

# The New Divorce Centre

# A Trip Across Mexico



JUDGE ORR, WHO DECIDES HALF OF THE DIVORCE SUITS

Reno, Nevada, A Million a Year Estimated Revenue Inherits the Sioux Falls Industry By HERBERT F. JACKSON



JUDGE PINE, WHO DECIDES HALF OF THE DIVORCE SUITS

Advantages of the town over any other in the state. Nevada is primarily a mining state, and nature usually hides her precious metals in difficult places. Reno is not a mining camp, and is not only centrally situated from a railroad point of view, but has scenic attractions rarely to be found in any American community.

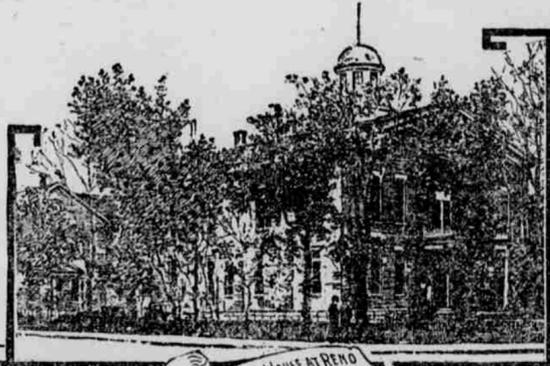
It is located in the heart of a rich agricultural region, and through the center of the town runs a beautiful mountain stream, the Truckee river. Surrounding the town, at a brief distance, are snow-capped mountains, and the winds coming from over their summits keep the air cool on summer nights. It is never very warm in Reno. On the other hand, the winters are comparatively mild.

An altitude of 4,500 feet makes the atmosphere somewhat trying on nerves that are not robust to begin with, but nervous affections are the only complaints to which the climate is unfavorable.

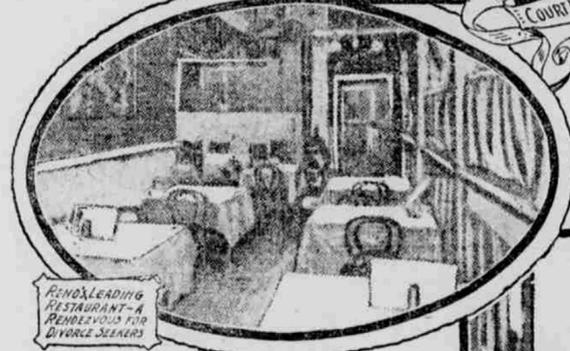
For the cure of other ailments hot mineral water springs abound in the vicinity of Reno. Twelve miles away are the famous Steamboat Springs which Comstock millionaires were wont to patronize 40 years ago. Three miles from Reno is Moana Springs. Five miles from Reno, to the west, is another famous medicinal resort, Loughton's Springs, the road to which runs along the Truckee river, making a beautiful driving boulevard. Half way to Loughton's on this road is a magnificent edifice

**R**ENO, Nev.—The population and social life of Reno, Nev., are undergoing a great change. Where a year or so ago the optimistic mining promoter, in his corduroy or khaki and his high russet shoes, was wont to disport himself, to-day may be seen men of the east flashing by in high-powered automobiles. Where Washoe squaws would a year ago sit and play cards at the corners of the public squares may be seen to-day handsome women in Paris gowns sauntering in the afternoon sun. On the veranda of the leading hotel where a year ago were the silence and desolation that the panic of 1907 produced, idly sit and fight with ennui groups of men and women, who look forward, in mental vision, to the time when they will be able to forsake this frontier post of civilization and whirl an eager flight back to their homes in the east.

But they are looking for divorces at present, and so they must stay here for at least six months from date of arrival to satisfy the requirements of the Nevada divorce laws with regard



COURT HOUSE AT RENO



RENO LEADING RESTAURANT—A FAVORITE FOR DIVORCE SEEKERS

to residence. For Reno has succeeded to the eminence formerly occupied by Sioux Falls as the divorce center of America. Some farsighted lawyer got into the Nevada legislature several years ago, and when he got out again there was a divorce law among the statutes of Nevada that for length, breadth, height, elasticity, and all other qualities that commend themselves to the seeker after easy matrimonial freedom, could not be surpassed anywhere in the union. It was equaled by the South Dakota law, though, and so Nevada and the Nevada lawyer secured no results from it for the time being.

But everything comes to him that waits, and when the people of South Dakota arose in their wrath last November and, by a referendum vote, declared that any one who desired to get a divorce in South Dakota would have to live there a year instead of six months, as had been the requirement previously, the seeker of relief from present matrimonial ties began to take the long journey westward to Nevada, where it takes but a six months' residence to be in a position to go before the courts of the state as plaintiff in a divorce suit.

W. H. Schultzer, a Reno divorce specialist, has written a treatise on divorce practice and procedure, in which he throws an illuminating ray on the wherefore of the popularity of Reno as a divorce center. He says:

"While the laws of the eastern and middle western states generally contain some provision for the dissolution of the marriage tie, it is obvious to the reader that in cases where extreme cruelty, desertion, and failure to provide for the basis of the grievance, the law in such states offers no substantial relief to the aggrieved party, because the requirements of proof, duration of offense, corroboration of plaintiff and procedure under court rules are so exacting and irksome that the desired relief sought by the applicant is rendered impossible of attainment. Summing up the situation as it exists in the eastern states respecting the domestic relation law, the client when consulting local counsel is almost invariably advised that upon the facts submitted he or she is without remedy. Here in Nevada the applicant, without deception or fraud, upon almost any charge from which lack of harmonious relations may be reasonably inferred, may apply to our courts and secure prompt results by decree of absolute divorce, valid and binding in law."

While there are about 54 cases now on the docket of the district court, there are in Reno to-day over 350 individuals establishing a residence for divorce purposes, a majority of whom are women.

The charms of Nevada as a divorce center have only just begun to percolate into the consciousness of the outside world.

Reno has no objection to the present status of affairs. It is estimated that the revenue of the town from the divorce colony at present is close to \$1,000,000 a year, and that it will rapidly increase from this on. To a community of but 18,000 population this is no small consideration.

Why Reno is preferred to any other community in the state as a place of residence by those seeking divorces is because of the manifold ad-

come back for several days. It might be mentioned in this connection that the divorce colony has brought to Reno over 100 motor cars.

The leading hotels are always crowded, and the rents for cottages have appreciated, on the average, to the extent of 50 per cent. In the last six months. In some instances the increase has been much greater. One cottage that rented for \$60 a month in January last, now returns its owner a rental of \$100 a month.

Perhaps the one thing that endears Reno to the visiting divorcee more than anything else is its proximity to San Francisco. One may board a train in Reno and be in the Pacific coast metropolis in ten hours. Despite its manifold attractions, life in Reno is likely to wear irksome upon those who have been used to existence in larger centers, and the visitors, to a great extent, sooner or later during their stay, take a trip or half a dozen trips, over the Sierras to the city by the Golden Gate.

Such visits, while affording relief from the monotony of life in Reno, do not impair the residence qualifications necessary to the obtaining of a divorce. To again quote the Nevada divorce authority already mentioned:

"Under the provisions of Section 22 of the Marriage and Divorce act, the plaintiff must reside in the state for a period of at least six months. This is not construed to mean that in order to fully comply with the statute the party must remain here continuously for said period. So, if a party comes to Nevada, and, in good faith, takes up a residence, the party may leave the state at any time after establishing residence, may go and travel when and wherever the party chooses, and may return to the state whenever inclination prompts, and yet such temporary absence would not in any wise affect the legality of the residence established, but the party would be entitled under the law to bring suit any time after the lapse of six months from the date residence was originally established, notwithstanding the party's absence from the state during said period."

Blessed somewhat by the financial seductions of the situation, and yet to learn the lesson that such a state of affairs can only result in the moral degradation of the youth of the community—a lesson which caused South Dakota to reform her divorce laws—Reno appears to be perfectly contented with things as they are.

But Reno is busily engaged in cleaning house, and it is felt by the most reflective observers that the divorce laws of Nevada as now written will be a thing of the past in the near future. Not in

known as "Rick's," which is the local "Monte Carlo." Rick's has all the conveniences for those who desire to make a stay, and frequently parties who go there to spend a few hours forget to

may enjoy. The royal lady of a European court no longer sits in regal splendor in her palace, surrounded by ladies in waiting ready to minister to her most languid wish, but you may meet her motoring in the country or riding horseback in the park. It is an excellent example they are setting for their countrywomen in this respect.

Queen Alexandra is a devotee of outdoor life. In young and enjoying good health to this fact. When a young girl she was fond of swimming, rowing and driving, and even now she never permits a day to go by without taking some exercise. If the weather is too bad for walking she passes several hours at billiards. She is wonderfully skilled with the cue and is proud of her game. But in nice weather her favorite exercise is walking.

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FALLS OF JUANACATLAN



IN CHAPULTEPEC PARK, CITY OF MEXICO

Standing on the steps of the state capitol at Denver, Gov. Shafroth of Colorado smiled and waved his hand to a scout car that was quickly speeding away from the capital bearing the flags of Old Mexico and the United States and followed by a dozen well filled cars.

This was the final farewell to the car and its crew of four men who were going to make a trip from Denver to Mexico City, a distance of almost 2,400 miles, the greater part of which was unexplored.

The trip was being taken to map a route between Denver and the Mexican capital over which an endurance contest will be run next October. George A. Wahlgreen, a leading citizen of Denver, last fall offered a handsome trophy to the car that would cover this distance with the best endurance record.

Four men undertook this trip in a 30-horsepower car, which had already quite a full experience. For the past 30 days this car has been driving through Old Mexico and the men have been having strange experiences in a country where automobiles have never before and the American never before set his foot. This path was laid over miles and miles of sandy desert wastes and rock strewn plains and parched sands. They traveled for days without the sight of a bird, water, a human face or even a human abode. At nights they slept by the side of their car, with revolvers in hand, and were sung to sleep by the wail of the coyotes, which broke the awful stillness of a semi-tropical desert. The party consisted of Billy Knipper, an experienced driver of racing cars; F. Ed. Spooner, newspaper man; W. E. McCarton of Denver and James H. Howard, a guide.

This party left Denver May 1 and arrived in Mexico City June 3 at midnight. The trip from Denver to El Paso, the last stop this side of the Mexican border, was full of pleasant driving, soon to be forgotten when the car got into the unexplored country. The trip was made literally along mountain tops. The car started at an altitude of 5,173 feet above sea level and ended in Mexico City, which is 8,000 feet above sea level. At no time was the route below 3,500 feet.

In every town they stopped at they met a lively reception.

The party arrived in El Paso May 12. The pathfinders took on a great coat of tan during the eight days of traveling over the mountains and deserts.

The party spent one day of rest in El Paso and this time was spent in generally overhauling the car and getting additional supplies for a dash into a country in which they did not know when they would meet man again. The crew found here that the trip of the American car into Mexico was being accepted as of much greater moment than they had anticipated. They were informed that down in Mexico, all along the line, preparations were being made to receive the tourists and extend every courtesy. They left El Paso with light hearts, not knowing that it was theirs to return again.

It was here, though, that they had some tried difficulties in getting through the customs on May 13, but finally the car was passed and the members received their passports carrying the additional rights of explorers.

They passed the Mexican burros drawing wood and water and the Mexican drivers were found to be very sympathetic. Inquiries of these Mexicans by Interpreter James Howard led to plenty of replies. One said it was "dos cigarras" to Guadalupe, meaning that two cigarettes would be smoked during the distance. Others used leagues as measurements, others used kilometers.

It was proven that the guide which they had taken on at El Paso knew little more about the roads, or pretended to know less, than they them-

selves. In following his directions, they took the right fork of a dangerous looking road and went hub deep in adobe mud. Block and tackle, which was part of their equipment, came into play, and the car came out backward. They started around this and the car was bucking the sand nobly, although the men often had to get out to cut sage brush from the way and dig sand from under the wheels before they could make headway. Finally the car went down over the hubs in what proved to be quicksand, and refused to budge.

The block and tackle proved of no avail. They saw that it was a case of camp and wait for relief. This was their first taste of the bitter of pathfinding. They later found that they were stranded in a desert 46 miles from a railroad, without food and water. They finally decided that Billy Knipper, the driver, and F. Ed. Spooner would stay with the car and McCarton and Howard, the guide, would walk until they found a ranch house or some other place where they could get aid. The place where they were stuck is known as Tierra Blanca, or White Earth, so called from the sand composing it. Here the sand drifted like snow and they seemed to be in the midst of great oceans of sand. The wind heaped the sand through the wheels of the car like a cyclone, and as fast as they would dig the sand from under the wheels more would blow in.

The hardships of the two men left with the car were even greater than those of the relief party. The sun was broiling hot and they made a cover, throwing blankets over two poles lying against the car. Their water bags were empty and they squeezed all the water from the radiator of the car. This water they mixed with some powdered peas and made a mixture which they called cold pea soup and which they said tasted like cough medicine. They were there for three days subsisting on this fare with no solid food.

At the close of the third afternoon they saw Howard coming over the sands holding a water bottle toward them. They rushed from their improvised tent with a shout of joy and staggered as drunk for the precious liquid.

The first relief party that was sent out from El Paso were unable to lift the car from its bed of sand, and they had to return for further assistance. Six men went out in another car and by means of 300 feet of rope used as a block and tackle placed around the relief car they were finally able to lift the car from the sand. After taking on supplies they again plunged into the unknown country.

One time during the last lap the car slid on the edge of a cliff and hung there on such a fine point that a baby could have dumped it over. It was only by two of the members of the party springing from the car and holding to it that the car and two of its occupants were saved. It was finally swung to safety by block and tackle and proceeded on its way.

The dangers that these men met in going through this practically unknown country would fill a book. The car was met at Tula, 25 miles out of Mexico City, its final destination, and escorted into the city with great pomp and ceremony. President Diaz welcomed the pathfinders. Now the car, followed by a large number of others filled with local motorists, paraded the streets of the city, which was banner-flung with welcoming words. They were given a dinner that night at the Hotel Geneva and a ball on the same evening. On Sunday the party was entertained by a bull fight of real Mexican style and the pathfinding crew was given the honor of carrying Harper Lee, the greatest American bull fighter, into and around the ring several times to be reviewed by President Diaz by his arrangement. He was present in full uniform.

The car was the object of great curiosity, and many of the native Mexicans, who had been following its progress through the republic southward, knowing the condition of the Mexican roads, declared that such a trip was impossible. This was also said in the western states through which the car passed.

Motorists say that this is one of the greatest feats brought to the notice of automobilists in years and will pave the way for a great automobile industry in the southern republic. The friendly invasion of the cars that cover this course next October will add to the amiability of the two great American republics.