

EDITORIALS.

MEMOIRS OF U. S. GRANT.

THE "Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant" is likely to have a very extensive sale, being in the strictest sense a national work, having a national character for its central figure. It opens with an account of the author's ancestry, and follows with a narrative of his life, from his birth almost to the closing scene of his remarkable career. From the advance sheets, the character of the work throughout can be estimated. It is "A plain unvarnished tale" of a life of great interest. The absence of high literary finish in the narrative does not cause a deterioration of the story, but otherwise. The simplicity of diction inspires all the more confidence in the strict veracity of the matter, whose vigor is increased rather than diminished by the appearance of no effort at adornment.

The fact that the work was written after the General was seized with his last illness, and produced by him while he was fighting his last battle under the conviction that he was soon to succumb to the common enemy, lends it an additional interest. It was intended by him to be a legacy to those whom he should leave behind, as a means of material support.

The San Francisco Chronicle tells how subscriptions can be given to authorized agents for the "Memoirs" so that the family of General Grant will surely derive a benefit:

"The only authorized agents on this coast for the 'Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant' are J. Dewing & Co. of 420 Bush Street, this city. They have sent out an army of agents, each of whom is provided with a prospectus giving sample pages of the book, with illustrations and different styles of binding. Each is also furnished with a contract book in which the subscriber binds himself to pay a certain sum to J. Dewing & Co. on the delivery of each volume. No agent can solicit subscriptions for the genuine work who does not possess a book of these blank contracts bearing the name of Dewing & Co., and if any one who has subscribed for the work receives it from any other firm than the one named he may know that there is something spurious about it. Mr. Dewing says that the work of canvassing is going on rapidly. Many agents report that they secured twenty subscribers on the first day, and that the demand for the work exceeded their most sanguine expectations. In fact, the great sale of Blaine's history will be surpassed by this work of Grant. The first volume will be ready for delivery about the Christmas holidays, while it is expected the second volume will appear about the first of March.

MODERN WARFARE.

In view of the inspired predictions which have been uttered in regard to a time coming when peace shall be withdrawn from the nations of the earth and the spirit of warfare poured out until every man's hand shall be against his neighbor, a believer in them can scarcely avoid the impression that their fulfillment is near at hand when he reads of the growing antagonism and desperation in various nations, and also with the horrors of that time when it does come, as he reads of the progress being made in devising death-dealing agents. During the last half century especially man's ingenuity has been taxed to the utmost in this latter direction, until now the methods resorted to in ancient warfare appear childish and harmless compared with the vastly more effective means of destroying life which are now known to mankind. To the advancement made in the science of chemistry more than to that in the line of mechanics is due perhaps the changes that have been wrought. The new explosives that have been discovered during recent years and the new applications for them which are being continually devised, tend to show more every day the impotency of ordinary defensive measures when they have to cope with them. The heaviest battlements and the stoutest armor are powerless to resist their terrible effects, and the subtle manner in which they can be used renders them all the more appalling to contemplate. War now, with the use of these terrible explosives would be a very different thing even to what it was during the great civil conflict in this nation a little more than a score of years since. We alluded recently to a proposition which had been made, and which is declared to be quite feasible, of spreading death among an enemy in a fortified camp, city or elsewhere, by dropping torpedoes from balloons, the effect of which can be readily imagined. Almost equally terrible are the effects produced by firing explosive shells prepared according to recently discovered methods. The *Age of Steel* gives an account of experiments recently made, under the direction of a military committee, in firing shells charged with nitro-gelatin.

Four shots were fired with six-inch shell carrying 11-pound bursting charges of nitro-gelatin, which contain 95 per cent. of pure nitro-glycer-

ine. The range was 1,000 yards, the target was a perpendicular ledge of solid trap rock on the south bank of the Potomac. The first shot shattered the rock for a radius of thirty feet and hurled tons of rock in the air. The second shot tore out the rock for 25 feet in diameter, and six feet deep in the face of the ledge. This would amount to over 200 tons of rock, removed by a single shot from the face of the cliff. The experts expressed their belief that either shot would have wrecked any ship afloat, and would have annihilated any wooden ship. The safety of the system also seems to have been fully established."

If the foregoing be true, it may readily be seen how useless as a means of protection it will be to plate ships with iron or steel, and indeed, how unnecessary it is to construct very heavy guns, when a shot of this kind fired from a small gun is sufficient to destroy almost any obstruction which men can invent. War with such means as these mentioned and others equally horrifying that might be mentioned, would simply be wholesale destruction and slaughter.

LETTER FROM OLD MEXICO.

GARDENS OF TEXCOCO—USES OF THE MAGUEY PLANT—NATURAL AND ARTIFICIAL BEAUTIES—BATHS OF MONTEZUMA—CORTEZ' CANAL, ETC.

CITY OF MEXICO,
August 8, 1885.

Editor Deseret News:

Having visited most of the leading places of interest in and near the City of Mexico, (many of which have already been described by other correspondents to the News) my friends and I concluded, a few days ago, to take a trip to the celebrated

GARDENS OF TEXCOCO,

which are situated about 40 miles almost east of here. About 8 o'clock in the morning we boarded the train for Texcoco, and reached that place after a pleasant ride of an hour and a half.

Texcoco, at present, does not differ materially from other large cities of this Republic, though for ages, and before the Spanish sword wrought such changes in America, it took the lead in art, literature and civilization, and has been justly styled the "Athens of the Western Continent."

It was founded even before the City of Mexico, by the Tezcuicans, a nation of the same great family with the Aztecs, whom they rivaled in power, and greatly surpassed in intellectual culture. It was the capital of a flourishing nation whose laws and general scheme of government were much in advance of those of its contemporaries, and who boasted of a long and uninterrupted line of sovereigns, some of whom, though spoken of in history as heathens, idolaters and barbarians, displayed qualities which would do credit to crowned heads of our enlightened age.

During the conquest it shared the same fate as its neighbors and lost its individuality in the amalgamation of nations which followed.

The historic gardens are situated about three miles from the city of Texcoco, and as there were no conveyances to be hired at the depot, the four youngest of the party (including myself) decided to start out at once and walk over, while the remainder waited until one of their number could go up town and procure a carriage, when they followed.

The road leading to the gardens passed through several extensive "Mexican vineyards," or fields of

THE WONDERFUL "MAGUEY" PLANT, whose chief use at the present time is for the manufacture of pulque, the favorite drink of the Mexicans. We had an excellent opportunity of seeing the plant in its various stages of growth, and the manner in which the sap is extracted from its large succulent leaves.

The maguey is closely allied to, if not identical with, the renowned century plant, and in colder climates is said to blossom but once in a hundred years, though here it matures in much less time. Its trunk is often two feet in diameter, and its broad thick leaves—the only branches the plant has—are from seven to ten feet long and weigh from forty to fifty pounds each.

When about ten years of age the centre seed stalk begins to develop. This is the signal for the husbandman to tap the life-blood of the plant, and with dextrous hand he reaches in among the thorny leaves and cuts out the seed-stalk as low down as possible, leaving a basin-like cavity into which the sap from the leaves gradually collects. This juice is a clear, sweet liquid, and is removed at frequent intervals by workmen who scrape out the cavity at each visit with an iron instrument to keep the plant "bleeding."

The sap is taken to a kind of a distillery, where it undergoes fermentation, and comes out a whitish, rosey, intoxicating beverage, having an odor that is very disagreeable to those unaccustomed to its use. It is then put into curious bottles made of the skins of animals, whose bodies have been skillfully removed, leaving the hide almost whole, and is ready for market. It is said to be a very wholesome drink when used in moderation, and thousands of gallons are sold daily in Mexico. A single plant will produce about two gallons a day for as many months as it has been years in maturing—usually from seven to ten.

The maguey is also put to

OTHER AND PERHAPS BETTER USES.

Its leaves, when bruised, form a pulp from which paper is made. They also yield a strong fibre which is manufactured into sewing thread, waxed-ends, cords and ropes of all sizes, as well as a very durable kind of cloth resembling coarse linen, and a heavier variety similar to burlap, though much stronger. Many kinds of brushes, mats, saddle pads and other useful articles are also made from these fibres.

The leaves at certain stages of growth are used as fodder for animals, and the trunk when properly cooked forms a very palatable food for man.

The leaves also form an impenetrable thatch for the humble dwellings, as well as affording the inmates an acceptable fuel; while pins and needles are made from the hard, tough thorns that line their edges. In short, this miracle of nature combines in itself food, drink, clothing and shelter for man, besides materials for an almost endless variety of articles for his comfort and convenience.

At length we all reached our destination and were admitted by the gate-keeper into

THE CELEBRATED GARDENS.

They are situated on and around a conical hill of considerable height, and surrounded as far as we could see by a high stone wall of solid masonry.

The history of this spot dates back almost to time immemorial, as it was the favorite rural retreat of the kings and lords of Texcoco for ages before the Conquest. Since that time it has been the country residence of various noblemen and wealthy citizens, and surely a more pleasant and picturesque spot could not have been found for the construction of a tropical Eden! Its rare natural advantages for such a purpose were fully appreciated by its ancient possessors, who expended much treasure in rendering it one of the most magnificent and delightful retreats imaginable, and their modern successors have not been backward in following their example, as evidences of care, labor, and skill are still manifest on every hand.

Turning to the right as we entered the gates, we were conducted through

A GRIST MILL

of modern construction, run by water—quite a rarity in this region where water power is scarce and most of the corn is still ground by hand, in the most primitive manner, between two stones—and on making our exit, emerged at once into the beautiful and renowned gardens.

Passing along the path which leads from the mill, the eye is delighted with the profusion of beautiful objects that it meets on every hand. On the left, and partly surrounded by a cleanly-swept walk of cement, stands a very pretty, though somewhat quaint residence, which extends backward into the hill. As we stood a few moments admiring its curious style of architecture, with its balconies, porticoes, small, old-fashioned doors and windows, and high stone walls surrounded by battlements, visions of the

ANCIENT ROYAL PALACE

which perhaps occupied the same spot, flitted through our minds. We thought of the many warlike lords who had successively occupied the palace, their rude though luxurious mode of life, the feats of chivalry they had performed, and the many magnificent feasts and banquets they had held there in olden times. From the large trees whose dense foliage overshadows this dwelling we could easily imagine that the great forests that once surrounded this spot for many miles, and formed the favorite hunting-grounds of Montezuma, were still waving in the breeze and affording protection to the numerous wild animals that claimed them for their homes. But, alas! the ruthless hand of the Spaniard, as soon as this fair land came under his control, wantonly destroyed these grand old forests wherever they were found, simply to render the landscape—if we may believe the historian—similar to that of his own Castile, whose most striking feature is barrenness. Little did he dream of the inconvenience which this thoughtless whim is now causing his descendants. Wood is an exceedingly scarce and expensive article in Mexico.

As we ceased our reveries and continued our ramble over the smooth and well-kept walks, which were sometimes straight, sometimes crooked, now passing between level closely-cut lawns, then over small hills and through grassy ravines, our fancies were delighted with the variety and harmonious arrangement of the countless flowers, shrubs, and trees with which art had embellished nature already grand.

Geraniums, a small house plant at home, here reach ten feet in height, while fuschias, callalies, hyacinths and other flowers grow with equal luxuriance. The tall cypress, cedar and other trees, with their immense trunks dressed in thick robes of ivy, seemed to tower almost to the skies on either side of the path, while a variety of feathered songsters flitted among the branches and did their utmost to add to our enjoyment.

We followed the windings of this path until we reached the summit of the hill, where we rested a short time in a neat rustic arbor, and commented upon the unsurpassed loveliness of our surroundings, and expressed many a wish that our friends in Utah could share our day's pleasure with us.

A cool spring of considerable size bubbled up near where we sat, and in reply to my expression of astonish-

ment at seeing a spring on the top of a hill, one of the company dryly remarked: "In Mexico people

CLIMB FOR WATER, AND DIG FOR WOOD."

I had seen many things in this country that are quite contrary to what I had been accustomed, but I was hardly prepared for such an assertion. The proof of part of it, however, was before my eyes, and I afterwards learned that in many parts of Mexico the root of the mesquit tree is used for fuel. The water from this spring is conveyed in pipes to various parts of the gardens below, the pressure being sufficient to supply a number of beautiful fountains.

Having climbed the hill on the north side we concluded to descend on the south, the path winding somewhat to the west. As had been the case in our ascent, new surprises met us at every turn of the path, and many were the expressions of admiration elicited by novel and ever varying scenes presented.

Our descent was much more abrupt and rugged than had been the path we climbed; in fact, the hill on this side is very irregular and steep, and terminates in an almost perpendicular cliff of rocks, at the foot of which runs a small mountain stream.

THE DEEP GORGE

occupied by this miniature river, however, gave evidence that it had not always been a quiet murmuring brook, and might at any time be converted into a mighty, rushing torrent by the heavy rains which sometimes fall in this climate during the wet season.

Notwithstanding the rough surface of this side, broken as it is by numberless huge, angular stones that lie half embedded in the hill, it had not been abandoned to despair; but, on the contrary, had been rendered even more picturesque if possible than the other side. Great pains had been taken to render every little nook and corner the receptacle of some handsome tropical tree, shrub, or flower, which was nursed with skill and care; and even the crevices, and small angular recesses in the solid rocks were made to contribute to the attractiveness of the place, by sustaining small plants which drew their nourishment from a handful of dirt deposited there by the gardener when nature had not already done so. In short, advantage had been studiously taken of every opportunity to render the gardens beautiful. Labor, skill and money had been lavished upon the place, and not in vain, for the effect produced was truly wonderful and magnificent.

A rocky, rugged and comparatively barren, though picturesque hill, is here converted into an ideal Eden. The natural romantic appearance of the place, the historical associations connected with it, the climate of perpetual spring, and the tropical vegetation, together with the efforts of the most skilled gardeners for ages, all conspire to make the visitor believe that he is sojourning in some beautiful fairy land.

We had descended about half way down the hill when an abrupt turn in the path brought us to an opening in the dense foliage, and

THE CROWNING PICTURE

of the whole place suddenly burst into view. On a flat, horizontal ledge, or terrace-like shelf, which projected from the cliff on the opposite side of the stream before mentioned, stood one of the most picturesque and beautiful chapels imaginable. An iron foot-bridge spanned the chasm and hung some twenty feet above the stream, connecting the ledge with the gardens just below where we stood.

Crossing this bridge we entered the open door of the chapel and found that the irregular, though almost perpendicular precipice, had been utilized as the south wall of the building, while a huge, natural projection from the cliff formed most of the east end. The other walls were constructed of a beautiful light grey stone, skillfully chiseled. A substantial roof, surmounted by a belfry containing three bells, covered the whole. The irregular walls erected by nature retained their original shape and color inside, as neither chisel nor whitewash brush had changed their appearance in the least, and the dusky hue of the dark porphyry made a most striking contrast with the white marble floor and elegantly painted walls on the opposite side.

The interior of this half cave, half palace, was decorated with images, pictures, flowers and other ornaments usually found in Catholic churches, and the strange and peculiar effect produced almost baffles description. The pillars, arches, altar, pulpit, etc. were all made of stone, as were also most of the images. Embedded in the wall at the northwest corner of the chapel was a large ancient Aztec stone of dark porphyry covered with curious hieroglyphics, while in the opposite corner was one of marble bearing the Spanish coat of arms and some inscriptions. They are doubtless valuable curiosities, but having no guide we were unable to learn anything of their history.

Leaving the chapel we recrossed the bridge and visited the celebrated

"BATHS OF MONTEZUMA,"

as the natives call them, though history tells us they were excavated by one of the kings of Texcoco, and there is no evidence that Montezuma ever used them. They consist of a large cavity which has been excavated in the solid porphyry, and filled with water. This is surrounded on one side by a dense

foliage, and on the other by a cliff some twelve or fifteen feet high, from the top of which a copious stream of water flows into the basin below. This arrangement enables the bather to avail himself of a plunge or a shower bath at pleasure. An angular cavern-like dressing room extends back into the cliff, from the entrance of which a flight of stone steps, also cut out of the solid rock, extends down into the water. It is a delightful bathing place and worthy the king who made it.

Having spent several hours in the gardens and visited all the most interesting features, we retraced our steps to the gate of entrance, where we found a conveyance waiting to take us back to Texcoco. It was a large two-wheeled Mexican

BURRO CART,

and as the two most honored (as well as most corpulent) members of the company stepped into the hind end, they almost raised the little donkeys in front, off their feet. At last we all got in, and after a careful adjustment of the avoirdupois, started back to the city, where we arrived after a "bouncing" ride, which we will all remember.

As the train would not leave for the City of Mexico for several hours, we ordered dinner at a restaurant in Texcoco, and while it was preparing—which took about two hours—a number of the company visited the famous

CANAL DUG BY CORTEZ

for the purpose of launching his thirteen ships—the first fleet that ever sailed on American waters—preparatory to his renowned siege of the City of Mexico. The vessels had been constructed in separate parts at Tlascala, and brought on the backs of friendly Indians to Texcoco, a distance of about 60 miles, there to be put together and launched. He feared to take them nearer the lake to put them together and launch them lest the Aztecs should overpower the workmen and guard and destroy the vessels, so he sought the sheltering walls of Texcoco and there had them put together. He then employed 20,000 men for eight months to dig this canal down to the lake, thus enabling him to launch his fleet right in the city. There is nothing striking about this canal now. It is partially filled with dirt and a rank growth of weeds, and is used for a kind of a drain in the absence of a better system of sewerage.

Our trip home was a very interesting one, during which we got our first good view of the

HOARY-HEADED VOLCANO,

Popocatepetl, and its gigantic snow-capped mate, Iztaccihuatl, the two colossal sentinels between which Cortez with his little army first entered the beautiful valley of Mexico in 1519. As it did not happen to be cloudy in the evening, as is generally the case during the rainy season, we also got an excellent view of the "Southern Cross," a constellation in the far off southern skies that corresponds with the "Big Dipper," in the north.

Very respectfully,

HORACE CUMMINGS.

DEPRESSION OF BRITISH TRADE.

SENATOR EDMUNDS has been on a brief visit to England. Since he returned he has expressed himself on the decline of British trade and manufactures, and the consequent appalling distress among the masses of the people. He flippantly asserts the cause to be over-production, and appears to be inclined to the idea that the remedy lies in a protective tariff.

The real cause is the practical shutting out of British wares from the markets of the world. Over production is therefore but an effect of the real source of the mischief. Were the markets of the globe open, as of yore to the products of the "Tight Little Isle," her producing capacity would be barely equal to the demands upon her manufacturing resources. She will never regain the prestige which so long made her mistress of the manufactures as well as the commerce of the world. Her ailment is beyond all cure, for in every port she is confronted with competitors in the contest with whom she has not the ghost of a chance.

The United States was formerly a source of wealth to Great Britain, because Americans were liberal purchasers of her wares. Now she is shut off by two powerful barriers—a protective tariff and the growth of manufactures upon a liberal soil where every species of raw material abounds in profusion. The latter condition would be sufficient without the tariff, to keep her manufacturing products out of this country. For instance, when American calicoes can be laid down in Manchester at half a cent a yard cheaper than they can be made in England, what chance would that country have on this side of the Atlantic in that line? And other classes of goods are gradually approaching the same comparative ratio. So that not only is this nation practically closed to English manufactures, but the United States is one of her gigantic and successful competitors in all the markets of the globe. Other countries are also gaining ground upon her in the same direction, so that the prospects are fair for British merchants to exclaim in despair before many years—"Behold there are none to buy, our merchandise."