "old cove" and the repudiation by many of his witnesses of stories previously told by them, broke the spirit of the aged man and apparently he has given up the fight which up to the present time must have cost him in the neighborhood of three quarters of a million dollars.

Stokes has taken an appeal from the verdict of the jury which denied a divorce. The jury took only one ballot. There never was any doubt of the result. But Stokes has appealed. He did that because his lawyers told him to. He has not any hope of success, and even if the verdict were reversed by a higher court, W. E. D. Stokes could not be dragged in the ordeal of another trial. Today he is a broken old man, bitter in defeat but none the less defeated.

Over him hangs an indictment in Chicago and the certainty of having to face sooner or later a jury which must pass upon his right to liberty and the pursuit of whatever happiness life may hold for him. His highly paid lawyers will fight the Chicago indictment with every weapon known to the most skilled of their craft. They will attempt to pick it to pieces. But Mrs. Stokes has been taught a lesson in vindictiveness and she will press the criminal charges for all she is worth.

Perhaps the decision not to oppose her suit for separation may have been made with the idea of closing up the Stokes case for all time and leading to a dismissal of the proceedings in Chicago. But up to this time it has had no such effect. During the progress of the recent trial it was stated that if Mr. Stokes were unsuccessful in obtaining a divorce at this time, he would bring new proceedings with new respondents named and new witnesses. That determination has been reversed. The "Old Cove" is through.

Mrs. Stokes is not asking for a divorce. She says she is through with matrimony—through anyway until her aged husband, who has sought so hard to be rid of her has passed on to his great reward. Mr. Stokes says she can have the separation and welcome to it.

In court there was a childish exchange between the opposing lawyers as to which of the Stokeses was the more unwilling to live with the other. Stokes's counsel said the hotel owner could not be induced to live again with his wife. Mrs. Stokes's counsel said she would prefer a kangaroo any day to that husband of hers. The judge put a stop to the wrangle by saying that the court and the entire public of the United States was convinced that neither wanted to live with the

other. That much was all threshed out.

The last fight of the "old cove" is to be made on the amount of alimony that shall be allowed his loving but resisting wife, and on her right to dower claim on his vast estate. Mrs. Stokes is now receiving \$18,000 a year. She may ask for \$50,000 a year for herself and the two children. Stokes says he wants the children—or the right to have them at certain times of the year. Mrs. Stokes once more says she would rather turn the children over to a kangaroo than to the "old cove."

In any event the next court proceeding will have to do with the old man's financial affairs, his ability to pay and pay and pay. There will be some interesting revelations at the inquiry.

In a final public statement Mr. Stokes wants it known that he does not admit any of the allegations of "cruelty" made against him in his wife's suit for a separation. He says he is not and never has been a cruel man. In all the circumstances he is only glad to agree to a separation, but he reserves all his legal rights to appeal from any decision by the court on the amount of alimony to be given Mrs. Stokes.

Stokes says he has devoted much of his fortune recently to charitable activities. Counsel for Mrs. Stokes will seek to prove that much of this "charity" was the "endowment" of a church devoted to "divine truth and silence," presided over by Mrs. Hattie Johnson, colored, who "mothered" all the colored witnesses that Stokes brought from far and near to testify against his wife. All of the witnesses stopped at the church. Hattie Johnson noses as a spiritual medium.

But all of this is in the past for the "old cove." He is through.

JEWELER BRIGHT URGES EARLY HOLIDAY SHOPPING

H. C. Bright of the H. C. Bright Company, Jeweler, returned Wednesday from his second trip this fall to Northern wholesale jewelry houses to buy jewelry for the company's Christmas business.

"Buying this fall," says Mr. Bright, "has been a great deal heavier than the wholesalers anticipated and in many instances they will be finding themselves short of popular lines."

"With the price of cotton continually getting better and with labor demanding higher prices it is not improbable that jewelry, silverware, and novelties will advance in the near future."

"But even if it did not I would suggest early buying this fall in jewelry and all other lines for that matter, as stocks will be depleted unusually early in the season and as stores are in much better position to give service now than they will be later."

PREACHERS SWAMP MITCHELL'S

"Five preachers were writing letters in our office at one time today," Oliver Gilbert, proprietor of Mitchell's said Wednesday. The store had advertised a bureau of information and writing desk for Conference delegates and the visiting ministers took advantage of the hospitality of the department store.

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Mrs. Ada Burfoot Lester of Asheville is visiting her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Noah Burfoot, Sr., on West Main street.

Mrs. John Roseman of Enfield is visiting her daughter, Miss Winnie Roseman, at Mrs. T. S. Harney's on West Main street.

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DOUGLAS FAIRBANKS' GREATEST PICTURE COMING TO THE ALKRAMA NEXT WEEK

For the first time since he became a screen actor, Douglas Fairbanks spent a cold million dollars in order to make "The Three Musketeers," which has proven to be the film sensation of the picture world, and which was adapted from Alexander Dumas' famous novel, and directed by Fred Niblo.

Never before in the history of the motion picture industry was a photoplay produced on so lavish a scale as this forthcoming Fairbanks offering. Nearly a hundred thousand dollars was spent on costumes alone, and more than half that amount was expended in the building of the exterior sets, not counting the ship and the pier which cost a small fortune besides.

The payroll for the stars and players was more than three times as heavy for this picture as it was on any previous Fairbanks film, owing to the fact that it was the aim of the star-producer to get the best talent available, regardless of the cost.

More women played with Doug in important roles in "The Three Musketeers" than ever before appeared with him in any feature. Marguerite De La Motte, Mary MacLaren and Barbara La Marr, all stars in their own right, who are among the highest paid photoplayers on the screen, take the leading parts.

All told there are one hundred and sixteen persons in the cast not counting extras, and the weekly payroll for "The Three Musketeers" reached the staggering figure of over \$50,000 a week.

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