

# LEAVE FAMILIES; ELOPE TO EUROPE

Architect Frank Lloyd Wright  
and Mrs. Edwin H. Cheney  
of Oak Park  
Startle Friends.

## ABANDONED WIFE LOYAL.

Spouse Victim of a Vampire, She  
Says, and Will Return When  
He Can; Other's Husband  
Silent.

A wife pledging faith in a husband gone with another woman, and avowing affection for him in the face of knowledge of his act; two abandoned homes where children play at the hearthsides, and a fly-by-night journey through Germany, in which a prominent Oak Park architect has as his companion the wife of a Chicago manufacturer—these are features which make an affinity tangle of character unparalleled even in the checkered history of soul mating.

Frank Lloyd Wright, whose fame as a designer of original conceptions in residence structures extends to foreign shores, left his Oak Park residence early in October, ostensibly to publish a portfolio of plans in Berlin. He sailed from New York and later was heard from in the German capital.

About the time of his departure Mrs. Edwin H. Cheney, wife of the president of the Wagner Electric Manufacturing company and the Fuel Engineering company of Chicago, with offices in the Marquette building, disappeared from the residence of a friend in Colorado with whom she had been spending the summer.

### Mrs. Cheney with Wright.

Efforts to establish the whereabouts of Mrs. Cheney, guided by circumstances which already had linked her name and that of Mr. Wright in gossip in Oak Park society, led to the discovery that she has been the companion of the architect for a month in Germany and now probably is traveling with him en route to Japan.

In Berlin Wright has had apartments at the Hotel Adlon, where he registered "Frank Lloyd Wright and wife, Chicago." His business address in the German metropolis has been in care of Ernest Wasmuth & Co., architects, 35 Markgrafen strasse. At this address Wright has received mail from Chicago friends, and cablegrams and letters addressed to Mrs. Cheney by relatives here have been called for and received there by her.

Neither Wright nor Mrs. Cheney, who posed as man and wife at the hotel and at the Wasmuth company offices, had any explanation to offer when Mrs. Cheney claimed letters and dispatches addressed to her in her own name.

Four days ago they gave up their apartments in the Hotel Adlon, left no address, but announced that they were going to Japan.

### Remarkable Conditions Disclosed.

Investigation of the circumstances surrounding the elopement of Wright and Mrs. Cheney, which will occasion astonishment among acquaintances today and confirm a suspicion which has been strong in the minds of relatives and intimate friends, reveals conditions unusual in character. Here is a wife who poses as a co-warrior and defender with her husband in the struggle against the lure of another woman and a husband, who, suspecting the intrigue in which his wife was implicated, has denied its existence and sought by every means to win her back to the love now trampled upon and spurned.

That Wright is the victim of a strange infatuation against which he has battled for years is the declaration of Mrs. Wright, now living in the seclusion of her Oak Park residence, surrounded by her six deserted children.

With a faith in the abiding affection of her husband for her and an open assertion of her love for him, she expresses confidence that he will conquer an infatuation which has led him away, and she believes he will return to his wife and children.

### Mrs. Wright's Faith Unshaken.

"My heart is with him now," she said to a reporter for THE TRIBUNE yesterday. "He will come back as soon as he can. I have a faith in Frank Wright that passeth understanding, perhaps, but I know him as no one else knows him. In this instance he is as innocent of real wrongdoing as I am."

Mrs. Wright was reluctant to admit that her husband was in the company of Mrs. Cheney, though not denying that their relations for several years past in Oak Park had been such as to occasion trouble in the Wright household which almost led to separation.

Expressions of continued affection, pledges to endure whatever the future might have in store for the sake of children and husband as well, followed the perusal of cablegrams which established the fact that Wright and Mrs. Cheney were together.

Discovery of the hotel register signature led to an inquiry by THE TRIBUNE at the offices of Wright's business connections in Berlin. From Wasmuth & Co. it was learned by cable that Wright had visited the establishment accompanied by a woman whom he introduced as his wife.

### Gets Mail in Wright's Care.

They called for mail from America and the pseudo Mrs. Wright accepted letters and messages addressed in care of Wasmuth to M. B. Cheney. Neither offered any explanation, though clerks in the German architectural establishment hesitated at turning over the mail to Wright's companion.

After Wright and the woman left Berlin, announcing that they were going to Japan others letters reached the Wasmuth offices addressed to M. B. Cheney, and these were followed by a cablegram four days ago to the Wasmuth company signed by E. H. Cheney and inquiring if the letters and messages sent previously had been delivered. This message read:

"Have letters and cablegrams sent in your care been delivered to M. B. Cheney?"

The architectural firm sent the following cable in reply:

"Partially, holding remainder."

### Cablegram Not Delivered.

This message never reached its destination. It was addressed simply "Cheney, Chicago." It was returned undeliverable. The only "Cheney" cable address was that of the Columbian Bank Note company, of which C. C. Cheney is president. At the offices of this concern the message was started on its way back.

At the Wasmuth offices now are several thick letters addressed to M. B. Cheney, the

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envelopes of which are stamped "Wagner Electric Manufacturing company, Marquette building, Chicago." This is one of the concerns of which Mr. Cheney is president.

"These cablegrams and bits of verification do not change my position in the least nor alter my feelings," Mrs. Wright said after the various messages from the German metropolis had been scrutinized.

"Why, all these things are simply coming in at the end of things—no, I will not say that, there can be no end, of course—but this is simply the publicity part of a struggle that has been going on for a long time.

"This all is scarcely to be understood. People will see the bald, bare facts as they are stated now. It appears like any ordinary mundane affair, with the trappings of what is low and vulgar. But there is nothing of that sort about Frank Wright. He is honest and sincere. I know him. I tell you I know him. I have fought side by side with him. My heart is with him now. I feel certain that he will come back. When, I don't know. It will be when he has reached a certain decision with himself.

## World Cannot Understand.

"The world cannot possibly understand all that is involved in this affair. It can know nothing about it.

"But is it not enough to know that I shall take no action for divorce, that I shall make no appeal whatever to the courts, that I stand by my husband right at this moment? I am his wife. He loves his children tenderly now and has the greatest anxiety for their welfare. He will come back to them.

"I have ar abiding faith in the dawn of a tomorrow. I do not think that things ever can be so dark as they seem. There must be a future for me and my children now. But I do not say a word against my husband. I have not always been able to go with him all the way, but as to his ultimate honesty and goodness my heart has not at this moment the slightest misgiving. When he comes back all will be as it has been.

"He has the strength of character to live this down, to live down the publicity attending, and to conquer in the end. I know it. They can heap everything they wish to on me and I will bear it willingly and my place will remain here in his home.

## Sees Honesty in Signature.

"Why, do you know the fact that he signs his name on that hotel register 'Frank Lloyd Wright and wife' is a tribute to his sincerity and honesty? If he was an ordinary rake, if there could be anything low or common about him, do you think he would do that? He is honest in everything he does. A moment's insincerity tortures him more than anything else in this world.

"Frank Wright never has deceived me in all his life.

"Though I have not been able to accept all the things he has done I never for a moment have questioned the honesty and truthfulness of his relations with me.

"If there have been times when I have failed—when I have been powerless to—O, I cannot tell it! Through it all I have known only one thing—that he would conquer finally in this as he has conquered in other things.

"I have lived my life with a strange man. Only a few of his friends are able to understand him. E. C. Waller, Arthur Heurtley, and Hamlin Garland—these are the men who are his friends. They know his makeup, his disposition, what he has had to contend with.

## Whole Life a Struggle.

"His whole life has been a struggle. When he came here as a young architect he had to fight against every existing idea in architecture. He did fight, year after year, against obstacles that would have downed an ordinary man. The determination of character that he possessed to fight these obstacles until he reached the summit of success is the power that either makes or breaks a man.

"He has fought the most tremendous battles. He is fighting one now, and I know he will win. This is a struggle that he has fought out before.

"I have fought it beside him and the struggle has made me. Whatever I am as a woman, aside from my good birth, I owe to the example of my husband. I owe myself to him and I do not hesitate to confess it. Is it likely then that I should want to begin court action?

"There should not be the same moral gateway for all of us. The idea that such should be, seems inexorable, but it is not justice. Few know what Frank has had to contend with. Yet I believe right now that he is as innocent as I am.

"With regard to Mrs. Cheney, I have nothing to say. I have striven to put her out of my thoughts in connection with the situation. It is simply a force against which we have

had to contend. I have never felt that I breathed the same air with her.

## "Simply Case of a Vampire."

"It was simply a case of a vampire—you have heard of such things.

"Any indignity can be pressed upon me. I can bear everything. It does not count so much, because, you see, our lives practically have been lived. But I would do anything in this wide, wide world for the protection of our children. Why must they suffer for things they are unaccountable for?

"We have six children. The oldest boy is 10 and he is home from college now. They cannot think of a separation. They worship their father and love their mother. If I only could protect them now I would care for nothing else. I am living for them now.

"Is this position I take a strange philosophy? I have not known it. I have only known that this has been my life. It has been so filled with strange things that I could write a wonderful story. But I would not dare do that, for after all the things had been set down I would not know for a certainty that they were true. We suspect things too often. Things from the inside are not so dark as they seem from the outside.

"Faith in the ultimate goodness of my husband has sustained me before. It will sustain me now."

## Unique House Wright's Work.

The Wright house is in the northwest residence section of Oak Park. Its design is unique. A mammoth tree grows through the center of the living room.

Oak Park is filled with houses of unusual character, some of them radically bizarre in pattern—the conceptions of Wright—and of these one of the most conspicuous is the bungalow in which Mr. Cheney resides on North East avenue. A low roofed house, with interior decorations of dark wood, is surrounded by a high brick wall.

Of the structures which always are pointed out to visitors is the Unitarian church of Oak Park. It is one solid piece of concrete. Windows are set high in the wall and the whole has the appearance of a stone fort. A picture of this church adorns a postal waiting for Wright in the Wasmuth offices which reads:

Oak Park, Oct. 20.

My Dear: We think of you often and hope you are well and enjoying life, as you have so longed to. From the children and your wife.

CATHERINE L. WRIGHT,

## Mrs. Cheney's Sister in Charge.

At the Cheney house are several children in care of a nurse, while the house is presided over during the absence of its mistress by Mrs. Cheney's sister. To first inquiries as to the whereabouts of his wife Mr. Cheney said that she was with a friend in Colorado and would return to Chicago about Christmas.

At night before the orchestra concert at Orchestra hall he said he had no comment to make in connection with his wife's presence in Germany with Mr. Wright.

"Will you seek a divorce or take any other court action?"

"I have nothing to say."

"Did you suspect that she was with Wright when you sent messages and letters to the Wasmuth company?"

"I don't care to talk about the matter at all."

Then he inquired whether Mrs. Wright knew that her husband and Mrs. Cheney were together.

"If she has had anything to say about her husband then I certainly have nothing to add."

Before discussing the matter at all Mr. Cheney had a long conference with his sister-in-law, who met him at Orchestra hall. As he entered the concert he said:

"If I can do anything for you subsequently in the matter you can find me at my offices."

## Fraternity Honors Chicagoan.

Dr. George G. Zoehrlaut of Chicago was elected yesterday at New Orleans supreme editor of the Phi Beta Pi fraternity.