

# I Have a Statistic

By CHESTER T. CROWELL

WITH the kind permission of those present I wish to introduce a statistic. To the best of my knowledge and belief it is the shortest statistic captured and exhibited this year, therefore I shall take the liberty to consume a full four minutes introducing it. If I don't, the meeting will be over before the audience has comfortably seated itself. My statistic is important but placed end to end it will not fill more than two lines. In order to obtain for it the thoughtful consideration which I believe it deserves, I am going to disclose here and now the subject upon which it bears. This, ladies and gentlemen, is nothing more nor less than the ever-present question of divorce.

That question, as you have doubtless observed, is now cluttered with quite extensive statistics which show, among other things, that whereas in the year 1870 there were only umteenth divorces to each so-many thousands of marriages there are now ever so many more and the rate of increase indicates that next year even a greater number may reasonably be expected. Any one who is clever at arithmetic can take the figures just quoted and on comparing them with census statistics prove that we are being divorced even more rapidly than we are being born.

Moreover, this situation has persisted for a long time. Since very few of us obtain divorces in early infancy or before we are married the obvious conclusion, from the figures, is that marriage must be running a sorry second in the contest with what is commonly regarded as its chief opponent. In other words, if we are going to maintain not only our present divorce record but its steady, annual increase we must cut heavily into our capital stock or inventory of marriages. These, of course cannot increase more rapidly than the population. Hence the gloomy prediction that in due time virtually all of us will be divorced.

There you have the gist of what alarms those who view our divorce statistics with alarm. And now, ladies and gentlemen, I think the proper stage setting has been arranged for the introduction of my little statistic.

*Mr. Crowell's captured statistic is one of the most interesting we have had brought to our attention for some time. And we think that it will prove quite as interesting to others. For the statistic, subdued and made to explain itself, offers an exceedingly interesting interpretation of the divorce figures which have been appalling numerous jumpy persons of late because of their mounting totals. It casts a distinctly rosy light upon the future of marriage*

Little, did I say? Let the word be changed to brief. This is a high-powered statistic. Listen! All of the men and women I have ever known who sought divorces did so because they desired to marry and virtually all of them carried out their purpose. The others are at work on their trousseaux, or saving a little more money, or waiting until June, or until the decree becomes final.

Now I find that my statistic throws an entirely different light upon all of the other statistics and totally robs them of their gloomy aspect. No group of people in this country, I believe, is so utterly committed to marriage, so unqualifiedly enthusiastic about the institution, or so certain of happiness within its bonds, as those who obtain divorces. Consider, by way of contrast, the statistics relating to aviation, especially transatlantic aviation. You find that so-and-so-many men and women hopped off and less than half of them arrived at their announced destinations. With these two figures available you put them in a dice box and shake them up or, if you happen to know some one who understands arithmetic, you call upon him to wangle them a bit and presently you can state in terms of percentage the chances for and against your arriving in Europe in the event you hop off from Curtiss Field in an airplane. It is just as simple as that. But no such simplicity attaches to the divorce statistics.

When you pick up the morning newspaper and read that Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Z. Weaf are suing each other for divorce does it mean that another marriage has taken a nose dive into the Atlantic? Well, yes. But don't overlook the fact that Mr. and Mrs. Weaf, unlike the aviators who fail to cross the Atlantic, are still with us and that in

all probability two other marriages are soon to replace the loss. Anyway, one is; and the other will probably follow in due season. Unless several hundreds of otherwise reputable citizens have told me the same falsehood over a period of fifteen years without collusion and without even knowing each other a considerable number of the men and women who sue for divorces are al-

ready engaged to marry when the suits are filed. With regard to love and marriage, we are, I believe, the most idealistic and romantic people the world has ever known. Not only do we expect more of it than any other people but even when those rosy hopes are grievously disappointed we refuse to be downcast. "Oh, bother!" we say. "This isn't half as grand as my expectations. Maybe we chose an unlucky day. Anyway something slipped. I'm going to try again. It would be silly to miss the glamorous, gaudy happiness of marriage."

THIS is the state of mind—unless people have been lying to me all my life—that leads to divorce. Few of the disillusioned who lapse into pessimism have the energy to battle their way through the divorce court. After all they have other and less noisy and less expensive remedies. They can separate. But that isn't enough for the romantic optimists. They want wives and husbands. They not only believe in marriage after one smash but I have known them to be lyrical on the subject after three smashes. So far as I can judge, in the light of my little statistic, there is no danger whatever of marriage going into the discard because of the prevalence of divorce. On the contrary what troubles me as a mere dabbler in statistics is to figure out how we are going to supply mates for all these eager devotees of Hymen. You can see the difficulties yourself. Not only is the marriage of hitherto unmarried persons booming along at the old rate, but the previously marrieds are hurrying back into the bonds. If each divorce is going to continue to lead to two more marriages won't we run out of—? But I never was good at arithmetic.

# ▷▷ Ivory, Apes and Peacocks ◁◁

THE room we show you this week was designed by Joseph Urban, and is part of the current exhibition at the American Designers' Gallery. It is titled "Repose." "It tantalizes the vanity of the occupant," says the catalogue, "by showing faint images of herself on the black mirrors which surround the room." But why then call it "Repose"? It wouldn't be particularly reposeful to us to have faint images of ourself continually surrounding us in our hours of ease. Nor would it tantalize our vanity. However, each to his taste. And the room presents some interesting features. The walls and ceiling are in squares of black vitrolite—the sort of thing you associate with lunching in a drug store; the rug is black, of cut and uncut pile. The furniture is black with ivory fittings. We are sorry the picture doesn't show the dressing table with its ivory inlay and accessories, and the lighting fixtures. These latter are tall narrow pillars of frosted glass, illuminated within. There is also a light in the ceiling.

One result of our recent remarks to you on the subject of hand weaving as a hobby, was a letter from a lady who makes tufted counterpanes. Her designs are original adaptations of the work of three great-grandmothers, whom, she explains, she knew intimately. The names of these designs are appetizing—Rising Sun, Sweetbrier, Blue and White, Endless Chain, Rainbow, Dream Garden, and so on. We haven't seen them of course, but if you feel that you'd like to cover yourself with a tufted counterpane this winter, we'll be glad to give you her address.

We have always felt that this was an extremely valuable department—perhaps the most valuable in the mag-

By W. R. BROOKS

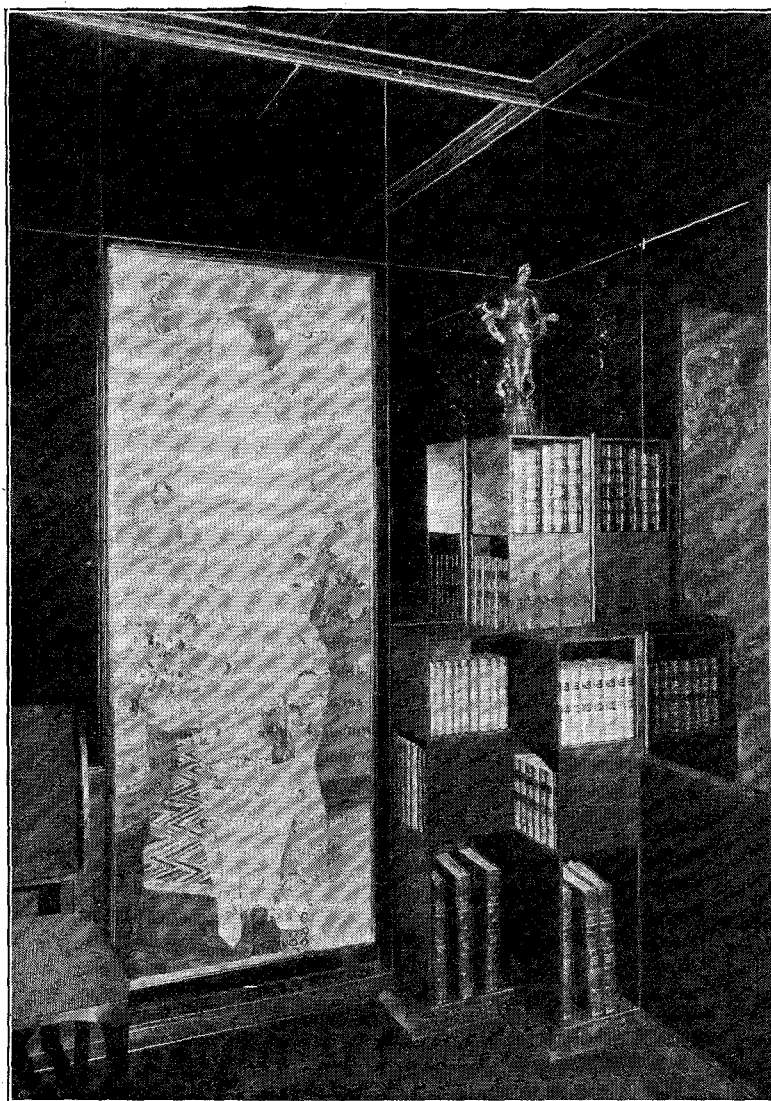
azine. So firm has been this belief that we have not hesitated to speak of it to you, and occasionally even to the Editor. But never has its value been more forcibly brought home to us than

suicide was premeditated or fortuitous we don't know; what we do know is that if he had turned on the gas a few hours earlier than he did the pilot light on the stove would have ignited the gas in the room and this column would have been written by another hand.

A secondary annoyance is the disposal of the corpse. In New York, getting the camel through the needle's eye is child's play to getting rid of a dead cat. Garbage men and ash men are so squeamish that at the mere sight of even a dead mouse they leap on their wagons and drive off. Appeals to the Department of Health are met by vague references to a mysterious institution known as the Offal Dock, but interest at the Offal Dock is awfully hard to rouse. The simplest method is to wrap the body in a newspaper and carry it out and drop it secretly in front of somebody else's house or in the back seat of a standing automobile. The time when you elect to do this, however, is always just the time when a suspicious policeman is following you. We knew of a man who carried a cat, thus wrapped, about with him from house to office and back and in and out of stores and clubs for several days, until desperate at last he resolved to violate all the laws and proprieties and bury it, by night and

cloud, under the small patch of grass in the back yard of his apartment. He crept out, dug the hole, and unwrapping the body was about to tip it in when something attracted his attention; he looked again and saw it was a perfectly good roast of pork. Somewhere, somehow, he had exchanged packages.

However, what we want to say is: locking gas cocks is necessary in a home that has either cats or children.



Courtesy American Designers' Gallery

## CORNER OF A BOUDOIR

By Joseph Urban

this morning. You will remember our speaking some time ago of a safety lock for gas stoves. We thought it a good idea and fully intended to get one, but we thought about it too long. This morning we woke to an unpleasant sense of illuminating gas. We rushed out into the kitchen and found one of the cocks of the gas stove half on, the room full of gas, and our cat dead under the kitchen cabinet. Whether his