

MODERN WITCHCRAFT.

MARVELOUS POWERS ATTRIBUTED TO WITCHES IN NEW MEXICO.

Many of the Natives Still Believe in and Fear Them—Some Veracious Stories of Unusually Exploits—Tiding With the Witches.

New Mexico, acquired by the United States in 1848, under the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, has a present population of about 175,000, including about 30,000 Indians and 25,000 Americans (as we use the term in the east). The rest are Mexicans, with a few fine old Spanish families scattered here and there.

Among the native population superstition is practically universal and has many strange manifestations. Despite the laudable efforts of our Pilgrim forefathers to exterminate the pestilent brood of witches, there are still witches and to spare in New Mexico; and the natives, almost to a man, believe in and fear them. They are generally women, but sometimes men; usually of middle age, but occasionally very old, and rarely very young.

It was my privilege the other day to photograph three live witches—the first, I venture to say, that ever faced a camera. They live in San Rafael. Our witchology is full, detailed and graphic. Every peasant in New Mexico can tell you their strange habits, their marvelous powers and their baleful deeds. They never injure the dumb animals, but woe to the human being who incurs their displeasure! Few indeed are bold enough to brave their wrath. If a witch ask for food, wood, clothing or anything else, none dare say her nay. Nor dare any one eat what a witch professes; for if he do, some animal, alive and gnawing, will form in his stomach. By day the witches wear their familiar human form; but at night, dressed in strange animal shapes, they abroad to hold witch meetings in the mountains or to wreak their evil wills. In a dark night you may see them flying through the sky like so many balls of fire, and there are comparatively few Mexicans in the territory who have not seen this weird sight! For these nocturnal sallies the witches wear their own bodies, but take the legs and eyes of a coyote or other animal, leaving their own at home. Juan Peres, a male witch, who died here in San Mateo some months ago, met with a strange misfortune in this wise: He had gone off with the eyes of a cat, and during his absence a dog knocked over the table and ate up Juan's own eyes; so the unfortunate witch had to wear cat's eyes all the rest of his life.

BEING WITH THE WITCHES. Before they get off, witches are obliged to cry out: "Sin Dios, sin Santa Maria" (without God and without the Holy Virgin). Whereupon they mount up on the air without difficulty. If you are on good terms with a witch you may persuade her to carry you on her back from here to New York in a second. She blindfolds you and enjoins strict silence. If you utter a word you find yourself alone in some vast wilderness, and if you cry "God save me" you fall from a fearful height to the ground—but are luckily never killed by the fall. There are several courageous people in the territory who have made journeys thus upon the backs of witches. At least they are ready to swear so, and they find 10,000 believers to one skeptic. One striking peculiarity about New Mexico witches is that any one named Juan or Juana (John or Jane) can catch them, and that to no one else can except a priest with holy water. To catch a witch, Juan draws a nine foot circle on the ground, cuffs his shirt inside out and cries: "Yeaga, brujal" (come, witch), whereupon the witch has to fall inside the circle and Juan has her completely in his power. This ability to catch witches, however, is seldom exercised, for let Juan once catch a witch and all the other witches in the country join hands and whip him to death.

And now, having briefly outlined the nature of witches here, let me give you some veracious anecdotes of their exploits—religiously believed throughout this section. Lorena Labadie, a man of prominence in New Mexico, once unknowingly hired a witch as nurse for his baby. He lived in Las Vegas. Some months afterward there was a ball at Puerta de Luna, a couple of hundred miles south, and friends of the family were astonished to see the nurse and baby there. "Where is Señor Labadie and his family?" they asked. The nurse replied that they were at a house a few miles distant, but too tired to come to the ball. The friends went next day and found the Labadies had not been there. Suspecting the nurse to be a witch, they wrote to Don Lorenzo, who only knew that the nurse and baby were in his house when he went to bed, and there also when he woke up. It being plain, therefore, to the most casual observer that the woman was a witch, he promptly discharged her.

PECULIAR EXPERIENCES. A pretty girl at San Rafael, just married, had a quarrel with one of the witches there. That night a strange cat came into the room. Feeling sure it was a witch, she locked the door and window, and her husband came with his six shooter, but the cat melted into thin air and suddenly appeared, few against Margarita's cheek and cut it, and then disappeared as mysteriously as the cat had appeared. A horrible sore formed on the cheek, and could not be cured till Margarita appeased the witch with presents. Jose Patricio Marino, one of the most respected men in San Mateo, had a most unfortunate experience not long ago. There was then in town a witch named Marcelina, a thin, withered woman of perhaps 60 years. Marino had the bad luck to offend her, and she retaliated by turning him into a woman! He was in this predicament for several months, as he is keen to swear, and recovered only by bribing the witch to restore him to masculinity. Marcelina found witchcraft an unhealthy profession, for last year two men whom she had bewitched caught her and beat her to death with clubs, right here in this pretty little village of San Mateo! Anything done to them? Well, hardly!—San Mateo (N.M.) Cor. Globe-Democrat.

Valuable Ornithological Specimens. More than 200,000 bird skins are now contained in the Natural History museum at South Kensington, London. A recent acquisition is the collection of 27,000 specimens made by the late Marquis of Tweeddale. This was presented by Capt. W. Ramsay, the naturalist's nephew, who has included in his gift the Tweeddale library, embracing nearly 3,000 ornithological volumes, many of them very rare and valuable.—Boston Budget.

No Excuse. Guest (angrily)—Your charge for three days' board is outrageous—a regular swindle, sir. Hotel Proprietor—You must remember that hotel charges are not based on what a guest consumes, but on what is provided. The waste of food at hotels is enormous. Guest—Then why don't you cook it better.—New York Weekly.

THE HEART HAS REASONS THAT REASON DOES NOT UNDERSTAND.—Rousset.

LOUISIANA VETERANS.

Personal Notes of Delegates to the Convention.

At 7.30 this evening the delegates of the various camps of United Confederate Veterans will assemble at Memorial Hall to elect a Major-General to command the Louisiana Division for the ensuing year. The rumored candidates are the incumbent (who has served but the third of a full term), Major-General W. J. Behan of the Army of Northern Virginia; General John Glynn, Jr., Army of Tennessee; Colonel J. P. Richardson, Washington Artillery, and Colonel George Moorhead of the Cavalry. There may be, however, some "dark horses" from the country.

Below will be found sketch personal notes concerning delegates at The Item reporters have been able to pick up, a number who promised memoranda not being sent in and in others not being found. Colonel B. F. Eshleman, the present chief of the veteran corps, Washington Artillery Camp, went out with the famous battalion in 1861 as Captain of the fourth company. He was the first officer wounded at the battle of Bull Run. After serving gallantly in several engagements he was promoted to Majorship of the battalion, and was in command at the surrender at Appomattox. Paul Conrad, a true republican and "le vieux temps" is found in Paul Conrad, a delegate from Camp Henry, St. Paul. He is a purely typical Louisianian. With an ancestry as old as the country, he combines in himself every essential feature of the old-time Creole, with the progressive characteristics of the present age.

Born in this city on December 31, 1840, of native parentage, he, with many whose names will ever live in the history of the State, attended the public school of this city. At an early age the death of his father left him to buffet the world with but little help, save the encouraging and wise counsels of a brave mother, and determined his early embarkation in the varying vicissitudes of life. He began a commercial career when barely 15 years of age in the wholesale grocery business, and afterwards engaged in the cotton business.

The war breaking out when he was about 20 years of age, he joined the Chasseurs a Pied, one of the first commands to leave this city for the then seat of war, Pensacola, in April, 1861. His career as a soldier was conspicuous for his personal daring and bravery, not unmingled with a fair share of romance, and paying the penalty of his venturesome spirit, he was three times badly wounded, once in front of Richmond, at the battle of Frazier Farm, June 30, 1861, where he was appointed color-bearer of his battalion on the field by the Colonel commanding. The flag thus entrusted to him, which he carried to the end of the war, in the same battle flag which was presented to St. Paul's Battalion by General Longstreet to commemorate their desperate charge at Seven Pines, and which was after the surrender at Appomattox taken to a place of safety in Richmond.

About 1879 a meeting of the veterans of the old command delegated Mr. Conrad to go to Richmond and secure the battered war emblem, which he did, and after reporting to his old comrades in arms he delivered the flag into the custody of the Association of the Army of Northern Virginia, which has unfurled it in Memorial Hall, where it now hangs, a silent and eloquent reminder of those troublous times which brought it into existence. At Sharpsburg (or Antietam) September 19, 1862, he was severely wounded, and fell into the hands of the Federals. After being exchanged and before thoroughly recuperated from his disabling wounds, he found him again in the field of active duty with his command in and about the historical Blackwater, Southampton county, Va., and at the battle of Bellefield he was again wounded.

Surrendering with the last forlorn hope, after four years and several months of actual active service, he resumed his duties of citizenship in his native State, relapsing into those peaceful pursuits in which he could serve his people most beneficially. In 1867 he was elected Assistant Secretary of the Finance Committee of the City Council, where his intelligent administration of the office soon promoted him to the Secretaryship. With varying success he engaged in various commercial enterprises, until of late years he acquired a home in the town of Waveland, adjoining Bay St. Louis, Miss., where his progressive spirit and enlightened enterprise were soon recognized, and he was elected and still serving as a Commissioner of that corporation. His suggestions of progress were soon adopted by his new constituents, and some time ago he was called upon to serve as President of the Gulf Coast and Manufacturing Company, which is now affording such material comforts to the denizens of that lively little town.

Many years ago he accepted a subaltern position with the Louisiana State Company, where his worth was soon recognized, and his promotion to the internal direction of his office affairs gradually followed, and which upon the death of their late President, Dr. M. A. Dauphin, culminated in his being chosen President of that vast institution which office he now holds with credit to himself and advantage to the company. He is also a Director in the Cherokee Manufacturing Company of Rock, Tex., which has sought the benefit of his advice and experience, and altogether he finds his time well taken up with the administration of the affairs of others.

Yet with his multifarious duties he remains what he ever was, a true and loyal friend and safe adviser, one upon whom none who know him ever hesitate to entrust their most secret confidences. His peculiar attribute is his unswerving devotion to duty, his undeviating punctuality and his loyalty to any cause he may espouse.—New Orleans (La.) City Item, May 30.

Feline Sagacity. A very much petted cat of mine, aged ten, was with me while sewing recently. She had seated herself on a portion of the calico which was before me on a small table, and before leaving the room for a few minutes I carefully arranged the part of the work with the needle in it so that it hung over the edge of the table and was well out of Tiny's way. On my return I found she had gathered up the calico and was sitting upon it, but had kept out the unfinished hem, and was holding down the needle with her right paw, purring loudly the while at what she evidently considered a successful imitation of her mistress.—London Spectator.

MEXICAN MANNERS.

UNFALING COURTESY OF A POLITE AND PUNCTILIOUS PEOPLE.

Boorishness of Tourists—An American Who Had Learned Wisdom—Politeness to Ladies—Almost a Tragedy—A Severe Test of Courtesy.

In their philanthropic and highly laudable efforts to reconstruct Mexico to suit their own ideas of propriety, Americans find their throats well often, perhaps, than for any other reason, at the excessive degree of form and ceremony which attends, it may be safely said, every transaction, great or small, in Mexico. It is a great mistake, however, to set oneself in opposition to these things. Mexicans, like all Latin races, are risers for etiquette, and they class as rough and undervalued people who ignore the superficial forms of politeness. In Mexico one finds a land where courtesy goes farther than coin of the realm; and this with all ranks and classes. Mark the street greeting of Pelajo and Mercedes, two peladitos of the lowest. Off goes the hat of Pelajo and Mercedes puts out to him her hand, hony and toll hardened, but friendly and cordial.

"How do you do, Don Pelajo? How do you pass the night? How is your wife—the children—are they well?" "Ah, Dona Mercedes! I am glad to see you. And how is your good family? I hope you have no illness or trouble. Will it please you to make to them all my humble greetings?" Poor, half starved, dirty, miserably clad in rags that scarcely cover their nakedness, these poor creatures still practice an un-falling courtesy that I have too often found lacking among our parvenu aristocrats, sitting aloof in their money bags. And they responded, too, to this trait in their superiors more readily than to the chink of tlaacos. This is practically demonstrated wherever in Mexico Americans do congregate. A little group will be gathered on a corner, squares, public carriages, mozas, what you will, and an American will come rushing past. A block away can be read in his eye the intention to rush through that group of low born mortals, who are certainly dirty and ignorant, but who are nevertheless entitled to the rights and privileges of all humanity. Does he scatter them in catapill fashion really? Ah, no! The mola of the carabidor—a heavy leather cushion, on which the carrier supports his burden, strikes him, not carelessly, but with almost force enough to knock him breathless. The aquilar slops some water out of a brimming choocoo over his worship's natty garments, and his shoulder will be black and blue for a fortnight from the force of his collision with the sturdy mola. By stepping on his foot, he manages to push him, breathless and raging. They look at each other complacently, grin sardonically and fall into place again as another gringo approaches. But this one did not come to Mexico the day before yesterday. 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