

THE MYSTIC MARDI GRAS

A Great Carnival of Fun, Frolic and Light-heartedness.

SPLENDORS OF REX IN NEW ORLEANS

The Hair Apparent of a Lottery King in the Royal Role—Origin of the Carnival, Its Balls, Processions and Gorgeous Revels.

The Mardi Gras has been celebrated again in New Orleans. To those who have never witnessed this carnival, the term "Mardi Gras" has rather a weird meaning, but to those who have taken part in its celebrations its name is identical with fun, frolic and light-heartedness. It is a time in New Orleans when by general consent the cares and worries of life are thrown off for a day, and when, no matter how dark a cloud may be hanging over the horizon, the eye will not be turned toward it for this short space of time, but will be directed toward the splendor of Rex, Comus and Proteus with their mystic krew. It is in this idea of renouncing freedom from every care that has given this carnival and its revels such popularity.

WHO IS REX? Ever since the celebrations of Mardi Gras have been carried on in New Orleans, this city has been a favorite resort for travelers from every part of our country, who have come here at this time for the purpose of taking part in them. The idea of the whole thing is just this:

Once upon a time it was the custom for the king of a country to go each year to the different cities of his realm for the purpose of noting their progress. These yearly visits were time-consuming, and to his subjects it was a burden, and they were anxious to catch a glimpse of their sovereign as he passed along. Immense banquets were given in his honor by the wealthy, and there were feasts and revels going on everywhere, in which all classes were included. At this time the king, who was always a good one, rewarded those subjects whom he considered faithful by presenting gifts, sent under his signature, with the royal seal attached. This was an inspiration to faithfulness. When this king was coming was never known until the day before he was sighted in the river just a few hours before he landed, and just long enough for the military to turn out to escort him to his stopping place.

This idea is carried out perfectly. The rex of the carnival is chosen from among the prominent men of New Orleans, but whose identity is not known until after his arrival in the city. This mysterious personage always comes in his royal barge off the river, having gone a few miles above New Orleans and taken it for the purpose of carrying out the illusion more completely. Although it is known in this case upon which day he will arrive, it is not known until a few hours before he lands, and he will put in his appearance. It is also never known before what processions the honored sovereign will give to the subjects.

THE MYSTIC CELEBRATIONS. It is interesting, both for itself and as a matter of education, for those who are not familiar with this yearly carnival at New Orleans to read about it, and then know that it is that the people in this part of the country are in the habit of celebrating this occasion, and so I will give a little of the detail of this carnival. The first of the revels was introduced by the French many years ago, and which has been carried on each year since, except during the four years of the war, with increasing splendor on each occasion.

The revels of the Mardi Gras include now four parades. The first is a military procession, the arrival of Rex, and the intention merely to escort him to the place where he is to stay, but after which he mysteriously disappears until time for his procession on the morning of the following day. At the arrival of Rex, after a fine display of military, are carriages containing the visiting dukes who have come with their wives and prominent men from all over Louisiana. The king and his dukes are not dressed in tawdry disguise as might be expected, but in rich costumes of silk, velvet and gold, and are the closest scrutiny under the bright sunlight.

The day is always a pleasant one, for among other blessings the king brings with him fair weather. From this time on until after the Rex ball on the following night the air is filled with the notes of the royal song. "If Ever I Could See the King" the houses and stores of his subjects are decorated with the royal colors, green, purple and yellow.

PROCESSIONS AND HIS GREAT PARADE. The next grand procession to which the people of New Orleans are treated is the appearance of Proteus, the god of changes. The god who upon one occasion may appear as a lizard and on another as a snake, whose scope of disguises is practically unlimited. This procession is one of great splendor, representing some story from mythology.

This year the admiring crowd was treated to a series of floats representing some of the tales and traditions of the Greeks and including the legends of "Asgard and the Gods." Those stories of the wise Odin, the mighty Thor, the beautiful Balin, and the wicked Loki, which are familiar to the Anglo-Saxons, as well as to the Danes and Norsemen.

Perhaps the most striking float was the one picturing the attempt to capture the Fenris wolf. This wolf is the representation of vice and crime, powerful and resistless. He has played a great part in the history of the world, and his name is mentioned in the myths and legends, and it is not until he is found impossible to capture it. In vain did Thor force his chains and in vain did the gods try to bind him with the adamantine rocks. This struggle between the gods and the wolf is the scene depicted upon the float. The gods were all arrayed in their armor, and with the wolf are in the front of the float, while leaning over a rock at the back are two superb maidens watching the combat.

Another interesting float in the Proteus procession was the one of Saga, the Goddess of History. It is the one who has collected all the myths and legends, and it is not until she is found impossible to capture it. In vain did Thor force his chains and in vain did the gods try to bind him with the adamantine rocks. This struggle between the gods and the wolf is the scene depicted upon the float. The gods were all arrayed in their armor, and with the wolf are in the front of the float, while leaning over a rock at the back are two superb maidens watching the combat.

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translated, and is the symbol of good times, plenty to eat and general rejoicing. It refers to the time when Mardi Gras was started, and the custom almost as old as time itself, when the devotees, dressed in the wicker cities of Italy and Greece plunged for days into the wildest feasting and revelry, when they would drink and riot until the whole populace were nearly mad with excitement. At this time the fatted beef was sacrificed, and it has since been the symbol of all kinds of wild revelry.

This year the following floats told stories from fairy land, and had many scenes from the history of the world, calculated to please young and old. Rex smiled graciously on his applauding people as he passed along, and in some cases presents and boxes of candy were cast off the floats to honored members of the crowd. Especial demonstrations were made in front of the Boston Club house, where Miss Lydia Fairchild, the queen of the carnival, was seated. The king and mystic krew disappeared mysteriously after this procession, and they would be seen again until the arrival of the Rex ball in the evening. Rex this year was Mr. Frank T. Howard, son of the lottery king.

THE COMUS PROCESSION. On the evening of Mardi Gras the last great procession of pageants passes through the streets of New Orleans. This year Comus, the god of revelry and mirth, the god who never grows old, was accompanied by representations of popular songs. These floats were particularly brilliant and appealed especially to the popular taste. The song of the southland, "Dixie," was the best of all, the old plantation negro, the melon and the sugar cane were all depicted.

Another float, one of the prettiest in all of the Comus procession, was the "Indian's Death Song." This represented three Indians in beautiful costumes in a boat speeding over the river of death to the "happy hunting grounds." They are proud and great and their forefathers who rejoice in the sun, hang over them. They flourish their tomahawks and implements of war, and although the ordeal of death is a terrible one, still as in the song, they have "ascended to fear."

THE BALLS. The old French opera house in New Orleans is a historical place. Here for generations the grandmothers and grandfathers of Creole blood have come in costume complete to celebrate the grand arrival of Rex and his crew into the city. The balls of Proteus and Comus are very select, invitations being issued with great care and are not transferable. At this last rule is broken and the person whose name is on the list and who has been invited to attend another ball.

THE ADVENTURES OF JONES—By Hayden Carruth. Cloth, \$1.00. Harper & Bros., New York. From Mcgeath Stationery Company, Omaha.

THE PHANTOMS OF THE FOOT BRIDGE AND OTHER STORIES—By Charles Dyer. Cloth, \$1.50. Harper & Bros., New York. From Mcgeath Stationery Company, Omaha.

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CONCORD'S SAGE AND POET

Emerson Etched as He Appeared in the Midst of His Work.

CONGENIAL FRIENDS IN THE OLD DEN

Edmund Kirke Recalls a Day Spent with the Poet and Philosopher by Himself and Foreythe Willson—An Estimate of His Influence.

(Copyright, 1895.) One morning in the summer of 1865, Foreythe Willson came to me at my house, the "old Coolidge place," in Cambridge, Mass., saying, "I ought to go out to see Emerson, but I want you to go with me. A half hour alone with him would deprive me of the power of speech for a week." It was about 10 o'clock on that morning when, opening a low gateway and passing through a prim, checker-board garden, we stood before the old oaken doorway of Mr. Emerson's residence in the very heart of Concord. The house was of dingy white with green blinds—one of those unightly, packing-box structures that are so common throughout rural New England, and if one's dwelling is an index to one's character, this house indicated that the "poet philosopher" was much more of a philosopher than of a poet. Our summons was answered by a prim looking woman who seemed a queer compound of steel springs, Oswego starch and the neatest of Yankee calico. She ushered us into a broad, roomy hall and left us standing there while she went to get the tea.

FOREYTHE WILLSON'S JUDGMENT OF EMERSON. Emerson, he said, has been judged by incorrect standards—as a poet and philosopher. He is not a cultivated man in the sense of the literary world, but he is a much more than a great spiritual teacher, and so great is the quality in him that it overshadows every other quality. The more he is read, the clearer it appears that he is not a philosopher of the intellect, and the spiritual vision, that enable him to see further and deeper than most men of our time. He is a seer, and he has the literary ability to put his thoughts into words that will bring their way around the world.

Emerson is steadily increasing; and there is not a cultivated man in the country or England who has not, consciously or unconsciously, been made more liberal in thought by the teaching of Emerson. No writer of any prominence has escaped his influence. He speaks from pulpits that oppose and deplore his doctrines. His brilliant points shine in the sentences of his severest critics. His phrases and philosophy are in the air; men cannot escape them. If we look into "Nature" or "The Dial" or "The Atlantic" we shall find on every page thoughts that have become common property, and are quoted daily by writers who have no idea whence they came.

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emerson ideas? I asked. "I once knew one of the great theological lights of New England who bewailed the appearance of 'Nature,' as a fascinating but very dangerous deviation from the path of duty. 'Who was he?' asked Emerson, with some interest. 'Old Dr. Emmons. I found the book on his table during the last year of his life, and you know he lived till he was past 92.' 'Yes, and he was a wonderful old man. I came to the advice he once gave to a young clergyman who had applied to him for instruction about writing his sermons: 'Have something to say, and then say it.' What did he say about 'Nature'?" "I can't recall it all, but I distinctly remember that he quoted against you what Margaret said to Faust: 'What you say sounds very fine, only it nearly kills the priest, told in all different words. For all that you had no Christianity.'"

EMERSON'S CHARM IN CONVERSATION. Then the talk drifted into other channels, and Emerson gave me a mingled history of poetry, proverb and transcendentalism. He was the most earnest of talkers, and we talked his wide renown as a writer in listening to the chat of his own conversation. He seemed to take in the peculiar tastes and prejudices of each of us by a sort of intuition, and he would say, "You are more clearly when they came back to us reflected from his transcendent intellect."

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REST—By William W. Wheeler. Paper, 50 cents. Arena Publishing Company, Boston. THE LONE INN—By Ferguson Hume. Cloth, 32 mo. The Cassell Publishing Company, New York. THE DEGRADATION OF GEOFFREY ALWITH—By Morley Roberts. Paper, 50 cents. Charles H. Sergel Company, Chicago.

HOME GEOGRAPHY—By C. C. Long, Ph.D. Board covers. American Book Company, New York. TRYPHENA IN LOVE—By I. Walter West. Paper, 50 cents. Rand, McNally & Co., Chicago. DOROTHY'S DOUBLE—By G. A. Henly. Paper, 50 cents. Rand, McNally & Co., Chicago. BROTHER OF THE THIRD DEGREE—By W. L. Garver. Paper, 50 cents. Arena Publishing Company, Boston.

LENTEN BREAKFAST DISHES. Creamed Eggs—Boil six eggs for fifteen minutes. Remove the shells, take out the yolks carefully, chop the whites and mix with six yolks of eggs and a tablespoonful of butter in a frying pan and set over the fire, let melt, add a tablespoonful of flower, mix until smooth, then add a cupful of cream and stir until season with salt and pepper, add the whites of the eggs and the mushrooms to the yolks, and let stand one minute. Take up in a heated dish and serve immediately.

Eggs on Toast (a Croque Releve)—Boil six fresh eggs until hard. Take off the shells, peel the whites fine, rub the yolks through a sieve, and set them aside. Put half a pint of milk in a small saucepan and set over the fire, rub a dessertspoonful of butter into a tablespoonful of flour together and stir into the boiling milk; add the minced whites, with salt and pepper. Arrange six slices of hot buttered toast on a dish, cover them with a layer of the sauce, then spread with the mashed yolks; pour over more of the sauce, sprinkle with cheese, and broil in a very hot oven for two or three minutes and serve.

Pyramid of Eggs—Boil a dozen eggs for twenty minutes. Melt a tablespoonful of butter in a frying pan, add a tablespoonful of corn starch and mix until smooth, add a cupful of cream, stir until thick and season; stir until boiling, take from the fire, and set to keep warm. Shell the eggs, cut the whites in thin shreds; chop the yolks, and season, pile them in pyramid shape in the center of a heated dish, arrange the whites in a border around the dish, and cover the hot sauce with the whites. Serve immediately.

Lenten Omelet—Break six eggs in a bowl and beat until mixed; add a tablespoonful of minced onion and a teaspoonful of chopped parsley. Put a small piece of butter in an omelet pan, shake it over the fire until melted, turn the omelet and shake over it with a layer of salt, sprinkle with salt and pepper, and turn out on a hot dish and serve immediately.

Creamed Fish—Boil two pounds of any fine fresh fish. When done pick free of skin and bones and cut in thin shreds; chop the yolks of two eggs, mix with a tablespoonful of butter in a frying pan, set over the fire to melt, add two tablespoonfuls of flour, mix until smooth, thin with a pint of milk, and stir until boiling. Add the fish, with six chopped mushrooms, salt and pepper, stand the pan over boiling water for fifteen minutes. Beat the yolks of one egg, add it to a tablespoonful of chopped parsley, mix well and serve hot.

Lobster Choppe—Take a pint and a half of cold boiled lobster, picked to pieces, season with a tablespoonful of minced parsley, half a grated nutmeg, a little salt and cayenne, and a cupful of milk. Put two table-spoonsful of flour and one of butter together, add to the boiling milk. Beat the hot sauce with a whisk, add the lobster meat, mix well, turn out on a dish to cool. When firm make into chops, fry first in beaten egg, then in cracker crumbs, put in a frying basket and fry in boiling fat until brown. Drain, arrange on a heated dish, garnish with parsley and serve hot.

The faintest underwear is made of nankeen or batiste in white or pale colors and handsomely trimmed with either narrow Valenciennes lace and insertion or Alencon and Venice laces, with much hand embroidery for variety.

Books Received. HIS EGYPTIAN WIFE—By Hilton Hill. Paper, 25 cents. Home Book Company, New York. THE CHRONICLES OF BREAK O' DAY—By E. E. Howe. Paper, 60 cents. Arena Publishing Company, Boston. FROM CHASE & EDDY, OMAHA. UNCLE SAM'S CABINS—By Benjamin Rush Dawson. Paper, 50 cents. The Atlantic Monthly Company, New York. LIFE—By William W. Wheeler. Paper, 50

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THE GREAT Hudsonian LESS OF THE FORMER AND MORE OF THE LATTER THAN IS GENERALLY SUPPOSED. Like all the rest of mankind, the Chinaman has his vices as well as his virtues. But, according to a writer in the Nineteenth Century, while the former are made the most of by his enemies, it is undeniable that the latter are the more numerous. Untrifling industry, patience and perseverance, extreme thrift, the inborn habit and faculty of saving a little day by day, however scanty his earnings, these are the very qualities that have turned against him the hands of men belonging to a less industrious, less frugal, less provident race. The vices of Chinamen are magnified out of all proportion to the seriousness that a pretext may be found for hunting him from the community like a parish dog. Let it be granted, however, that a certain proportion of Chinamen are addicted to the opium habit. My own experience is that not 25 per cent of the Chinese abroad ever use the drug, either to eat it, however scanty his earnings, these are the very qualities that have turned against him the hands of men belonging to a less industrious, less frugal, less provident race. The vices of Chinamen are magnified out of all proportion to the seriousness that a pretext may be found for hunting him from the community like a parish dog. Let it be granted, however, that a certain proportion of Chinamen are addicted to the opium habit. My own experience is that not 25 per cent of the Chinese abroad ever use the drug, either to eat it, however scanty his earnings, these are the very qualities that have turned against him the hands of men belonging to a less industrious, less frugal, less provident race. The vices of Chinamen are magnified out of all proportion to the seriousness that a pretext may be found for hunting him from the community like a parish dog. 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