

band a farm situated in what is now the very heart of the city of New York. When the British took New Netherland in 1664 they took possession of this property, which became known as the "King's Farm," and in 1705 the tract was granted to Trinity church by the crown. It is understood that Anneke Jans left nine children, and if these and their posterity at all maintained the record of their sturdy ancestry, at the ordinary rate of increase the number of descendants would amount to several millions of persons at the present time. One of the descendants has calculated that the property divided among the heirs would now amount to about \$1,000 each.

There is about as much chance of getting anything tangible out of the claim as there is of getting a slice of the moon; yet year after year the so-called heirs get together in conventions, report progress, listen to suggestions, raise a little more money with which to pay lawyers, and go back home solidly enjoying the prospect of wealth when justice shall be done and Trinity church be compelled to disgorge.

#### BISMARCK IN A NEW ROLE.

That Germany's "iron chancellor," who once was famous among other feats for his crushing opposition to clerical aggressiveness in the Fatherland, should become an object of worship, and that, too, before being removed from this earth, is more than his warmest friends ever could have hoped for. But this has happened if the Journal des Debats is to be relied upon in a matter touching one who is no favorite in France. The paper says that there is in Brazil by the river Parana a tribe of Indians converted to Christianity by Spanish missionaries. These have given their converts some knowledge of European countries, their art, governments and history. The Indians were particularly impressed by the history of Germany and the character of Bismarck, and in order to give expression to their feelings of admiration, they decided to include him among the list of saints they had been taught to reverence. So one day they had a native artist paint what he might conceive to be the likeness of the great statesman, and this work of art was placed in a little chapel they had erected. As soon as the missionaries became aware of the unexpected result of their efforts at teaching European history to Indians they were thunderstruck and remonstrated, but to no purpose. The converted redskins could not see why Bismarck was not entitled to as much honor as the saints of the missionaries, and the result is that "St. Bismarck" is now frequently supplicated for temporal and spiritual favors by those Brazil converts.

#### LITTLE RHODY'S LESSON.

An old time marriage law of the state of Rhode Island, which went into official effect some seventy years ago but fell into desuetude a couple of decades later, made certain provisions

as to the registration of ministers authorized to solemnize the marriage ceremony. As a result of the failure to comply with these provisions, it transpires that there has not been a legal marriage in the state for well nigh fifty years.

Of course there will be no great difficulty in securing a remedy for the technicality—an act of the legislature validating all such ceremonies can no doubt be passed without opposition. But the fact remains that there has been gross carelessness in the study of the statutes by those who operate under them—or the point noted would not have gone half a century undiscovered. It is a warning against the practice of leaving any law upon the statute books unenforced; every enactment which has served its purpose, or is unnecessary, or is found impracticable of enforcement, ought to be repealed and wiped off the legislative page. It is also a suggestion that the mania for making new laws which seems to possess every legislature and which the members appear to regard as their whole duty, is only one part of the business for which they are paid. If it were the rule that about one legislature in three should be debarred from any new legislation whatever, and restricted to the labor of clearing off obsolete, useless and bad laws and making a few changes in existing statutes which experience had shown to be necessary, the law-abiding spirit would be stimulated because ordinary people could understand what the laws were, and there would be fewer blunders, anomalies and rank absurdities for attorneys to have fun with and innocent people to suffer from.

#### MUTUAL IMPROVEMENT LEAGUE.

We are pleased to know that in response to a very general demand on the part of the young people of this city, an organization has been created, having in view the systematic development of its members, physically, mentally and morally. In the hurry and close competition of modern business and professional life, men are prone to neglect self-development, trusting to their innate physical, mental and moral strength, unaugmented by proper training. Too frequently the result is a complete collapse of body, brain or soul, usually coming too late in life to admit of recuperation, but so early as to entail lamentable loss of effort. In the hopefulness and activity of youth, men and women draw too much on future energy, with personal bankruptcy resulting as surely as financial failure from the abuse of credit. The sooner this tendency is checked and proper attention given to the storing of energy for future needs, the better.

This is the object of the Mutual Improvement League. A man may escape from the strain and worry of business or profession and spend a few hours out of each week one hundred and sixty-eight in body-building exercises in the gymnasium, under competent instructors, in mental culture in the reading room, with the guidance of a cultured librarian, or in listening to the lectures on

mental and moral themes given under the auspices of the League. With the growth of habits thus contracted the strength and character of this and succeeding generations will be assured. The wisdom of this organization is beyond question, and the NEWS wishes it abundant success.

#### UNFORTUNATE FRIENDSHIP.

If the ancient philosopher had had time to amplify his longing, when he exclaimed "Oh, that mine enemy would write a book!" he would probably have added, as the next best thing, "Or that somebody else would write a book about him."

The suggestion ought to have occurred to Governor McKinley, executive of Ohio, and one of the most prominent candidates for the Republican nomination for the Presidency in St. Louis next summer. His "Life" has just been published by Robert P. Porter, now of the Cleveland World, and formerly of the New York Press and of the Eleventh United States census. The book is four hundred pages in thickness, and from all reports is not only handsomely printed and pictured, but also ably written; which latter in histories and especially in biographies is a qualification not too often met with.

With all this, however, many of Major McKinley's best friends regard the volume with consternation, and many of his opponents with corresponding glee. Biographies have not generally proved good campaign material in the history of American politics. As eventful a career and as splendidly interesting a work as that of James G. Blaine did not win for the white-plumed knight that which he hoped for; while Mr. Sherman's recent "Recollections" have put him quite beyond the pale of further political advancement. It is to be expected that Mr. Porter has avoided anything in his write-up of McKinley which can give offense to other leaders of the party, and yet if it has any merit or value at all it can scarcely have avoided comparisons that are invidious and praise or censure that is unpalatable.

Moreover, in the plain common sense of the American people there is a proper and wholesome dislike to printed adulation and gush over living people. In some instances the affection of unwise friends amounts almost to the deification of the beloved subject. Books and sketches about people still in mortality are frequently met with which are simply nauseating in their descriptions and praise. The unhappy tendency develops also in other forms, and all of them, where they affect more than the immediate connections and most intimate friends of the person to be honored, are in poor taste and of more than doubtful propriety.

We think that Mr. Porter in his late book has done Major McKinley no service for which the latter owes him any gratitude. We do not think any one who assumes to place a living friend high upon a pinnacle of exaltation to be gazed upon, eulogized or fussed over by the multitude, furnishes an example deserving of encouragement. In the extremity to which the