SNAKE BITE CULT TEST

If Disciple Escapes, All Right; If He Dies, Faith Is Weak.

REVEALED BY A HAIR PULLING

Calling of Police to Quell Disturbance Begun by Women Members Discloses Activities of Reptile-Handling Sect. Organization Scattered Over Southwestern Kansas and Oklahoma.

Special to The Washington Post

New York Aug 12—A faith in God that makes them capable of handling poisonous reptiles without fear of injury is one of the tenets of the Snake Eaters' a religious organization which has been holding meetings in Dodge City, Kans. The poisoning and death of members of the band as a result of handling the snakes, and prosecutions by the authorities, have not broken up the organization which now has a membership scattered over southwestern Kansas and Oklahoma

The presence of the members of this cult was revealed by the calling of police to quell a disturbance that began as a result of revelations made by one of the speakers The true Disciples of Christ is what the members call themselves

Women Have Hair-Pulling.

The hair pulling that was staged was a result of the interpretation given by one of these speakers, Mrs Mary Osteen, a widow of Bloom which reflected on the morality of Mrs T A Covington -Mrs Covington indignantly denied that she was guilty of a sinful spirit as charged. The lie was passed and immediately the meeting was in an uproar The hostess seized the speaker by the hair Four other members including Mrs Covington's husband and a son in law tried to unlock her fingers Then somebody called the police

We believe that through faith we can handle snakes said Mrs Covington For in Luke He tells us that if we have faith we can raise up serpents and not be harmed

If Bitten, Faith Is Weak.

It doesn t say that people won't be bitten by serpents but if they are bitten it only shows that their faith is weak If they die they are only laying down their lives to the Lord, and any of us are ready to do that

That this belief of divine protection has been put to the test for years in southwestern Kansas and sometimes with fatal results was admitted Fortunately for the morality record rattlesnakes are scarce in Kansas Whenever a reptile is found it is passed from hand to hand among the members Even if some of the disciples are bitten it does not deter the others from testing the strength of their faith

Three Fail to Pass Test.

At a meeting in Stafford county a few years ago when 25 disciples were holding a test meeting three of them were bitten All three of the bitten ones recovered. but the county authorities arrested the worshipers and took them to St John An attempt was made to take the minor children of the worshipers from them, but failed