

*DIVORCE MADE EASY.*

We have been accustomed to look upon the United States as the home of divorce, and as an El Dorado where might be found a means of putting a final end to conjugal infelicities for very slight reasons, and, indeed, we have only to read a recent case from Omaha to realize what frivolous grounds for a separation have been urged. In this case the applicant complains that his spouse, who had previously rejoiced him with her dusky tresses, had taken the pernicious notion to bleach them, and by reason thereof it had become necessary that she should paint her face—presumably to harmonize—and that thereby she has acquired a "giddy, fast, and sporty appearance," which was foreign to his notions of decency.

Such being our ideas of divorce, as it obtains in the United States, we are naturally surprised on turning to the statistics of Japan to find that this sixteenth century nation with a nineteenth century government recognizes grounds of separation between husband and wife which would put even Omaha to the blush. In the number even of divorces Japan leads the van of the nations, for it is stated that in the year 1890, during which period there were 340,445 marriages, there were no less than 107,478 divorces. The grounds of divorce are (1) infidelity; (2) disobedience to either the husband or his parents; (3) kleptomania; (4) contagious or incurable disease; (5) sterility; (6) jealousy; and (7) excessive talkativeness. The second ground would seem to be on a par with the alleged mother-in-law nuisance of the western nations. The sixth ground, although apparently trivial, has more importance than might be supposed; for while a Japanese may legally have but one wife, he may have two concubines, who are permitted to live in the same house as does his wife.

When a divorce, sought on the ground of "excessive talkativeness," is opposed by the wife, we imagine the fun would begin. Such opposition, however, is rare, as the women are as yet, for the most part, not sufficiently free from the control of their liege lord to attempt to thwart his wishes, and the recent law giving women the right to sue for divorce is as yet made but little use of. The right to the custody of the children remains in the husband, no matter whence the cause of divorce emanated.