

make the most of the exceptional opportunity afforded for presenting Utah's cause, interest and people in a favorable light.

A number of Salt Lake people besides those officially concerned in the congress are anxiously looking forward to the result of the convention and hope to see our representatives score a distinct and impressive success.

Among a number of people staying at what were the first headquarters of the commission on Michigan avenue are H. B. Clawson and wife and Miss Ruby Clawson of Salt Lake and Ben. E. Rich of Ogden. At the Hyde Park hotel near the Fair grounds are Mrs. William Jennings, Miss Fenton, Mrs. Clark and Mrs. Julia Taylor, all of Salt Lake, and a large number of Utah people are scattered in various other hotels in Chicago. We are all brothers and sisters here and a rendezvous at the Utah building is always attended by an expression of supreme heartiness and good-fellowship. Thus the great Fair fulfills a nearer mission than that of drawing us into closer affiliation with the outside world. "PERDITA."

DEAD IN A FOREIGN LAND.

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CITY OF MEXICO, May 21.—Memorial or Decoration day, which derives its name from the beautiful custom—universally observed throughout both the northern and southern sections of the United States—of placing flowers upon the graves of all who fell on either side in our late Civil war, is generally regarded by those to the manner born as a purely American custom known and observed only in our beloved country. This is an error. The Mexicans keep an annual decoration day which is even more elaborate and extended in its celebration than ours. Upon the annual recurrence of that day the graves of the American soldiers who fell in this lovely valley during our war with Mexico in 1847 are always most generously included in the decoration, as we shall see later. No nation follows more faithfully Mexico the christian precept enjoining us to forgive and love our enemies. I have said that the Mexican Decoration Day is more elaborate and extended in its celebration than ours, for the reason that the Mexicans not only adorn with floral tributes the graves of their fallen soldiers but also deposit them upon the last resting-place of all their loved ones, irrespective of sex, age or occupation, because instead of being limited to one day, like our observance, that of the Mexicans is prolonged for a period of three nights and two days. The difference in the climate and the time of year at which flowers are most abundant also cause Mexico's Decoration Day to be kept at a different season from ours.

The observance practically begins on the night of October 31 at about 7 p. m., and about that hour on the last day of last October I found myself mingled with a crowd of people who were pouring along the Calle de San Francisco into the Plaza Mayor, within whose elegant zocolo a government military band was sending forth strains of delicious music. Both the Plaza Mayor and the Plaza de La Constitucion presented a most brilliant sight. They had been converted into a temporary fair ground crowded with innumerable booths which

offer for sale the strangest commodities that ever merchant dealt in. Everything sold is emblematic of death and decay. There are immense piles of candy skulls, in some of which have been placed miniature wax candles, whose light shining through the toothless jaws and eyeless sockets of crystallized sugar produces a most ghastly effect. There are skeletons of every imaginable size and material upon the counter of every booth, some of them poor, cheap affairs of paper, many of candy, and others elaborately constructed of wood and jointed so that the pulling of a string causes them to dance and caper in a weirdly comical way. Some of them were fantastically dressed like ballet dancers and were surrounded by groups of candy tombs and sepulchres. Students of old English customs have heard of "soul cakes," a sort of bun which good natured people used to prepare in large quantities to give to children who went about from house to house at this time of year singing a song and demanding a soul cake as a reward, but the booths in the Plaza Mayor on that eve of the Decoration Day celebration offered for sale soul cakes which, for appropriateness and elaborate design, threw those of old England completely into the shade. They consisted of three layers of cake so placed as to form three steps, covered with white icing, and leading up to a chocolate cross at the extremity of the topmost layer or step. Upon each of the other layers there was some design in chocolate intended to remind the purchaser of the solemn occasion which the cake was meant to commemorate, such as skulls, bones and coffins.

Catafalques made of wood and painted black, from six inches to two and a half feet in height and from three inches to two feet square, were also a highly popular article of merchandise. Some of them consisted of several platforms rising one above the other, elaborately draped with black cloth and emblazoned in gilt with crosses, skulls and coffins.

Besides the booths, there are numerous open air kitchens, whence the tempting display of edibles is constantly being replenished, and where stout, swarthy young women, their well-rounded neck and arms displayed to the best advantage by the low-necked, short-sleeved chemise, which is their only garment above the waist, are busily engaged in compounding, trying, oiling and baking those fearfully and wonderfully made dishes in which the Mexican palate delights.

But most interesting of all sights are the people themselves. Though the occasion is intended to be a solemn one, and one would think the display of such wares as I have described above calculated to strongly emphasize its solemnity, yet the shouts and vociferations of the light-hearted crowd and their boundings and gambols in the shadow of the grand old cathedral, which for over 200 years has stood at the head of the plaza, were such as might at first have led one to think that the inmates of that philanthropic establishment, the Casa de Locos (Lunatic Asylum), had forced bolts and bars and exchanged their straight waistcoats for others of a more elastic and becoming model, while above all arose from the zocolo strains of such music as we seldom or never hear in the States; for the playing of a Mexican government military band is a revelation of the possibilities of such an organization.

All that night and during the succeeding day and night the preparatory festivities—if I may so designate them—of the annual Decoration Day are steadily continued. With the dawn of Decoration Day proper, which was November 2, came crowds of people laden with flowers; and from the first streak of daylight until dusk the cemeteries of San Fernando and Dolores, and the French, English and American burying-grounds are crowded with those who come to visit and decorate the graves of their dead. Many of those earth mounds have been wholly concealed by flowers, and the entire enclosures of the cemeteries have presented the appearance of one vast flower bed whose delicious perfumes have completely filled the air. Flowers are so marvelously cheap here that it costs but a trifle to place them upon many graves. In the flower market that Decoration Day morning I was offered rosebud bouquets which in the States at that time of year would have been worth about thirty dollars for "quatro reales" (fifty cents), and the vendor, when I showed no disposition to purchase, dropped to "dos reales" (twenty five cents). Finding that even this liberal reduction failed to attract attention he desired me to name my own price. Elaborate floral designs, such as would cost several dollars at home, may be purchased here for a few cents.

One of a colossal heart, made entirely of the finest white roses—Niphetos—which would have cost in the States at least twenty dollars, was offered me first for "sair reales" (seventy-five cents) and finally at my own price. Mexican residents tell me that flowers were formerly much cheaper than at present, the loud expressions of surprise at their cheapness made by American tourists and their readiness to pay without question the sum first asked by the dealers having considerably advanced prices.

Dolores, the principal cemetery of Mexico, and the one in which the most elaborate floral display is made, is a burial place of great beauty and extent. It is as tastefully laid out and has as many and as handsome monuments, grave-stones and mausoleums as the average cemetery in our large American cities. San Francisco (St. Francis) is also a large and handsome city of the dead and the floral display made there on Decoration Day is likewise elaborate and beautiful. In the American cemetery in which, though not nearly so large and ornamental as those just mentioned, there is "good, snug lying," as Sir Lucius O'Trigger says, there are buried 750 American soldiers who fell on the battle fields of Contreras, Churubusco, El Molino del Rey and Chapultepec, among the most famous and bloody battle fields of that war which gave to the United States the rich prizes of California and New Mexico.

Over those dead heroes, sleeping their last sleep in a foreign land, a handsome monument has been erected to commemorate their deeds of valor. On every Decoration Day their last resting place is literally covered with flowers, while innumerable floral designs of rare beauty adorn their monument. It was with great pleasure that I saw many of these floral tributes placed there by the people of that nation by whose hand my countrymen had fallen. It was a striking proof that the fierce enmity of nearly half a century ago had been replaced by friendliness and good will.