

Funny Charlie Chaplin—He Could Only Make His Wife Cry!

And Here Mrs. Chaplin, Suing for Divorce, Tells the Sad Experiences Which Convinced Her That the Great Motion Picture Comic Star Is Only "One Half of One Per Cent as a Husband"



Charlie Chaplin in a Care-Free, Gay Scene and Behaving Just the Way He Did Not, His Wife Says, So Far as She Was Concerned.

NO recent case of broken romance and once fond hearts estranged has created such interest as the suit for divorce by Mrs. Charlie Chaplin against her husband, the world famous funny man of the motion pictures. The charges brought by Mrs. Chaplin are "mental cruelty" and failure of her husband to provide for her.

Among the millions whom Charlie Chaplin has made laugh there have probably been many who have thought how care-free and amusing the lot of the woman was his wife. No woman, it would be said, could ever have the bliss of being but cheerful with so mirthful a companion. Yet strangely there are no sadder, more pessimistic than the professional humorist to use up all their store of wit and output. And, according to Mrs. Chaplin, Charlie Chaplin was no exception. She tells what she alleges is the sad story of her life with the man on earth—so far as the divorce is concerned.

Mrs. Chaplin has denied all that Mrs. Chaplin charges in her suit, and has expressed herself as being much surprised at the decision to force the issue. He will, she said, bring counter suit against her on the grounds of his own, and incidentally alleges that, despite her charge of penury, he spent over \$60,000 in about eighteen months in housekeeping expenses, although during that time Mrs. Chaplin herself was earning \$1,000 a week.

By Mrs. Charlie Chaplin.
(In an interview)

I AM quite ready to admit that my marriage to Charlie Chaplin was a mistake. It was a mistake on his part, because he is a genius, and geniuses should not marry. He would better be free and remain free, for he will make any woman he marries miserable, I know.

We have been married for three years. For two of those years we lived under the same roof, more or less. That is, if greeting a husband after long disappearances might be said to be living under the same roof with him.

If lying awake, weeping and wondering where your husband is, until 4 or 5 o'clock in the morning can really be called living. If wrangling over every bill that comes in can be called living.

If living on the scale of an income of \$250 a week, when your husband earns \$13,000 a week, can be called living.

If having your wardrobe censored and a standard of two or three dresses and one hat established may be considered an existence.

If being told to keep your head down so that no man will see your face is living. If hearing that meat and potatoes and pudding are enough for a meal and that cream and salads are silly and useless really stands for proper living.

If being constantly accused of flirting with a man who is causelessly jealous is living. If this and more I endured—and for five months. That is the reason I hesitate to say that we lived under the same roof. It wasn't living. It was perdition.

It has been said that a comedian is only funny in public. I believe it. In fact, I know it. Charlie Chaplin, who has made millions laugh, only caused me tears.

So it was better that we should separate. Better that there be a divorce. I have seen him since my suit for divorce began. We met in the office of my lawyer in Los Angeles.

When we parted he said: "Mildred, you are right. I should never have married. I know it now. You probably will marry soon. If you do I hope you will be happy. I shall never marry again." And we looked at each other sadly—a funny man and his wife.

That the public may not be misled by strange, false rumors I will tell for once and finally, unless I tell it in court, the story of the funny man who could only make his wife cry.



Mrs. Charlie Chaplin, Who Is Suing for Divorce on the Grounds of "Mental Cruelty" and Failure to Support—and Two Pictures of Charlie With His Famous Hat, Little Moustache and Ridiculous Shoes.

not even with his wife, as was invariably impressed upon me on bill day.

He thought my bills for dresses outrageous. He said: "You are married. You don't need expensive dresses. You have captured me. I am yours."

I used to reply: "But my dear, I want pretty clothes to keep you. Marriage ought to be a winning over and over of the lord of our hearts."

He did not even listen. I had lost him again. I was always losing his attention. He is the most preoccupied man on earth. For this there is a good reason, I confess.

He invents his own characters and writes his sketches and acts in them. That is the work of two or three men. Instead of staying at home with me, in our big, lonely house on the hill, he left me cowering with fear, as a child cowers in the dark, afraid of nameless things, while he went forth to walk the streets at night.

He walked, as I have said, until 4 or 5 in the morning. He was looking for types, he was seeking characters and materials for his comedies. He seemed to forget I was in the world. I was not in his world of thought.

He used to leave home and visit our friends. He would be gone for days and weeks. He stayed with friends at Berkeley Hills for two months. That was when I sued for divorce. During these absences there would not be a word from him. Then he would come back and resume the old gloomy life.

One thing that bored me was that he wanted to read deep books. Some time I shall grow into an understanding of them, but I haven't yet reached that stature. He would read those books to me by the hour and would insist that I read them. Yet sometimes I found that Charlie fooled me. When I really read the books I read them. I delved into them.

And when I would talk to him about the plots and characters I found he had only a surface knowledge of them! My lord was guilty of skimming a book. There are literary posers. And yet Mr. Chaplin is ambitious. He wants to leave off the funny little walk and the baggy trousers

and queer little moustache. Like all comedians, he wants to be serious. He longs to play tragedies. He used to rehearse tragic parts to me.

Fancy Charlie Chaplin as Hamlet! If the incongruity struck me and I laughed he flew into a fury and called me the essence of silliness. That essence of silliness is a euphemism. You wouldn't print what he called me.

Although his life and thoughts were so far from mine, yet he was madly jealous. His life had not been sheltered as mine was. In those days while he was growing up in Europe he had not known the best women. He was surprised when I did not drink nor smoke cigarettes. He thought it a prudish pose. And he could not believe that the men whom I had known before I knew him were not my suitors. And it was impossible for him to believe that the men with whom I signed contracts or worked in the studios I regarded merely as cogs in the business wheel or professional associates.

While paying court to me and after our marriage he would say to me while we were in restaurants or were driving: "Keep your head down. I don't want any man to see your face." Or he would say: "Don't look at a man. He will think you want him." He had lived abroad too long to understand our open-eyed American candor. He even let jealousy enter his own studio. He watched me dance with an employe of his and said: "I'll fire that fellow in the morning."

Yet there would be recurrences of great tenderness. While I was ill in the hospital when our baby came he took a room next to mine. He came in to see me and bent his head over me and cried. He left me a note saying: "You are the dearest little mother in the world." Even the nurses said his thoughts of me were beautiful. But our baby died three days after

it was born. His feeling toward me seemed to change. He grew more indifferent to me. He went away collecting material. His room at the hospital was empty. He did not even call to take me from the hospital to our home.

I insisted on moving down from the big lonely house on the hill because I was afraid. We moved down to Oxford street. Because he left me alone so much I went back to work in the studios. And he was like a madman. We did not talk much to each other toward the last. We had little to say, because we could not agree upon vital themes.

I like domestic life. Mr. Chaplin is bohemian.

I like to make life as beautiful as I can. I believe in spending money to make it so. Yet when I told him that we could not be happy together and talked of a separation he offered me \$25,000. This man, who is

not as rich as the public thinks, but who is worth at least a million!

I want to be free from such doubts as his. I want liberty to do my work and have an uncensored home.

I don't want to be made to cry any more by a funny man—not even an American husband, who is the only one hundred per cent kind.

American men are one hundred per cent husbands because they are good friends and comrades. Mr. Chaplin is a genius. He has been called the funniest man on earth. As a public entertainer he is above par. As a husband he is one-half of one per cent.

His ambition is like that of Doug and Mary. He wants to have five million dollars and travel. I shall be content with a modest living and a home. It is better that our ways parted and at a great distance.



Mrs. Chaplin on the Bank of the Lake at the Chaplin Home in Los Angeles.