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SOME ODD STORIES.

INTERESTING INCIDENTS RELATED BY ALFRED R. CALHOUN.

A New Version of the Old Story of the Ghost of the Pecos—A Legend That Has Long Been Prevalent in New Mexico.

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Some years before the railroad came to New Mexico I was at a dance in Santa Fe given by the territorial officers to a number of engineers who had been making a preliminary survey down the Rio Grande. It was a long party, and after supper some lighted Mr. Chavez, the gentleman who presided, announced to the guests that he expected each one to make a speech, sing a song or tell a story. Colonel Wolf—a member of the staff of General Getty, who commanded the Department of New Mexico, chose to tell a story, and the graphic mental and the startling and unexpected termination struck me so forcibly that I wrote it out the next morning. Here it is:

"Gentlemen, I do not wish to reflect on any of the stories that have been or can may be told, but what I am about to narrate has the very doubtful merit of being true.

"At the breaking out of the late war a large number of Germans who were living in Texas, but who were strongly supposed to sympathize, decided to get off their portable effects into wagons and come north to New Mexico here to remain till the war was over.

"They were induced to come to this territory by an old trapper named Cooke, who knew the country as well as if he had made it, and who readily consented to be a guide for parties of this sort.

"The women and children, with a good supply of provisions, were placed in the wagons. In addition to the drivers there were twelve well armed and well armed men with rifles, and these drove along a lot of sows and fat cattle, which it was expected would be found useful in the new home, which it was decided would be in the northern valley of the Pecos river.

"After a march of more than 300 miles, during which the exiles suffered many privations, they reached their destination, and that ever delightful Rio Grande upper Pecos, which every good New Mexican regards as an Eden. Soon after their arrival Cooke, the guide, was killed by the Comanches, at least he never came back to deny it, and in the same time the startling news reached them that General Sibley, with a brigade of Texans had come into the territory and proposed to hold it for the Confederacy.

"The Germans consulted together. They had not believed their condition by leaving Texas, for the enemy had followed them. After a prayerful consideration of the case and a careful examination of a map of old and New Mexico they made up their minds to reload their wagons and go to the better country. As this was early in 1862 they knew nothing of the designs of the French emperor on the bells of Minnesota.

A MONTEZUMA SPECTRAL FIGURE.

"They had no guide, nor was this thought necessary, for the maps showed that the Pecos rise nearly due north till it enters the Rio Grande, about 100 miles away, and across from its mouth was their promised land.

"The Pecos, where they had found a temporary resting place, was a beautiful trout filled river. The banks were studded with stately cottonwoods, the sky was clear, the soil fertile and the pasturage the best. They reasoned from their experience with all other streams that these conditions would continue, and that as the river neared its mouth the volume of its water would increase. They did not reflect that for 100 miles it received no tributaries, and as they could not foresee the effect of perforation and evaporation on the current.

"Full of hope, they started off for Mexico, and it was not till they had been traveling for a week that they noticed the not unusual fact given place to summer heat and caution, and that the rich pastures of the upper river were replaced by powdery Mother grass. The water became somewhat saline, the sun poured down alternating for them a cloudless, coppery sky. In shimmering waves the radiating heat distorted the landscape, and, in their early morning and after sunset, the mirage appeared with its delusive cities, its celestial lakes and its purple mountains of the blessed.

"At length there came a day when the current ceased and they found the water only to kept the mud pools. Still on and down they pressed, hoping and praying for a sight of the Rio Grande and the Sierras of Old Mexico.

"Then the pools vanished, swallowed up by the parched earth, and they had to dig for water in the wild and dusty bed of the river, at first a foot, then two feet, then six feet! Their time was spent in digging for water and they were forced to travel at night, for the oxen had died or wandered off and the horses and mules looked like parched skeletons.

"Then there came a day when the last of the exhausted animals died. The wagons fell to pieces in the furnace heat, and great, wild eyed women staggered down the bed of the river with their little ones dying on their necklaces and encircled hands. The women and children and their last old men died one after the other on the blistering banks of the waterless river.

"After this the younger men died, till at length only one, the most powerful of the party, was left. Without hope, but urged by instinct, he still thinks that crawled his life and blackened his swollen tongue and wade thirsty every pore of his great form, the great fellow staggered on. The red sun rose into the cloudless sky, sounded to the south, then sinked down from the vast arcadian dome, dark as night on night of ruin.

"One night the last of the entire, his strength all gone and the coming of death the one thing wished for, threw himself on the blistering river bed and raised his glazed bloodshot eyes for a last earthly look at the stars. The voices that he now saw came attributes to the conditions of his mind, but as he looked a mountain spectral figure rose from the sands of the Pecos. The eyes blazed like furnaces, and the mouth was like the mouth of an entire volcano.

"'My friend,' said this figure, 'do you know who I am?'

"'No, no! Water, water,' cried the poor man.

"'I,' said the spectral, 'am the Ghost of the Pecos! Don't you think that is enough for rather a long time between drinks?'

The colonel sat down after this story, but it was some minutes before the horrified company emitted the usual sell and hurtled him out of the room.

Worse Than Death.

Until a score days it was the law in America that a woman convicted of a serious offence and condemned to death should be saved, even if on the scaffold, if a single man would come forward and then and there make her his wife.

The women of Yuma are justly celebrated for their beauty, and years ago one of the fairest women in the American capital has suffered the death penalty for crimes, usually limited to poisoning, then would shock a band of things.

Marie Hartman was employed as governess in the family of a colonel of Hussars. She was wonderfully bright, and in addition she had the rare beauty that comes from a crossing of the Magyar and Teutonic races. Colonel Von Graf was about thirty years of age, rich, handsome and gallant—his adjutant in the letter from which we quote, and he was young in the face that his wife had been so bright since the birth of her only child, now a little girl of six.

Forgetting their social difference as well as the marital barrier that separated them, Marie Hartman fell violently in love with the colonel, and although he denied even having encouraged her passion there were not wanting those who believed that the girl had some reason for believing that her employer preferred her to his married wife. But be that as it may, it is very certain that Marie got the idea into her pretty but very wicked little head, that if Mina Von Graf were out of the way she would be installed very soon thereafter as the mistress of the colonel's heart and home.

Too impatient to wait for the natural agencies that produce conditions, Marie determined to become an active ally of Death. She was a great favorite with the invalid lady, and she gave her the opportunity so every one for years, which she did with a calmness and a hardiness to which the annals of crime present but few parallels.

From the time she began administering poison to her victim she was in a state of nervous lady that was rapidly wore worse, and during that time the change in Madam Von Graf's mind prompted the most delicate attentions to Vienna, including the physician of his majesty the Emperor Francis Joseph.

With the colonel's free consent an autopsy was held, and then the truth came out. The unfortunate lady had been killed by arsenic, administered with surprising skill.

It was some time before sufficient proof to Marie Hartman, and then it proved unmistakably. The girl was overwhelmed, but displayed a moral religosity that proved not whose time had been devoted to the investigation and punishment of crime.

Even when the evidence was overwhelmingly against her the prisoner her innocence with a unshakable and efficacy that astonished the court, and when convicted and sentenced she broke out with a torrent of profanity and told the judge that she expected to make love at him when they met in a place warmer than Vienna.

The girl's recklessness and beauty entitled the interest of one of the prison doctors, a middle aged, well to do man, who was noted for his plain features and professional skill. This interest gradually intensified into love, but Dr. Trott did not dare to sacrifice his feelings to his friends or to the beautiful criminal.

At length the day set for the execution of Marie Hartman arrived. In the interim between her sentence and execution she refused to see any clergyman, declaring with a laugh, when talked to on the subject, that she had no hope of heaven or fear of hell.

Dr. Trott was at the place of execution, and when he saw the lovely form about to mount the scaffold all his dread of what society would say vanished, and urged thereto by his overpowering love he rushed up to Marie and cried out, with his arms aligned her neck, "Marie, I love you, and I will save you by making you my wife!"

With a laugh, she looked into the pale, honest face, and asked:

"Mean I marry you in order to live?"

"Yes," replied the doctor, "for you will marry me and you will live. The clergyman, who is here to point out the better way, will make us."

Marie Hartman lifted from the earnest, pale faced man to the scaffold, then, struggling her shoulders, she said:

"Not my precious life at too high a price. I think that if marrying you is the only alternative, I prefer to die."

And with a mocking laugh she mounted the scaffold and died without the least sign of agitation or a pang of penitence.

"Two Quarts and a Pint."

There is today an English actor in the United States, who is winning high fortune and fame, who once his start in life in his early ignorance and boyish humor. When a lad he was what is known as a "pot boy" in a public house near Covent Garden theater, in London.

A gentleman came in late one evening, and while taking refreshments he ordered the boy to call a hack for him. On reaching the landscape, and, in fact, early morning and after sunset, the mirage appeared with its delusive cities, its celestial lakes and its purple mountains of the blessed.

"At length there came a day when the current ceased and they found the water only to kept the mud pools. Still on and down they pressed, hoping and praying for a sight of the Rio Grande and the Sierras of Old Mexico.

"Then the pools vanished, swallowed up by the parched earth, and they had to dig for water in the wild and dusty bed of the river, at first a foot, then two feet, then six feet! Their time was spent in digging for water and they were forced to travel at night, for the oxen had died or wandered off and the horses and mules looked like parched skeletons.

"Then there came a day when the last of the exhausted animals died. The wagons fell to pieces in the furnace heat, and great, wild eyed women staggered down the bed of the river with their little ones dying on their necklaces and encircled hands. The women and children and their last old men died one after the other on the blistering banks of the waterless river.

"After this the younger men died, till at length only one, the most powerful of the party, was left. Without hope, but urged by instinct, he still thinks that crawled his life and blackened his swollen tongue and wade thirsty every pore of his great form, the great fellow staggered on. The red sun rose into the cloudless sky, sounded to the south, then sinked down from the vast arcadian dome, dark as night on night of ruin.

"'It was two quarts and a pint, sir!'

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This was unintelligible to the gentleman till the landlord explained that the boy meant 111.

The book was now found, and the driver was found, somewhat reluctantly, to acknowledge that he had picked up the pocketbook when he was on his stand.

The eminence of the boy so puzzled the gentleman that he sent him to school, which he learned rapidly and was showed than he had imagined the talent of a high order.

ALFRED R. CALHOUN.

A Statuesque Clock.

A new clock of large proportions is being made for St. Paul's cathedral, in London. Some idea of the size of this clock may be formed when it is known that the hammer which strikes the bell weighs 800 pounds.—New York Journal.

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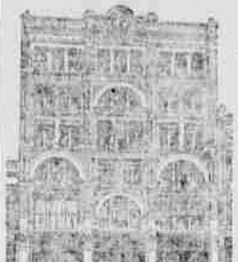

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