IT IS NOT A FAILURE...

Declares Matrimonial Association of Marriage

(Auburn, Ind., Letter.)

One thousand five hundred couples in thirty years—is the proud record of the Rev William L. Meese, the marrying parson of De Kalb county, Ind. Last week at his behest many hundreds of people who had been joined by him in matrimony, left their labors in various parts of the state, and journeyed to Waterloo to testify their friendship for and devotion to the aged person. Not many other ministers could do what Mr. Meese has done during the seventy-three years of his life. The father of eleven children, he has seen the earth close over all but three of them, as well as over their mother. Yet he is as earnest and unyielding in his work as he ever was.

Turns Many Away.

The great fame that has come to Mr. Meese rests not alone on the number of marriages he has performed. For all that he is known as a "marrying parson," he has turned away almost as many as he has united. He will not marry a couple if he knows either one has been divorced. He will not marry a girl who looks to be a mere child, no matter what the legal license may say. His Meese Matrimonial association stands pledged for a uniform divorce law in the United States.

There are few more picturesque characters than Meese. Though seventy-three, he is agile and quick-witted. He has not a biblical phrase upon his lips at every turn of events. The great social reforms in which he now thoroughly wrapped up can, he thinks, be brought about only by hard work and practical means.

MR. MEESE'S HOME.

He Becomes Famous.

In August, 1896, the first session of the Matrimonial association, composed of couples married by Mr. Meese was held at Auburn, Ind., the home of the parson. Nearly 4,000 couples responded to the invitation. They all agreed to work for reform of the marriage and divorce laws. An annual reunion was determined upon, the story of the session went broadcast over the country and the Rev. Mr. Meese found himself famous outside the limits of De Kalb county.

It was thought that this last reunion, held at Waterloo, would far surpass all of the preceding ones in enthusiasm and results, and so it would have, had it not been for the rain, which caused many to stay at home. But the day brightened up and the reunion was held. Parson Meese, in his black Sunday clothes and derby hat, flitted around the grove, attending to a thousand details, greeting newcomers, showing them where to register, chucking children under the chin and playing host to the big gathering. Among the resolutions passed by the members were:

Explicit Divorce Record.

"That we deplore the alarming increase in divorces as compared with marriages in our community and that we view with disgust the evident insincerity with which many of our young men and women enter into their marriage vows. That marriage is not a failure and he who declares the contrary questions the rectitude of the creative scheme of Almighty God. That we believe the strength and safety of the republic are dependent upon the morals of the people, and that no nation whose people show fidelity to their marriage institutions can far depart from the principles of liberty, justice and equality. We therefore, invoke the aid of all patriotic and Christian men and women in creating a sentiment against the present loose divorce laws and the lack of solemnity with which the marriage state is invested."

THE REV. W. L. MEESE.

DEADLIEST OF REPTILES.

Compared with the Fer-de-Lance the Rattler Is a Gentleman.

The most deadly snake in the world is the fer-de-lance. Comparatively little is known of the venomous reptile outside of the French West Indian islands of Martinique, Guadaloupe and the British possessions of Saint Lucia. Martinique is especially unfortunate in possessing them in large numbers. The natives, taught by dear experience, regard it with deeply rooted hatred and fear, and rightly, too, for it can be truthfully said to reign supreme in the forests and byways, oftimes being found on the more frequented paths and roads, but rarely venturing into the cities or towns.

There are about eight varieties, the most common being of a grayish black, and by its color, so resembling the underbrush and stumps, is scarcely distinguishable at times. The head, as the name implies, is lance shape, flat, with reddish eyes, changeable like an opal, which become very bright at night and can be seen for some distance away flashing out defiance at an intruder, whether man or beast.

Its length rarely exceeds five feet, with a body the size of a man's arm, and not of lead pencil thickness as imagined by some people. Quite unlike the "rattler" of the United States, who, to do him justice, is a gentleman compared to the "fer-de-lance," this snake never gives warning, but at once when approached becomes the aggressor, quickly gets into battle array, darting forward its triangular head with lightning-like rapidity—so quickly, in fact, that the human eye can scarcely follow the movements, and woe to the unlucky mortal or animal that it strikes.

It is almost certain death, and if the services of a physician cannot be secured within an exceedingly short time the venom does its deadly work, causing the flesh to spot, after which comes—death. If the strike has been made upon a vein or an artery there is absolutely no chance for life unless the limb be amputated at once, and often then it is too late, as the venom has gained too much headway through the blood system to be checked or the victim succumbs to the heroic treatment.

Rivers and Commerce.

In a recent issue the New York Marine Journal remarks that "the present century seems destined to bring the steamboat as a means of transportation to an equality with the railroad train." That paper says that great as is the volume of traffic on the lakes a greater business is conducted on American rivers, amounting to 100,000,000 tons a year, exclusive of boats plying on the arms of the ocean inland. At least half of the interior commerce of the United States is transacted by boats. Though almost every navigable river in this country is paralleled by a railway the business for both increases. The two great systems of inland waterways in the United States, the Marine Journal remarks, are the great lakes and the valley of the Mississippi, and of the two the latter is foremost.

Language of Apes.

The Bushmen, or low-grade Hottentots, on the plains of South Africa have a language which has been proved by Garnier to be a close approximation to that of the higher apes. It consists of hissing, clicking and grunting sounds.

TO HONOR A BANDIT.

SAD MAN WHO WAS THE TERROR OF KANSAS

And Who Sent Fifty-Two Men to His Private Graveyard to Have a Monument Erected to His Memory at Wichita—How He Died.

(Wichita Letter.)

One of the most noted cowboys and bandits who ever drew a gun on an enemy is it is said, to have a monument erected to him in West Wichita. He is Jack Ledford, who fell in West Wichita in 1871, while fighting a whole company of regular soldiers. Already Ledford's friends have raised $300 for the monument, and soon work will be begun to erect a shaft on the very spot where Ledford fell.

During the civil war Ledford was a scout under Gen. Phil Sheridan. At Springfield, Mo., he got into a fight with some of the opposing side, and killed six without stopping to reload his revolver. Then he made for the Missouri river and under a heavy fire swam to the Kansas side. After that he quit scouting and turned outlaw. His headquarters were in the Arkansas river bottoms, near Wichita, and his field of operations along the line of the southern stage coach route, running from Fort Sill to Wichita. Once he held up a 40-wagon government train alone, and rifled the mail bags of thousands of dollars. He was the original lone bandit who has in late years thrived in the wilds of Arizona.

Ready with the Pistols.

Ledford always carried two revolvers with him, and could hit the mark every time. One of his favorite tricks was to take a revolver in each hand, and twirling them around, snap the hammer between the cartridges, all the while pointing the muzzle in the face of a friend. It was great sport for him, but a single slip of the finger would have put the bullet in his friend's head. Luckily he was sure of the trigger. Another feat was to shoot the nails out of the walls of saloons and allow the costly paintings to crash

HOW LEDFORD MADE LOVE.

on the floor. Shooting up the mirror or smashing lights were beneath his dignity.

South of Wichita in an unexplored region was the rendezvous of the Ledford bandits. After robbing stage coaches until they almost quit carrying money, Jack organized a band of horsethieves and acted as leader. The man who owned a valuable horse could not keep it long after Ledford's band learned where he stabled. The gang rode fine Kentucky-bred horses and lived on the fat of the land, as it were. The surrounding country was then in such a wild state that the gang felt perrfectly safe in visiting Wichita whenever they chose. Horse stealing was not considered such a crime in those days.

Ledford's Love-Making.

At that time in Wichita a German doctor named Vigus owned the leading hotel. He was also the father of a pretty girl, named Agnes. She was a buxom lass, with a wealth of long brown hair, a full face, and sunny blue eyes. She fell in love with Ledford, "the bandit king," as he was pleased to style himself.

The Hotel Vigus was the scene of many gay revelries, the dancing lasting until daylight. Ledford was a star figure at these dances, and he made no attempt to conceal his love for the little German girl. Her father was furious, but it could not be stopped. One day the girl was by prearrangement standing in front of her father's hotel, when Ledford came riding down Douglas avenue like the wind. He drew near the platform, but did not stop. As he reached the girl he swung partially from his saddle, caught her around the waist and raised her into the saddle. For half an hour they galloped about town, she sitting on the great Kentucky horse in front of her sweetheart, the picture of contentment and happiness. After they had enjoyed themselves to their own notion he rode by again and sat her lightly on the platform. This was what he called buggy riding.

The old German objected to it, but his daughter insisted on standing near the sidewalk on certain days. Once when Ledford came riding down to his sweetheart he found her on the walk, but back of her was the father with a shotgun drawn and ready for action.

"If you take her, I shoot," he yelled.

"Well, old man, you'll have to shoot." Ledford reached down and grabbed the girl from the arms of her father, as it were, and they took their ride as though nothing had occurred.

In a fight between a stage coach driver and Ledford in 1870 the latter was injured. He was taken to the rendezvous, and a doctor was kidnapped from Wichita, blindfolded, and taken in a roundabout way to the outlaw camp. There he was comanded to attend to Ledford's wounds.

Reformed by a Girl.

When it was thought the man-killer was going to die he sent for his sweetheart. She came, and Dr. Holland, of the regular army corps, who witnessed the scene, thus describes it:

"Jack wanted her to marry him, but she refused. She cried a great deal of the time, and told Jack that she loved him, but that she had promised her mother never to marry him as long as he was an outlaw. He remained silent a while, and then announced that he would give up the outlaw business if she would marry him. The girl seemed pleased and kissed him. He wanted her to marry him then, but she insisted that time be given in which to prove that he was speaking the truth. It went hard with the outlaw, I could see that, to have his power overruled by a woman, but he was madly in love. So he agreed, and after a hard tussle he recovered and reformed."

It was quite a surprise to the community when Jack announced himself a candidate for sheriff of Sedgwick county at the election in the fall of 1870. To every man from whom he sought a vote he said:

"If I am elected sheriff of this county there will be no more horses stolen around these parts."

Of that the citizens were well aware, and they elected him. Shortly after his election the governor ruled that the election had not been conducted properly, and appointed the officers then in to fill the next term. Jack was chagrined, but he did not go back to robbing.

Later he married the Vigus girl, and the wedding was a matter of much importance in Wichita. The bandit, under the gentle rulings of his wife, completely reformed, even to drinking. Their life would have went on very smoothly, perhaps, had it not been for the coming of Sam Lee, a former sweetheart of Agnes'. He found that a big reward was offered for Ledford, but the officers at Fort Harker did not know his whereabouts. Lee informed them and secured $1,000.

The Killing of Ledford.

Capt. Harger, of Company B, Sixth United States Infantry, with a full quota of men, came to Wichita one morning in July, 1871. They found Jack in a room playing billiards. He was ordered to come out, but refused. Finally one soldier slipped in the rear of the room and shot him in the back. This enraged the fighter and he ran out into the street, fighting with two pistols. He killed four of them before he was disabled. When removed to the hotel, he inquired how many he had killed. In a few days Ledford died. On his revolver butts were found 52 tacks, which, his intimate friends said, indicated that he killed that number of men.

A NEW SYSTEM.

Decidedly Interesting, as Its Workings Are Exemplified in Chicago.

The Speers system of imparting useful knowledge to the young, as exemplified in Chicago, is not a novel one. With modifications, it is the same system used in training performing monkeys and dogs. The learned pig gets his education by the Speers method and so the system may justly claim to be well grounded. In the Speers system as prepared for the little bipeds of Chicago, the teacher points out on the Speers chart the word "hop." Then the teacher hops and the children hop. The next word is "skip," and the teacher skips and the children skip. If the next word is "grin," they all grin. If it is "wink," they all wink. It is fun as well as profit, you see—especially for the teacher. When it reaches "flip-flap" and "summersault" it becomes more so. "What is that word, George?" says the fond Chicago father to his bright off-spring. "Pronounce it for me, daddy," says the bright offspring. "Reverse," replied daddy. "Ah, I know," cries Master George, and at once stands on his head. It certainly is a nice system.—Pennsylvania Grit.

Kentucky the Home of Feuds.

Nowhere is the fued so common, so old, so persistent, so deadly, as in the Kentucky mountains. Nowhere else is there such organization, such division of enmity to the limit of kinship. About thirty-five years ago two boys were playing marbles in the road along the Cumberland river—down in the Kentucky mountains. One had a patch on his trousers. The other boy made fun of it, and the boy with the patch went home and told his father. Thirty years of local war was the result. The factions fought on after they had forgotten why they had fought at all. While organized warfare is now over, an occasional fight yet comes over the patch on those trousers and a man or two is killed. A county as big as Rhode Island is still bitterly divided on the subject.

The South Is Waking Up.

England in the sixteenth century felt the first decided movings on the same impulse that now throbs from Virginia to Texas. She went into the critical period a third rate, or, it is more accurate to say, a fourth-rate power; she came out an acknowledged leader among nations, with a primacy the strength and duration of which no one now hesitates to attribute in great part to the commercial ascendancy acquired through her immense manufacturing interests. Few will dispute the claim that when the subjects of Elizabeth ceased to send their fleeces to be woven to Flanders and dyed in Florence they had worked out an achievement of better worth and more notable results than when they defeated Philip's armada.—Munton's Magazine.

A MEXICAN OVEN.

AN OBJECT THAT IS EXCEEDINGLY USESUL.

It Clearly Shows One of the Disadvantages of What We Believe to Be the Higher Civilization—The Food Is Always Well Cooked.

(Trinidad, Col., Letter.)

The queer-looking object illustrated in this article is not a hut nor a calaboose, but an adobe oven such as is commonly seen in Mexico and in our own border states. This particular oven is one of many similar to it in El Moro, Col., near Trinidad, and it is used by several families for all of their baking.

While the bread, meats and pies are being prepared, the oven is filled with wood which is set on fire, but burns very slowly, as the hole near the top for the escape of the smoke is but small, and there is little draft as the door is closed as tightly as possible. When it is thoroughly heated the fire is raked out, the food put in quickly and the door shut up again.

The baking is said to be very even and always sure, so the natives have some reason for clinging to this, the method of their ancestors, or rather ancestresses; and it may be done with cleanliness.

The word adobe as pronounced by them is simply "dobe," the "a" being dropped entirely. It is also self-explanatory, meaning "sun dried." This baked clay is used for making houses which are well suited to that sun-baked country, for they are as cool within as those built of stone, and, of course, are much cheaper. Another fortunate thing is that adobe houses are quickly built. If it took six months to put one up I fear the half-breeds would prefer to go without. Yet their indolence is not without some excuse, for the summers are very long and torturously hot; besides, one often sees commodious, well-finished adobe houses, vine-covered and every bit as attractive as the ordinary brick cottage.

Both houses and ovens last for sev-

A MEXICAN OVEN.

eral generations. If the latter should burn out in spots all that the owner has to do is to patch up the hole with fresh clay, and borrow her neighbor's oven for one baking while it dries. Watching this simple mode of life, one is forced to admit that civilization has its disadvantages.

Animals Shed Tears.

That animals shed tears is now fairly well established. Lady Burton says she has seen horses in the Syrian desert cry from thirst, a mule cry from the pain of an injured foot, and camels shed tears in streams. A cow, sold by its mistress who had tended it from birth, wept pitifully. A young soko ape used to cry of vexation if Livingstone didn't nurse it in his arms when it asked him to. Wounded apes have died crying, and apes have wept over their young ones slain by hunters. A chimpanzee trained to carry water jugs broke one, and feel a-crying, which proved sorrow, though it wouldn't mend the jug. Rats, discovering a young one drowned, have been moved to tears of grief. A giraffe which a huntsman's rifle had injured began to cry. Sea lions weep for the loss of their young. Gordon Cummings observed tears trickling from the eyes of a dying elephant. And even an orang-outang, when deprived of its mango, was so vexed that it took to crying. There can be little doubt, therefore, that animals do weep from grief, or pain, or annoyance.

Sea Dikes of the Netherlands.

There are at present about 1,000 miles of sea dikes in the Netherlands. The total length of dikes is difficult to estimate, and even if it could be estimated would mean but little, for it must be remembered that the dikes have for the most part in the course of time been destroyed and rebuilt repeatedly. It has not been so much a question of building them as it has been of maintaining them and keeping them where they were. Besides protecting the country from the invasions of both fresh and salt waters, the dikes have served to reclaim no less than 210,000 acres, nearly all of which are good, fertile land.

Qualifications of Sea Captains.

On some of the foreign steamship lines the captains are naval officers, and, in case of war, would retain their commands. On the German steamers the officers must first serve a year or so in the naval reserve. On the French line each member of the crew must serve a time on a vessel of war. On the majority of ships, however, the officers are men of the sea, who have fought their way up, step by step, entirely by merit, and not at all by favor. On the American line, even after a man has reached the rank of captain, he must pass a rigid examination every five years.—Collier's Weekly.

THE POLAR BEAR.

Some of His Characteristics Described by an Observer.

The character of the polar bear is a curious mixture of cowardice and daring, for it will fly at the sight of man, but will often come close up to the huts and sometimes even try to enter them.

When met with in the water, bears are killed with harpoons. On receiving the first wound, the animal utters loud roars, seizes the weapon with his teeth, pulls it out of the injured part and hurls it far away. Sometimes but by no means invariably, it will turn upon its assailant. Quickly it receives another spear or bird arrow from a second kayak man, against whom it turns after treating his weapon in the same manner, and sometimes breaking it, and in this way the struggle is continued until the bear is overcome. The most important precautionary rule which the hunters have to observe is, when during the fight the animal has dived, to keep a sharp lookout down into the water in order that it may not come up unawares right under the kayak. Its white gleam can always be seen when it approaches the surface, and there is time to get away if it be coming too near. When a bear is encountered in the water, or amid somewhat scattered ice, its capture is considered a certainty for, although an excellent swimmer, it cannot get away from a kayak. In the northern colonies where they are seldom seen, the Greenlanders appear to be afraid of them, but such is far from being the case in the Julianshaab district, where, in the water, at any rate, they are considered much less dangerous than the walrus or the hooded seal.

BOUGHT FOR $200,000.

Interesting History of Senator Clarks' Great Copper Mine.

Like all rich mines, the United Verde, the greatest copper mine in the world and which is owned by Senator W. A. Clark of Montana, has an interesting history. Clark bought the mine, which now earns $12,000,000 a year profits, from two women for $200,000. This was the way it came about. Two ranchers in the Verde valley located the property. They sold out for $10,000 to William Murray and former Gov. Trittle of Arizona. One of the ranchers promptly proceeded to drink himself into delirium tremens with his share of the money. Murray and Trittle induced two New York women of independent fortune to back them to the extent of $200,000 in the development of the mine. This money was nearly all spent and the prospects were blue when the miners struck a pocket of silver ore that paid $80,000.

Murray died and Trittle failed to get any more profit out of the mine. It was abandoned for several years. Clark with his foreman came down from Montana looking for mining property. They saw the Verde, liked it, went to New York, found the women only too glad to sell their stock for its face value and got possession. Clark proceeded to develop the mine scientifically and soon found that he was "right on the ore chute," as miners say. Then he built a hundred-ton smelter and set about taking out the ore that has made him the copper king of the world. There are about 3,000 shares of stock in the mining company and Senator Clark owns them all.

Reading Aloud Is Beneficial.

Reading aloud is recommended by physicians as a benefit to persons affected with any chest complaint. The reommendation is made because in all cases of lung trouble it is important for the sufferer to indulge in exercise by which the chest is in part filled by and emptied of air, for the exercise is strengthening to the throat, lungs and muscles of the chest. Reading aloud can be practiced by all and besides being a curative act can be a pleasure and profit to both reader and hearers. In this treatment it is recommended that an overdose of medicine be avoided that the reading be deliberate, without being allowed to drag, that the enunciation be clear, the body be held in an easy, unstrained, upright position, so that the chest shall have free play, and that the breathing be natural and as deep as possible, without undue effort.

Indian Chief's Big Lucks.

Whiteboy, an Indian of a tribe in Wisconsin, who was feared to have been foully dealt with, has turned up in Nebraska, heir to a large ranch. There is a bitter feud between Chief Whiteboy and the Waukon brothers of the same tribe, enlivened recently by a love romance, and it was feared that he had gotten into more trouble with the brothers. When the United States settled with some of the Indians in Nebraska years ago, Whiteboy's parents took a large tract of land in Nebraska, where they have since grown wealthy. Both died recently, and Whiteboy wished to acquire his new riches unknown to his enemies.

Little King's Body Guard.

The little king of Spain is guarded every night by a body of picked men, who are natives of Espinosa, and have served wth distinction in the army. It is by them the gates are locked at midnight and with ceremonious solemnity reopened at 7 o'clock in the morning. Should one of this guard prove false to the person of his sovereign Spanish faith in Spanish loyalty would die as if by lightning stroke and something very dreadful would happen to the traitor. It is a curious custom of very ancient tradition, which the queen regent has not been sorry to maintain.