

Winter Hardships of Reno's Fashionable Divorce Colony

NEWSPAPERS daily in America and Europe are filled with stories of domestic tragedies, the principals of which have fled to Nevada as the quickest means to secure much desired divorce. Under usual conditions in winter and summer the six months "wait" does not worry the candidates for a legal separation. There are always enough of the socially prominent established temporarily in the miner's cottages and the hotels to insure a royal good time, and news of rather gay parties and receptions often leaks out and finds its way eastward and westward over the mountain tops.

But the last three months has produced extremely unusual conditions. Reno, in the grip of this winter's exceptionally severe storms, has had a hard time of it. Those plucky enough to stick it out will go home in the spring with stories of "privation" that will make Fifth avenue gasp.

Reno has gained notoriety for itself as a place of refuge for those seeking relief from the unpleasant vows of matrimony, a notoriety that has spread throughout the world.

One thousand five hundred and sixty persons, that means the breaking up of that many happy homes, have journeyed across the broad United States in the last year, and after maintaining the prescribed residence of six months have traveled east free from married obligations and ready to take chances again in the great lottery of love.

All winter this mecca of the divorce seekers has been snow-bound and crowded. It is estimated that at least 15 discontented souls made their advent weekly into the town until just before cold weather set in, and not a desirable cottage in the place was for rent after the middle of December. The town is actually flooded with strange faces from all sections of America, and even Europe, most of them feminine.

During the first week of the new year weather conditions were at the worst. Fuel became scarce, and many accustomed to steam heated flats and cozy apartments or the heat of hotel service shivered in costly furs and tried vainly to keep warm.

To one in the ordinary walk of life the "hardships" endured by the wealthy divorce seekers would be of little moment. A month of such satisfying wholesome, nutritious food staples as pork and beans would be a small matter. The average working-man would declare that things might

be much worse and sit down to his daily meal with enjoyment, good naturedly varying the menu with fried pork or bean soup.

But to those used all their lives to having their appetites pampered and tempted, pork and beans very soon grew extremely monotonous, and before the month of January was over the bills of fare afforded by the chefs of Reno were regarded as little short of downright privation.

Some of those who self-imposed the discomfort they underwent have written cheerful letters home in which they declare that the freedom they hope to obtain and which they trust will follow the long six months' inconvenience will more than compensate.

A very fair illustration of the hardships that residents of Reno have had to endure is the experience during the last winter of Mrs. Henry Spies Kip Little, former wife of Henry Spies Kip, well to do New York society man.

A day or so after Mrs. Kip was handed a decree separating her from her husband she married the wealthy son of a wealthier mining operator. Filled with the new love and thoroughly off with the old, she decided that a romantic life with Little in the picturesque mining town would be ideal.

Recently Mrs. Kip Little wrote to a friend in New York. She told her friends that she was very happy and that the tiny snow covered cottage of the mine superintendent was the loveliest place in the world. She admitted, however, that the "grub" was "awful" and indicated that she was getting rather tired of pork and beans.

According to her friends in the social world, the satisfaction of the former society woman and one time prospective operatic singer of New York will be short lived, and they freely predict that one more hard winter will send her scurrying back to New York and comfort.

Mrs. Kip-Little's experience with winter weather in Nevada, it is said, is only an example of what many other society women went through prior to their successful applications to the courts for a severance of their marital relations. Recent divorcees are said to have had quite a tough time of it.

Only a week or so ago Mrs. Ellhu B. Frost, wife of the New York lawyer of that name, was allowed a divorce by one of the hard pressed, overworked Reno judges. She jumped aboard a train and joined Hamilton Wilkes Cary, the wealthy New York clubman, and the pair made a bee line for the dining car. No record is available as to what delicacies the two society leaders chose to satisfy a long tortured desire for "goodies," but it is perhaps well that

Cary had a heavy bank account at his command. When New York was reached Mrs. Ford and Cary were married.

Two very dear friends of Mrs. Frost Cary are still in Nevada and have been up against the same kind of hard times this winter. They are the beautiful Mrs. Keith Donaldson and the cultured Mrs. Smith Hollins McKim.

Both reached Reno four months ago and because of the "cruel" Nevada law which demands six months' residence must stay two months longer before they may save their wounded hearts with the comfort of divorce.

Mrs. Freddy Gebhard, wife of the New York clubman and all around sport, who was formerly beautiful for the wealthy, accomplished society

One might write indefinitely concerning these women who have braved Reno's severe climate because of their domestic difficulties. The little town that, when 5,000 persons are in it, is crowded is filled with hundreds more who have had like experiences. A walk along the main street and one can see scores of beautiful women whose very carriage and bearing mark them at once as members of some of our haughtiest and most exclusive families, women who have graced some of the most exclusive social functions in our large cities and abroad brushing shoulders with rough miners or farmers who make up Reno's natural population. Some, in the summer season, vainly try to escape the awful ennui of the long "wait" by dashing madly and headlong into the few gayeties that the place affords.

And, even though the weather man, within a month of the outset of the next winter season, should prophesy that a repetition of the blizzards of the winter of 1910 would take place, the result would be the same. Just as big a crowd of the wealthy divorce seekers will fill the houses and hotels. Just as long as Nevada's divorce laws are so lenient, just as long as it is really only necessary to maintain a six months' residence in the state to secure a decree, will the procession of mismatched pairs continue.

The divorce seekers may return to their homes and tell of the awful cold, of how the thermometer went "30 below," of the lack of morning cocktails and evening wines until they are blue in the face. The warnings will not be heard. The first thought in the minds of the disagreeing rich is "Reno"—Reno where no questions are asked, and the relief is obtained the speediest. According to recent dispatches, next winter will find among the divorce colony Louise Gunning, prima donna in Gustave Luders' opera, "The Harselle." She is the wife of J. Pittney, of the New York cab company.



LOUISE GUNNING

MRS. HENRY SPIES KIP LITTLE

MRS. HENRY CLEWS JR.

MRS. KEITH DONALDSON

GENERAL VIEW OF RENO