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CURRENT HISTORY, DETROIT, MICH., U. S. A.

THEY KILL WITCHES.

CATTARAUGUS INDIANS NOT FREE FROM SUPERSTITION.

They Are Pretty Nearly Civilized, However, as a Visit to the Reservation Shows—They Have Good Schools and Professional "Peacemakers."

(Special Correspondence.)

VERSAILLES, N. Y., Jan. 5.—Most interesting happenings were taking place among the Iroquois Indians of New York about a century ago. A prophet had arisen among them—Handsome Lake by name, and one of the Seneca tribe—who preached with soul stirring oratory of what they were and what they should be and do.

He had lain for a long time in a trance, so he told them, and had visions from the Great Spirit, in which all was revealed to him.

His teaching was a strange medley of old pagan belief and the precepts of the Jesuits and the lessons of the Bible. He taught that good lives must be lived on this earth if happiness is to be expected in the future. Those who were bad in this world were to be punished in the next by conditions similar in spirit to those of their evil lives here. For example, a drunkard was throughout eternity to be forced to drink boiling liquor from a red-hot caldron handed him by a devil who constantly tells him that having loved liquor so much in the past he must not do without it now.



FOUNDING CORN ON THE CATTARAUGUS RESERVATION.

In the future abode of the good every man was to be physically perfect and enjoy forever pleasant games, exciting hunts and happy times. He taught that the white man went to a place of perpetual evil—of misery unspokeable—and that every converted Indian would go there too.

His teachings were enthusiastically received. The mass of the Iroquois tribesmen believed him. They enrolled themselves as followers, discarding not only the teachings of the missionaries, but also ancient and time honored beliefs of their own ancestors.

And even now many of the Indians, and particularly the Senecas, hold quietly to what he taught, and among these are not a few who are nominally Christians. Remnants of absolute paganism still survive, too, among the Senecas, and in the Cattaraugus reservation there is a very common belief in witchcraft.

An old woman was but a few months since murdered there, and a searching investigation on the part of the United States authorities disclosed the fact that she was killed because of being a dangerous witch, who by her malign influence caused sickness and disaster.

Her funeral, too, was conducted with striking ceremonies, the Indians burying her in accordance with ancient savage rites. Food was laid out to sustain her during her weary journey to the land of spirits. Bright lights were burned to dispel the darkness from the gloomy path. There were moccasins to keep her feet from bruising. There was clothing to keep her warm.

This case, however, was very unusual, as the pagan beliefs and customs are in general kept out of sight.

The Cattaraugus reservation is mostly in Erie county. It extends for some twelve miles along both sides of Cattaraugus creek, contains a little over 20,000 acres, and has a population of about 1,500, mostly Senecas, with a sprinkling of Cayugas and Onondagas.

Although paganism still has such root among them, it has not prevented them from becoming quite fairly advanced in agriculture, and many of the Indian farms are quite well cultivated. The land, indeed, is very much better farmed and worked than that of the Alleghany reservation, although that reservation is also of the Seneca tribe.

Both reservations are owned by the Seneca Nation as a body, and all the land is held in common. There is no individual ownership.

Individual Indians obtain the right to work and occupy certain portions, and are allowed to dispose of the right to others.

The presiding officers of the nation are president, clerk and treasurer, and in addition to these there are upon each reservation eight councilors, a marshal, an overseer of the poor and three peacemakers, all holding office for one year, except the peacemakers, who hold for three. Note the word "peacemakers." Has it not an odd and agreeable sound as compared with general beliefs regarding Indian character?

The homes, as a rule, are fairly well made and comfortable, but somehow there is always about the doorway of even the best Indian homes an intangible something which spoils the general effect and gives an air of griminess and mussiness to the whole.

Public schools are kept up by the government, and although there is no compulsory attendance, and therefore considerable laxity regarding regularity, there is yet a fair number present on each day.

We stepped one day into one of the little school buildings—white and one story, with a little bell in a little belfry on top—and found the class engaged in a geography recitation. The way in which the little children answered regarding rivers and cities and state boundaries was pleasant indeed.

There is upon this reservation a fine boarding school for Indian children. It

was endowed by a private individual, and is also liberally supported by the state, which allows \$100 for the annual maintenance of each pupil, besides providing for the salaries of the teachers.

The nursery children, pretty little bits of humanity who could scarcely more than toddle about, quaintly sang their little songs for us, and the older scholars recited their lessons in a way to do credit to any school of whites.

There was something strange in hearing them answer questions regarding the discovery of America and the first explorations, and we wondered if behind those dark and impassive faces there were not thoughts which if uttered would surprise those who really believe that it was white people who discovered and explored this land.

There are still among these Indians many names which are reminders of ancient times. There are Blue Sky and Red Cloud; there are Half Town and Silver Hoops and Red Eyes!

The general type of face is with high cheek bones, the lower part of the face broad, the mouth projecting. The nose is either hooked or the opposite extreme, running up at the very end. There is quite a variety of shades of copper color, and some faces are very dark.

The men are quite broad at the hips. The women are in general extremely well formed. Many of the Indian girls are soft voiced, soft eyed and really beautiful. Boys and men have a calm and quiet expression, typical of steadiness of purpose and self command.

The people are in some of their ways old fashioned indeed. One farmer whom we noticed was plowing his field with a yoke of white oxen, and not a few of the families use the ancient type of mortar and pestle for pounding corn.

"And do you, too, use the wooden mortar?" we asked of an intelligent tribesman.

"No," he replied, with a quizzical glance at his smiling wife. "No, but she keeps wanting me to make one, though; says she'd much rather have it!"

There is much modern life as well. Tinware is plenty. Stoves are common. Some of the homes are constructed with quite an effort after effect, and have bay windows and comfortable porches. Splendid flowers are cultivated—magnificent peonies, fine lilacs and tulips, beautiful snowballs.

Many families keep one or more pigs, and pork and beans is a most highly relished dish among the entire community.

The Indians are never taken aback by strange visitors. They never receive them with lack of politeness, no matter how unexpected may be their call. They meet them with stately courtesy and a demeanor at once pleasant and composed, and whether their homes are the elaborate ones of the successful farmers or the one room log huts of the poorer people the ease and courtesy are the same.

The Cattaraugus is a fine stream, some 800 feet in width, flowing through an attractive valley, bordered by level plains and gentle hills and easy slopes.

A pleasant country it is for the Indian, and little disturbed by tourists or seekers after curiosity, and so long as the reservation system remains in force it is to be hoped that the Cattaraugus people will be allowed to quietly remain there. ROBERT SHACKLETON, JR.

KEARNY'S CALIFORNIA HOME.

The Old Adobe Building Still Stands in Sonoma.

(Special Correspondence.)

SONOMA, Dec. 31.—In the early days of his military career General Philip Kearny was a property holder and resident in the Sonoma valley.

His residence was a low walled adobe building with a tile roof, fronting on the plaza in the town of Sonoma. The building was of ancient origin, it having been built by the early missionaries from Mexico.

Since the days of 1848 Sonoma has prospered. Its Spanish population has been crowded aside by Americans, who have torn down the old landmarks to make room for buildings of modern pattern.

In this work of destruction the willow residence of the renowned soldier has been carefully preserved. The owner, an American of the name of Ladd, has refused repeatedly to sell the property for fear that the building would be destroyed.

It stands at the corner of Spain street and Third avenue, and has become exceedingly valuable in consequence of the improvements going on around it.



PHIL KEARNY'S HOUSE.

In 1883 the building was taken possession of by General Mariano G. Vallejo, who was at that time military governor of upper California. It was the residence of a member of his staff.

Kearny sold the property to Ladd, who subsequently rented it to a painter as a storeroom for his painting material, and for that purpose it is used now.

On the roof of this building are splendidly preserved tiles of red clay. These tiles are valued very highly by artists, who paint on them and then advertising them as being of great value as historical curiosities sell them at a high figure.

It requires the utmost vigilance on the part of the police and the owner of the property to protect this roof from the thieving fingers of the Spaniards, who sell them to the artists and curio seekers. The story is told by the old residents of Sonoma that General Kearny bought the property of General Vallejo in 1847 for \$25, and that he sold it to Ladd for \$150. In those days property was not rated very high in Sonoma. Today the building and the lot on which it stands would readily sell for \$20,000.

H. A. THAMES.

Swelling Words.

William Wirt when a young man wrote a farce in which the most eminent lawyers of Virginia are introduced and their peculiarities humorously exaggerated. Among them was one who had been minister to England and was remarkable for using swelling words.

He is represented as conducting a cause in the county court, and in asking the clerk to call some one into court, thus addresses him:

"Mr. Jones, have the benignity to vociferate Peter Jolley into court."

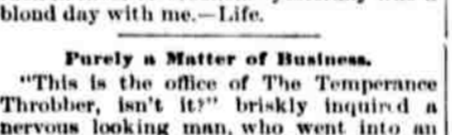
"The clerk called out, 'Vociferate P. Jolley! Come into court!'"

While examining a loquacious female witness the lawyer loses his patience and exclaims:

"This woman ought to be deposited into tacturnity!"

"You may go to Tass Eternity yourself, but I reckon you'll have none of my company, sir!" retorted the angry woman.—Youth's Companion.

Trust 'Em Not.



Alice—Oh, Billy! I didn't think it of you—walkin with another girl after what you said to me yesterday.

Billy—I've had a revulsion o' feelin since then in favor of bronets—yesterday was a blond day with me.—Life.

Purely a Matter of Business.

"This is the office of The Temperance Throber, isn't it?" briskly inquired a nervous looking man, who went into an office in a tall building on La Salle street yesterday afternoon with a small memorandum book in his hand and his arms full of bundles.

"Yes, sir," answered the young woman at the desk.

"What's the subscription price?"

"One dollar a year."

"That's right," he said, after putting down his bundles and referring to his memorandum book a moment. "Dollar a year's right. Send a copy to Orton O. Better, 6,427 Shortall avenue. Here's your money. Check!"

And he made a mark in a little book. The young woman wrote down the address and gave him a receipt for the money.

"There!" he exclaimed, referring once more to his memorandum. "I believe that finishes the whole bus—no, there's one thing more I've got to get. 'Half pint best Holland gin.' Know of any place near here where I can get half a pint of good Holland?"

"Sir!"

"I say do you know of any place where I can get a half pint of good Hol?"

"Sir!"

"Know of any place where I can get—but never mind. I can probably find one on the way to the depot. Afternoon!"

And the busy, hurried, overdriven citizen from the suburbs pocketed his memorandum book, picked up his bundles, and bustled out of the office totally unconscious that he had done ought to offend the most fastidious.—Chicago Tribune.

Must Be an Intruder.

It must have been hard on midnight when he awoke with a start and perceived in the light of the nascent moon a dim form hovering about the chair where he had left his trousers.

He reflected for some minutes in silence. Then he leaped from his couch.

"My dear!"

He was whispering hoarsely.

"—are you there?"

He leaped anxiously over the bed. There lay his beloved wife sweetly sleeping.

"Strange."

Musing thus a sudden thought came to him.

He strode to the stairway.

"Mary," he called, "are you in your room?"

The voice of the bed girl was wafted to him in assent.

"Then?"

There was the firmness of conviction in his tone.

"—it must be somebody who has no business going through my pockets."

Whereat he fired four shots at the dim form and frightened it away.—Detroit Tribune.

Too Agreeable.

At a time when the Irish situation seemed critical to the officials at Dublin in 1881 or 1882 a certain Liberal peer was delegated to go to Hawarden and consult with Gladstone.

Upon his return his friends received him with eagerness. "Well, what did he say. What policy did he recommend?" The peer blushed slightly, hesitated a moment and then mildly remarked, "Well, to tell the truth, the fellow was so wonderfully agreeable that we never got on to the subject of Ireland at all."—Argonaut.

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