

JUNCTION OF PHILLIP AVENUE AND 9TH STREET, IN SIOUX FALLS, S. D.



BUILDING FILLED WITH THE OFFICES OF DIVORCE LAWYERS.

HOTEL FILLED WITH GUESTS REMAINING ONLY LONG ENOUGH TO OBTAIN DIVORCES.

SIOUX FALLS DIVORCES.

Life There of Men and Women Who Seek Marital Freedom.

If any one is thinking of going to South Dakota to seek a divorce after six months' residence there, he or she ought to start soon. The citizens of the state are to vote on a change in the divorce law in November, and it is almost a foregone conclusion that the term of residence required on the part of those suing for divorce will be increased to a year.

Announcement of this has been heralded afar and has caused a rush of divorce immigrants into the state. It is estimated that there are now between 700 and 900 persons in Sioux Falls primarily in search of release from marital bonds. Sioux Falls is a city of 12,000 population. It has been noted for some time as a mecca for divorce seekers.

It is not so easy to secure a South Dakota divorce to-day as it was in the early days of the state. Then all that appeared to be necessary was to hire a room and place a trunk in it. Having done this, a person could leave the state and return six months later, when his case was ready for trial.

Of the sixty lawyers in Sioux Falls some are divorce specialists, and are rarely in court in cases of another nature. "Business" is sent to them from New York and the larger cities in the East. The rivalry to obtain the conduct of divorce suits is often strenuous. Some lawyers pay bonuses for cases, and hackmen, boarding house keepers and merchants are in touch with lawyers whom they recommend as "the best and surest." The costs of a divorce trial in a Sioux Falls court are about \$15.

The nature of the case enters into the fee charged. One lawyer will ask a fee of \$500 to take a case, and another will take it for \$200. A fee of \$10,000 was paid by a Massachusetts man who obtained a divorce. The average fee is from \$200 to \$500, and \$100 is the lowest known fee.

The South Dakota divorce colony includes all types of humanity, many of whom seek employment while establishing their residence. Lawyers, dentists, physicians, teachers, clerks, nurses, stenographers and servants are among these.

A dentist who has been earning \$100 a week elsewhere will become a laboratory assistant in Sioux Falls for \$10 a week. A lawyer of large income in his home office will become a clerk in a law office. Work keeps their minds from dwelling on their troubles. There have been many suicides in South Dakota among divorce seekers. The men divorce residents are found in shops, freight offices, as hotel clerks, in newspaper offices, as collectors, and even working at manual labor. The women become manicurists, stenographers, typesetters, milliners and waitresses.

This serves to keep wages down in Sioux Falls, with the exception of those paid in unionized trades. Places that pay \$25 a week in other cities are filled for half that amount. The employer sets his figure and there is a scramble.

To offset this, however, is the quarter of a million spent yearly by the divorce seekers. Some of them are wealthy, and they make their enforced residence a vacation and entertain lavishly. They hire cottages, purchase horses and automobiles and keep a force of servants. Sioux Falls "society" bars them from the clubs, but the pastors invite them to their churches.

Merchants and others who share in the \$250,000 every year are wondering what will happen to their bank accounts if the law is changed. Most of them feel that a one year residence would "kill the goose that lays the golden egg." Nebraska, they say, will become the favorite divorce state.

Sioux Falls is one of the most cosmopolitan cities in the Northwest, for almost every state in the Union and Canada are represented by those seen in its streets. The New York woman in a Paris gown jostles a Sioux squaw in blanket and buckskin. Corduroy and top boots worn by a sturdy wheat grower keep pace with a banker in furs.

Mondays are divorce trial days in Sioux Falls. The Minnehaha County courthouse, where the cases are heard, is called "The Temple of Freedom." An uncontested suit is generally disposed of in fifteen minutes. A witness accompanies

the plaintiff to swear to the time of residence. If the judge is satisfied with the plaintiff's testimony and evidence he says, "You may take a decree" and there's no more to be done. In a suit tried recently the court learned that the plaintiff had been out of the state, having taken her sick child to a nearby watering place in Iowa. This was held not to be a sufficient excuse for leaving the state, and the woman is "making up" the vacation.

Some of the successful plaintiffs give dinners and have farewell receptions before they go away. Others study the timetables and strive to conquer the impulse to be off, for the attorney warns his client to put off the home journey for a few days for the sake of appearances.

No decree is filed by the attorney until his account is settled, and there have been instances where a year has elapsed between the decision

SHOPPING IN MALTA.

Bargain Hunting in One Street Like Mountain Climbing.

"Walking as exercise is a bitter reality to the people who go shopping in busy St. Lucy street in the city of Valletta, Malta," said a returning traveller the other day. "It would be bad enough never to see a street car, a carriage or a horse on level ground, but with a street of endless stairs stretching the length of New York's Rialto, no wonder visitors feel averse to pedestrianism. All but athletes get out of breath when they have walked half a block up St. Lucy street, and it takes an extraordinary

ground of the British soldiers' scarlet uniform. The British maintain a large garrison at Malta, not entirely for keeping tourists in order. The Knights of the Garter were organized some time before the construction of the street of stairs. It is said that an American suggested having a sloping street where cable cars could run, or at least a set of escalators to carry pedestrians from shop to shop, but the British authorities shook their heads on account of the tourist trade.

"Malta has been on the decline since the treasurer of the Knights Templar absconded and it was decided that Jerusalem wasn't worth taking from the Turk. Even the cat trade has gone down, because the Maltese cats were so un-patriotic as to have kittens wherever they happened to be taken. Legend tells, that the Knights Templar, who endured a famous siege at Valletta, used the well furred cats of the island as foot warmers until they found it more profitable to sell the cats and buy hot water bottles. Many other romantic anecdotes of the knights are related to tourists by the conscientious guides. The knights are at present buried in a fine old church, one of the sights of Valletta.

"The street of stairs has many jewelry shops where rare brooches, rings and other pieces of Maltese goldwork may be picked up at tempting low prices after half a day's friendly argument. No charge is made for argument; on the contrary, the prices recede in proportion to the staying power of the customer. It is expected that at the first mention of a price by the shopkeeper the customer shall throw up his hands and start for the door. He returns immediately and asks for the next quotation. The shopkeeper complies, and probably swears by the beard of Mahomet that he is selling 250 per cent under cost. When he has reached 1,000 per cent below cost the customer tells him to wrap the package up. It is dinner time, anyway. Some customers are said to pay a deposit and call around next day to resume the process of beating down the price of an article at the point where they left off.

"Statues of saints and local heroes are seen in niches along the street. Also there are projecting balconies and brilliantly hued awnings to lure the tourist up the stairs and make him forget the lack of elevators. Mountain climbers on their way to Switzerland get in excellent training by running up and down the street twice before breakfast. There is a beautiful harbor at Malta, where the British keep an array of warships and try to prevent the importation of Maltese relics made in Germany."

THE PRUDENT PIPER.

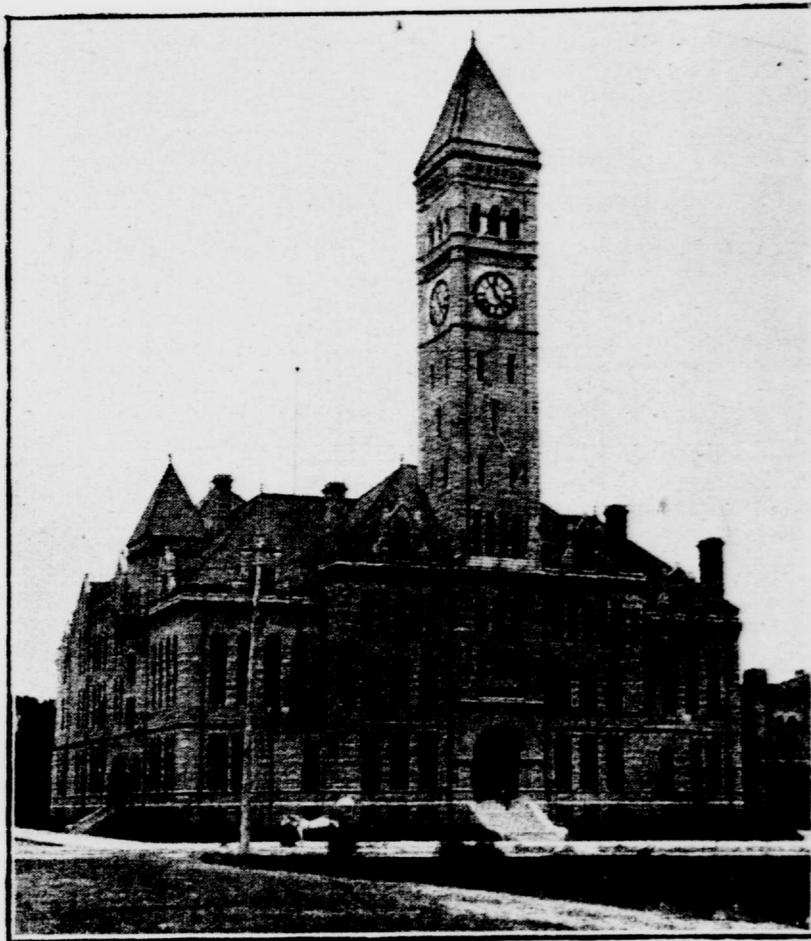
Thomas F. Ryan, the financier, was talking about music in the smoking room of the Deutschland.

"I like all music," he said, "except such native and special sorts as the tom-tom, the bagpipes or the Indian hufaa give off.

"Speaking of bagpipes, did you ever notice how a piper prances up and down as he pipes? He never sits, he never stands still, but up and down, round and round, to and fro he struts continually.

"A little boy, listening to the weird skirl of the bagpipes of a street performer, once said to his father:

"Father, why does the piper keep on the move all the time he plays?"
 "'I can't say, my boy,' the father answered, 'unless it is to prevent any one getting the range with a cobblestone.'"



A TEMPLE OF FREEDOM.

Courthouse in Sioux Falls, where divorce decrees are granted with a celerity that is pleasing or scandalous—depending on the point of view.

and the filing of the decree, in which time some poor plaintiff has been getting enough money together to obtain from the attorney the paper bearing the gold seal of the State of South Dakota.

Many who go to Sioux Falls to get a divorce remain and marry into the families there. Some find openings in trade which prove so good that they become business men of the city.

THE READY AURORAN.

"Alert?" said Senator Hopkins of a colleague the other day. "Why, he is as alert and clever as the Aurora bridegroom.

"You know how bridegrooms, setting off on the honeymoon, forget their brides and buy tickets only for themselves? Well, that is what this bridegroom did in Aurora, and when his wife said to him, 'Why, you only bought one ticket, dear?' he answered readily:
 "'By Jove! I never thought of myself.'"

HAD A LIVING REMINDER.

"About the greatest man that ever lived in this community was Skinner—broad-minded, big-hearted and brilliant—and yet he died with all his talents and goodness unsuspected."

"How did you come to find out about it?"
 "I married his widow."—Pick-Me-Up.

bargain sale to induce women to climb to the top stores.

"Sometimes they reach the top by another route and make their purchases more easily as they descend the terraces by short stages. It dislocates the entire mechanism of urban civilization to have such streets. 'Mashers' lose their breath when they travel upstairs in pursuit of pretty unknowns in black capotes. The 'cops' hate to chase pushcart men and other male-factors uphill, whereas gravity aids the cause of justice in the other direction. Fakers and thimble-riggers generally locate at a safe altitude above the blue-coated guardians of law and order. If rain falls heavily everybody makes a wild rush to get under cover, for while the cascades of water curving over the steps are beautiful to watch from a distance, any one who gets in the way feels that he is in the rapids of a millrace. No one has yet tried to toboggan the steps in a rainstorm. In dry weather people again seek shelter when the street cleaning department gets busy on the top stairs and clouds of dust descend on the lower levels of the street.

"On windy days tourists repair to St. Lucy street in large numbers to admire the display of picturesque native hosiery against the back-

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" " 100 " "	"
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