

Indian Dances in Yucatan.

From time to time, during such festivals as the Izamal fair, carnival, and the like, an opportunity offers itself for learning something about the old customs of the aborigines. The Indians still remember some dances of their ancestors, as well as a few ceremonies, which they perform on the sly, because formerly the Spaniards punished them for what they called idolatrous and superstitious rites.

One of their dances, called Ixtol, is especially interesting, being a vestige of sun-worship. Men and women take part in the dance; provided the number of each is equal, it matters not how many. All have on masks, anciently well made, to-day mere square pieces of deer-skin with three holes cut for eyes and mouth. Often these holes are so much awry as to produce a most ludicrous appearance, and none can guess what the features beneath may be like. All wear sandals. The women have necklaces, principally of large red beads, and ear-rings, formerly nose-rings too, but since the conquest these have been prohibited. The chief, or master, as they call him, wears a circular cap, studded all round with peacock's feathers, making a lofty, waving head-dress. In front of him, from his waist, hangs a representation of the sun. In its center is an eye, inclosed by a triangle, from which depends a large tongue. All these things are symbols of most ancient freemasonry. One carries a white flag with a sun painted on it and a man and woman worshiping it. Another has a sacracon, a kind of drum, used also in Africa; another flute; another a sistrum, a sacred instrument among the ancient Egyptians. With the sistrum he beats time for the dancers. In the other hand he has a small three-tailed whip, calling to mind the Egyptian flagellum of Osiris. This is to chastise the dancers if they step badly. A necklace of large sea-shells hangs half-way to his waist.

Each dancer has in the left hand a fan made of turkey feathers, with the bird's claw for handle. In the right hand each has a sistrum, not quite like those used by the Egyptians, but exactly like those of Central Africa, as described by Du Chaillu. Those in Yucatan are made of small calabashes ornamentally painted, and secured to the handle by pieces of bamboo: they have pebbles inside to rattle. The flag is held upright by the bearer or planted in the ground. Beneath it sits the drummer, cross-legged, his drum on the ground before him. Close to the flag-staff stands the master, the conductor, and the flute-player. With the flag for center, the dancers go round three times, bodies bent forward and eyes on the ground, as if groping in the dark; the drum meanwhile beats a peculiar quickstep. Then the flag is unfurled—the sun appears! All draw themselves up to their fullest height, and raise eyes and hands with a shout of joy. Then the dance commences round and round the flag with various steps and motions, at the same time energetic and solemn, imitating the course and movements of our planet, among other things. Meanwhile the chief sings, and the people answer in chorus, over and over again the same thing, in Maya tongue:

Chief—Take care how you step.
Dancers—We step well, O master.

The melody is both mournful and stirring. The rattling of the sistrum is very effective, now imitating the scattering of grain, now, by a sudden movement of every arm, giving forth one mighty rattle as of a sudden rain-fall and clap of thunder, together with a shout raised by the dancers after each chorus is sung. The fans are kept in motion as symbolic of the wind.

There is a pig's-head festival, now much fallen into disuse. At a certain season of the year the head is cooked, decorated with many colored ribbons and flowers, and with an orange between its jaws, placed upon an altar prepared for the occasion by a man who dances meanwhile. In this manner it is borne by a procession of people to some chosen individual. Various other presents are also given, such as fowls, cigars, sweet-bread, and so forth. The more numerous the gifts, the worse it is for the recipient, because on the following year he is expected to give just twice the amount received.—Alice D. le Plongeon, in Harper's Magazine.

History of Letter Postage.

It will probably surprise some of our readers to be told that it is only since 1863 that the postage rate on letters in the United States has been uniform for all distances. The first postage law, that of 1792, fixed the rates according to distance, and according to the number of pieces of paper.

A "single letter" was one piece of paper. Envelopes were wholly unknown. The sheet of paper was folded and the address written on the back of it. For a single letter sent a distance of thirty miles or less, the rate was 6 cents. This rate was increased to 8 cents for distances of sixty miles or less; to 10 cents for 100 miles or less, and so on.

For every single letter sent over 450 miles, the rate was 25 cents. The distance from New York to Buffalo by the Central Railroad is only eight miles short of that distance and the postage on a letter between the two cities would have been 22 cents.

The system was continued with unimportant changes, which increased rather than reduced postage, until the year 1845, when a part of the present system came into use. A letter which weighed less than one-half ounce was to be deemed a single letter. The postage was made uniform at 5 cents for distances under 300 miles, and 10 cents for all greater distances.

In 1845 prepaid single letters were charged with 3 cents postage, and letters on which the receiver paid the

postage, with 5 cents, for all distances under 3,000 miles; double rates for greater distances—which referred only to letters sent to and from California.

In 1855 prepayment of postage was made compulsory, and the rate was fixed at 3 cents for less than 3,000, and 10 cents for all over 3,000 miles.

Finally, in 1863, the uniform rate of 3 cents was fixed.—*Youth's Companion*.

MR. E. R. HOYT, a mechanical engineer at the New Orleans Exposition, was severely injured by a huge derrick pole falling on his foot. He was conveyed to his residence, and, after only three applications of St. Jacobs Oil, all the swelling and pain disappeared, and he resumed his duties.

The Writer of Junius.

It seems strange that a love-letter should supply another link in fixing the authorship of the most scathing invective and the bitterest sarcasm in the language. But there is published at the end of Mr. Chabot's book, as the work of another well-known expert, Mr. Netherclift, the fac-simile of an epistle to a lady, in a disguised upright hand of Junius. It was written at Bath in the winter of 1770 to a Miss Giles, the daughter of one of the officials of the Bank of England, afterward Governor when in the time of Mr. Pitt the bank stopped payment. In those days it was customary at the assembly rooms for a lady to retain her partner during the whole of the evening, and for several evenings Mr. Francis and Miss Giles danced together. The result of it was a very tolerable copy of verses, delivered to Miss Giles with an anonymous letter, wherein the writer declared that, having found the verses, which were unaddressed, he could not conceive for whom they were meant unless for her. At the time the young lady suspected the author, but said nothing, and it was not till years afterward, when, though the wife of Mr. King, of Taplow, she still kept the papers, that a scrap of Junius' writing was being handed round the company in which she happened to be. "Why," exclaimed Mrs. King, when the paper came to her, "I know that writing. The person who wrote that wrote me some verses and a letter." And on comparison, though the verses were plainly by another hand, the letter was as plainly in the hand of Junius. The verses, Sir Philip's composition, were afterward proved to have been dictated to his friend Tilghman, who spent the winter of 1770 with him at Bath, in one of whose letters from America part of a verse is jokingly quoted, in proof of Francis' capacity for poetry of the highest order. That Sir Philip publicly and in the strongest terms denied the authorship is very well known, but by the denial one is only reminded of the reply said to have been made under similar circumstances by the author of "Ecce Homo": "Why, if I had written it, you know I should certainly say I hadn't."—*The Cornhill Magazine*.

Facts for Tourists and Emigrants.

Whether for the tourist, bent on pleasure or business, or the emigrant seeking a far Western home, Hostetter's Stomach Bitters is the best protector against the hurtful influences of climatic changes or malaria; the most reliable medicine for general use he can possibly carry with him. It nullifies the effect of sudden changes of temperature, braces the system against the enfeebled influence of excessive heat, prevents injurious consequences from a change of diet or of using bad food or water, is a fine resuscitant of physical energy diminished by the fatigues of traveling, and tends to contract the effects of exposure in rough weather; it is a specific and sovereign remedy used by mariners and others whose out-door life and arduous labor expose them unusually. It is, moreover, of great service as a preventive and curative of disorder of the stomach, liver, bowels, and as a general tonic.

The Ear's Capacity.

It has been found by Dr. Lawson Tait that, as a rule, the ear in women can perceive higher notes—that is, sounds with greater number of vibrations per second—than the ear in men. The highest limit of and ability for the human ear is somewhere between 41,000 and 42,000 vibrations. The ears of most persons seem to be unequally sensitive to acute sounds, the right ear usually hearing a higher note than the left. To show the ear's range, it may be added that very low notes of about fifteen vibrations per second may be perceived, but when the vibrations become a little slower they cease to produce the effect of a continuous sound, and each gives a separate impression upon the ear.

Bartholdi's Statue of "Liberty Enlightening the World"

will be a reminder of personal liberty for ages to come. On just as sure a foundation as Dr. Pierce's "Golden Medical Discovery" been placed, and it will stand through the cycles of time as a monument to the physical emancipation of thousands, who by its use have been relieved from consumption, consumptive night sweats, bronchitis, coughs, spitting of blood, weak lungs, and other throat and lung affections.

A DOUBTFUL state—wondering whether she will accept him or not.

"That Miss Jones is a nice-looking girl, isn't she?"

"Yes, and she'd be the belle of the town if it wasn't for one thing."

"What's that?"

"She has catarrh so bad it is unpleasant to be near her. She has tried a dozen things, and nothing helps her. I am sorry, for I like her, but that doesn't make it any less disagreeable for one to be around her."

Now if she had used Dr. Sage's Catarrh Remedy, there would have been nothing of the kind said, for it will cure catarrh every time.

When the baseball pitcher goes too often to the soda fountain he is sure to get busted.

Horsford's Acid Phosphate,

ONE OF THE BEST TONICS.

Dr. A. Atkinson, Prof. Materia Medica and Dermatology, in College of Physicians and Surgeons, Baltimore, Md., says: "It makes a pleasant drink, and is one of our best tonics in the shape of the phosphates in soluble form."

MR. GILL'S DAUGHTER.

Poor Katie! A great sufferer she was, and most patiently did she endure in the hope that at last her suffering would come to an end. She was just budding into womanhood; a fine-looking girl of nearly nineteen, who had, previous to her attack of illness, enjoyed robust health.

Let her mother tell the story, as she told it to two of our editorial friends who recently spent an evening at the house.

"Katie's illness came on slowly, with great pain in her thigh and hip. For a while she kept on going to school, but the pains became so severe that she had to stay at home, and most of the time lie down on a little lounge here in the sitting-room. We tried the best physicians we could get. The disease baffled them all. One said it was ulceration of the thigh bone, and wanted to have the poor child undergo a terrible operation. It turned out to be sciatic rheumatism. Poor child! how she did suffer! About four o'clock in the afternoon she would begin screaming with pain. She couldn't help it. She would scream and moan till about four in the morning. Then she would fall asleep from weariness, and sleep for some hours. This went on for about eight months. During the nights neither she nor I could sleep.

"Katie was a great reader. One day in a paper she saw an advertisement of Athiophoros. She asked me to get it and see if it wouldn't cure her. We had tried a good many different things, but I thought we would try this. And I went and got a bottle. I gave her a dose of it toward evening. It was simply wonderful how it quieted the poor child's pain and put her into a gentle sleep. She slept nicely until ten. Then she was in a great perspiration. She waked, and I gave her another dose, for the first had done her so much good. Then she fell asleep again and slept until morning. Her pain was gone. She had hardly any returns of it. The Athiophoros did the work for her most completely.

"But the terrible sciatica had drawn Katie's leg up, and made it shorter than it had been by several inches. She was lame for life, although the rheumatism was all driven out of her. She had to walk on crutches. One day she fell down stairs, and was badly hurt that she had to be taken to the hospital. There she suffered a great deal, and after some weeks he died.

"Father Tschneider, of the Paulist Fathers, saw much of Katie during her illness, and knows all about us. Go and ask him, and he will tell you all about it.

"Some time ago we gave a letter about Katie's case, and it was published. We have had numerous inquiries in reference to all of which we promptly answer.

"I must tell you," continued Mrs. Gill, "of our neighbor, Mrs. Summers, and her eleven-year-old boy. The boy had one of the most terrible attacks of rheumatism I ever knew a boy to have. He had a little Athiophoros left in the bottle from which Katie had taken. I gave it to Mrs. Summers, and she gave it to the child, who was screaming with pain. When Mrs. Summers came home, he was surprised to find the boy sitting up, free from pain, and cheerfully singing. I wish you would go and see them. They live not far from here, on West 12th street, No. 905."

Mr. Gill added in his own behalf:

"I have had a good deal of rheumatism myself, chiefly in my shoulders and arms. But I took Athiophoros and I got rid of the trouble. I did not have to take much, either. I found the medicine acted very quickly."

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