

AFTER TWENTY YEARS SHE FINDS HER HUSBAND

LEPROUS

Stranger than "The Octoroon" is the story of deception

unfolded in the divorce suit of Mrs. Albert White of Los Angeles.

DENY IT! DENY THAT YOU ARE A NEGRO!

THE sensational disclosure that Mrs. Mary H. White has been compelled to make public in her efforts to secure a divorce from her husband, a well-known insurance solicitor of Los Angeles, has made the people of that pretty southern city first to open wide, incredulous eyes, and then to shudder.

The divorce court is the hot-house for starting revelations, and the judges, lawyers and hangers-on of that particular department of the law are bored to satiety by the recital of marital differences, but Mrs. White's story is such an unusual one that even these well-seasoned listeners are stirred to pity and amazement.

It is a story beside which the average divorce court narrative pales into insignificance and becomes petty and trifling, a tale whose tragic details seem more the offspring of the romancer's mind than the sad life of a timid little woman. The strange facts as she related them are more dramatic than "The Octoroon," "The Leopard's Spots," and other stirring novels whose plots revolve around the question of racial intermarriage.

For twenty-one years Mrs. White has lived with her husband, has borne him two children, and never, until the other day, did she have the slightest suspicion that he was of another race. Then from the lips of the angry man himself she learned the sickening, overwhelming truth.

Her husband was a negro! Of gentle Southern birth, to whom a taint of Ethiopian blood is as a leprous spot, she recoiled with horror from the man she had promised nearly a quarter of a century ago to "love, honor and obey." Shrieking from him, she looked at last with seeing eyes at her husband. The swarthy skin, the full lips, the peculiar eyes, exaggerated themselves until she could have shrieked aloud instead of crouching silently in a corner of the room.

How could she have been so blind all these years? Why had not woman's rare intuition warned her?

Why had she not felt an instinctive aversion to this man whose name she had borne for twenty-one years?

But he had lulled any suspicions that might have been aroused on account of his brown complexion, by explaining that he was of French-Canadian descent and that life in the open had also helped to darken his skin.

She, loving and trusting him, had never doubted him.

She told the pitiful story the other day to a representative of the Sunday Call, seated in a little room in a secluded part of Los Angeles, where, with her children, she is hiding from her husband. A frail, dainty little woman, with a quiet dignity, of which all the trials and humiliations to which she has been subjected have not been able to rob her. Calmly and slowly she told of life as dramatic as any play. She was not conscious of a heroic role. She related the facts simply, reluctantly, and apparently with a scrupulous regard to truth. Malice was absolutely lacking in the recital of them.

In fact, so gentle did she speak of the wrongs done her that her older daughter, sitting beside her holding her hand, would often excitedly interrupt and express her indignation at the treatment afforded her mother. But Mrs. White, with a wan smile at her daughter's vehemence, quietly rejoined, "Never mind, now, Mamma dear. I probably wasn't always in the right, myself."

"My father and mother were Arkansas planters," she began. "They came originally from the East, and were well-to-do. They were both of them, however, and so, while I was hardly more than a baby, I was left an orphan in charge of neighbors of ours who already had a large family of their own. My parents' illness, at my mother's death, and the fact that they had brought West with them, consequently by the time I was 13 years old I was dependent upon the charity of the people with whom I was living. Being poor, I was often excitedly brought to the attention of a man, a stranger, who was very attractive and he explained to me that he was of French-Canadian birth and that many years passed in the open air had tanned his skin. He came to see me often, took me to amusements, and had such charming manners that he won me completely. He finally told me that he loved me, asked me to marry him and promised to be as good to my little girl as though he were her own father."

"Despite his protestations and prepossessing ways, I hesitated. I didn't know why. A nameless dread of something I couldn't define came over me. But I was only a child, as innocent in heart and mind as the one I carried in my arms, and I was lonesome and yearned to have some one to love me. He easily persuaded me to marry him. That was in 1885, and I was then not quite 16. It was a contract marriage, for he told me that was the usual form in the part of the country in which he lived. Afterward I grew suspicious of the contract marriage

and demanded to be married by a minister. He consented, and the second time we were married in Wichita, Kan. "For a short time we lived happily together and I was beginning to think that at last my troubles were over. It was only a breathing spell.

"One day my husband brought home a colored man whom he introduced to me by the name of Fitzpatrick. He told me that he had engaged him as a secretary. I knew my husband's correspondence was not large enough to warrant his employing help, so I was puzzled to know why he had gone to the extra expense and why he had hired a coal-black negro. The mystery deepened when I found that the man made little pretense at working, but instead was on the most intimate of terms with Mr. White, even calling him by his first name and wearing his clothes. He ate with us, and attempted little familiarities with me. I pretended not to see them, as my husband endeavored to effect that I was not to be troubled by the negro's conduct, and I felt that a stop should be put to the man's insolence. I spoke to Mr. White, but he still more mystified when he only laughed at me, then openly showed the negro the feeling I had toward him, and he displayed for me the bitterest hatred. He showed it in taunts and jeers and veiled innuendoes to the effect that I was no better than he. I didn't know what to do. Mr. White strangely ignored the impertinent negro's conduct and at times seemed to have an absolute affection for him. Finally one day Fitzpatrick ventured too far and caused an open rupture between my husband and me, his mischievousness and interference recoiled upon his own head. My husband, furious, turned Fitzpatrick out of the house, but at the same time he treated me and spoke to me in a manner that was entirely foreign to him. I was more puzzled than hurt. His manner placed me almost on a social level with the negro he had just dismissed.

"In fact, from the day Fitzpatrick came to live with us there was an indefinable change in my husband. I did not understand it then."

She shivered and stopped, but in a moment went bravely on. "I can't exactly explain the feeling I had about him at this time, because I struggled so hard against it. I thought that was partly to blame, but the trouble was morally my fault and was the result of overwrought nerves. As nearly as I can express it now, it was as though his gentleness and good breeding had been but a thin veneer that the negro had taken off. Yet in public he appeared the same as ever. We went out as much as usual, and entertained our friends as we'd always done; still the feeling I had did not wear off. Finally, one day, I found myself shrinking from my husband. I so lost control of myself one day that he noticed it, in-

stead of trying to calm me he became enraged. Frightened, I grabbed the two children and ran away. Determined to have nothing more to do with him I brought an action against him for divorce. My decree was not granted. My suit for divorce seemed to change the man entirely. It was as though I'd never known him. A latent savagery began to show itself, and I watched with wonder and an unnamed dread a peculiar coarseness develop in him. Although falling to get a divorce I refused to have anything to do with him. Every time he came to see me my feeling of loathing grew stronger, and it required all the self-restraint I had to keep him from seeing it. But he felt a difference in my manner toward him, and became very bitter.

"Thinking to compel me to return to him, he went to the hospital where our baby, little Della, was just recovering from a severe illness. He asked to see the matron, and while the nurse went in search of her he snatched Della from her bed and made his escape with her. "I was immediately notified, and, nearly frantic with grief and alarm, went to the police station. I tried there to get an order for my baby, but I was told that I could not do this without a good deal of formality, and, considering the circumstances, perhaps not at all. "I seemed for a minute as though I should go mad. I told the police that I'd get the child myself, if I died in the attempt. "The fragile little woman straightened in her chair and the lips that had been tremulous as she told of her sufferings, now smoothed themselves out and closed firmly upon each other. "I went on: "I went to our old home here in Los Angeles, something telling me he would take the child there. An officer in plain clothes followed. Mr. White was at home, and little Della was on the sofa crying. I opened the door quickly, went in and grabbed the baby in my arms before he realized what had happened. He pursued me, of course, and just as I got outside the door, caught up with me. He asked me to return to him, and when I refused, in my ex-



MRS. MARY H. WHITE, WHO ASKS DIVORCE FROM HER HUSBAND BECAUSE HE IS A NEGRO



MRS. MARY H. WHITE



ALBERT WHITE, NOW DECLARED TO BE A QUADROON

wants a nigger baby, anyway." "I nearly dropped little Della. "What are you saying, Albert?" I screamed.

"You want a divorce," he went on with an ugly sneer. "Why don't you get it on the ground that you're married to a colored man?"

"The way he said it made me start and look at him closely. Something, too, the negro Fitzpatrick had once said to me, burned upon my memory. My overwrought feelings, my husband's strange conduct, Fitzpatrick's liberties, all these flashed through my brain, explained at last. But I refused to believe. It didn't seem possible that anything so awful could happen to me. I had endured poverty and hard work, but disgrace had never visited me. "Say it's not true, Albert; say it's not true!"

"I found myself slipping to my knees. "Find out," he laughed, and went into the house."

Mrs. White stopped. Sobs were crowding out her utterance. After a time she concluded:

"I went to see my lawyers and asked them to find out for me all about Albert White. Their investigations have proved my worst suspicions. Mr. White is a Tennessee quadroon. His real name is John Fitzpatrick, and he is a full brother of the negro Fitzpatrick who lived with us. I could have my marriage annulled on the ground of his being colored, for the laws of the States of Arkansas and Kansas, in which our two marriages took place,

forbid a white person to marry either a negro, mulatto, quadroon or octoroon.

"But there are the children. Such as he is, he is their father. I don't want to have the marriage declared null and void on their account. What am I to do? If it weren't for the two children I'd put an end to my unfortunate life."

For such a sorrow there were no words. We left her with her face in her hands, silently sobbing, as Albert White's two children came into the room. The boy, Oswald D., is 10 years old, and little Della 5. They are both light of complexion like their mother, with blonde hair. They do not show the slightest trace of colored blood, although their features resemble those of the father.

"I can't let the children bear it alone. I brought it on them and I'll do my duty by them. Why, if they hadn't me, they might descend to the level of their father's family. Oh, the shame of it!"

White himself refuses to discuss the case, and will neither deny nor admit that he is a negro.

Mrs. White's lawyers say they have discovered that White was in constant communication with colored friends in the South; that he met them surreptitiously, or when he left home ostensibly on business trips. He told his relatives that he had married "a pretty white girl who didn't suspect." Such is the strange story of "one woman's life."

LABOR'S WAGE FOR REBUILDING CITY--175 MILLIONS

(Continued from Front Page.)

tained by much figuring. Mathematics does not offer a romantic pastime, but it obtains totals of wide interest as touching a city passing through an epoch that will always be important to the world's history.

About 18,000 buildings were destroyed by the fire and all of this number will eventually be rebuilt. They will be rebuilt of permanent type and of better material than composed them when laid waste by the flames. It is safe to say that at least 12,000 structures will be built of brick and concrete. Four thousand temporary structures have been hammered up since the disaster at an average cost of about \$1000, aggregating \$4,000,000.

Under ordinary circumstances architects and structural engineers estimate that in wooden structures labor amounts to fifty per cent of the total cost. This percentage has not obtained during the past few months because of the increase in the price of lumber. The raise in carpenters' wages, even when figuring in overtime and Sundays, has not kept pace with the boosting of the price of lumber. Approximately, however, the labor in the erection of four thousand wooden and galvanized iron buildings that have been provided for the temporary shelter of commercial enterprises has cost from thirty-five to forty per cent, or about \$1,500,000. Before temporary building has

stopped the carpenters will undoubtedly receive another million. By that time there will be ample demand for them in the permanent buildings that will gradually rise and crowd out the shacks.

The best way of calculating the cost of the reconstruction of the city is to take some standard building as a gauge and figure from that. Engineers with whom I discussed the subject declared that a four-story brick building on a lot 44x110 feet is as good a standard as could be taken. Experts who know the rebuilding situation say that using such a standard it is safe to figure on 12,000 permanent buildings.

In the construction of a four-story building of the type mentioned 548,000 bricks are used. Ten years ago 1000 bricks could be bought and laid for \$11. Today in San Francisco it costs almost as much for the labor. A bricklayer can lay ten hundred bricks in seven hours and at the present rate of wages he makes 87.5 cents an hour. This makes his labor in laying 1000 bricks cost \$6.12. Then there is almost \$4 for the hodcarrier and other labor to figure in on the work, bringing the total up to about \$10 a thousand. Thus the wages of labor in erecting a 548,000-brick building would be about \$5500. In 12,000 such buildings the grand total would be more than sixty million dollars.

If, as has been estimated, 6,576,000 bricks go into the rebuilding of San Francisco, the aggregate earnings of the bricklayers alone employed on the work will be something like forty-six millions. Other labor

will get out of the work of hod-carrying and preparing the mortar twenty-three millions.

One billion feet of lumber will go into the rebuilding. A few years ago this amount of lumber would have cost less than fifteen millions. Now it is costing much more. Whatever the cost of lumber, there seems no doubt that the carpenters and joiners will receive more than ten millions of the money spent in the rebuilding.

As a rule, plumbing is estimated at about ten per cent of the cost of the building. Consequently the plumbing in a brick building of the sort I have used for a standard, presuming it to cost when complete \$35,000, would be \$3500. Ordinarily the labor required to install the plumbing is estimated at twenty-five per cent of the cost of the material, so that the plumbers would get \$875 out of each building. Then before all the 12,000 buildings were finished and ready for occupancy the plumbers would have received ten and one-half millions in wages. This would be doing rather well even for the plumbers.

Every permanent building that will rise over the burned area must be plastered, and there would be shipped on the walls of a four-story brick building forty-five feet wide by 110 feet deep 5000 square yards of plaster. In 12,000 buildings the walls would be covered with sixty million yards. Common scratch brown plaster usually costs about twenty-five cents a yard when on the wooden lath. The same material with a plaster-of-paris finish, using a metal lath on wood studding, costs more than twice as

much, so that the average cost would be in the vicinity of forty cents a yard. Sixty million yards would cost \$6,000,000, labor and all, the plasterers getting at least ten per cent of the final cost under normal conditions. Labor conditions, however, are not normal and the plasterer is making from forty to fifty per cent more than usual, so that his wages would be in the neighborhood of fifteen per cent, if not more. Thus there will be \$900,000 as the plasterers' share of the reconstruction millions.

Incidental to the rebuilding of San Francisco there are many industrial, manufacturing and railroad enterprises under way that demand the services of a separate army of laborers. The Western Pacific Railroad is now advertising for 10,000 laborers, for construction work on the tracks running into San Francisco ferry approach. Other big contractors who are doing quarry work, the hauling of sand and the digging of gravel for footing and superstructural work in the new and greater city can use 5000 more men than are at hand. Altogether the incidents to the reconstruction will employ 15,000 laborers during the period of the next five years. With the average wage rate for these toilers estimated at \$2 a day the daily payroll for incidental labor will foot up to \$30,000. This is \$30,000 a week or \$3,350,000 a year. In five years this would add up to \$16,750,000. And adding it to the already estimated two hundred millions, we would get the ultimate total of \$245,000,000 as labor's earnings.

BARTON W. CURRIE.