

YUCATAN LETTER.

A TRIP INTO THE INTERIOR OF THIS GULF STATE.

Wild Journey on a Wild Donkey's Back—Some Old Cities—History of a Skeleton

(Special Correspondence of the Record-Union.)

MERIDA, June 20, 1888.

On the line of the new railroad about 78 miles directly south from Yucatan's capital, is Ticul, the second city in size on the peninsula. On the way thither we made a detour to the village of Xal, for the purpose of viewing some prehistoric ruins, and traversed the remaining 25 miles or donkey-back.

Southward from Xal, the stony high way leads over immense ledges of rock, in some places slippery as glass, over which our beasts stumbled and slid in the most alarming manner. The day was scorching, and the reflection of the sun upon the naked rocks was indescribably painful to the eyes. Between this intense glare, the heat, the dust, and the entire absence of coolness in Yucatan, it is not to be wondered at that so large a proportion of the people are afflicted with skin diseases.

On our right, interminable forests stretched away, in which—here and there through the dense foliage—we caught glimpses of huge mounds, the ruins of prehistoric cities, with the whole peninsula strewn. Though not lofty, the Mica mountains are the most range in Yucatan, being nothing but stupendous heaps of stone, trunks and devoid of the slightest vestige of verdure.

It was nearly dark when we reached the last sierra, on the very brink of which stood the little church of San Antonio. Directly below it lies the Indian village called Oxcutzal, and beyond a wooded plain extends to the horizon, dotted with the remains of ancient cities, and the well-kept highway, which here has a broad pavement of cut stones, taken from the fallen structures of ancient towns. Everywhere around us were the ruins of mounds and temples and prehistoric cities; but we had no time to examine any of them, for darkness was upon the face of the earth. A backward glance showed us a dangerous sierra, now wrapped in dense shadow, made us thankful indeed that we had resisted all temptations to loiter by the wayside.

Through one of the most important cities in Yucatan, so near to the capital and with a population not less than 16,500. Ticul might well pass for a deserted village. Like all Spanish cities, it is laid out with a central plaza, and streets running from it at right angles. But Ticul is distinguished among the other cities of Yucatan for the fact that it is the center of the houses, which occupy the center of the town, immediately surrounding the plaza. Back of them, extending more than a mile each way, are the ruins of the Indians, who constitute the bulk of the population.

A perfect picture of repose is the Plaza of Ticul, overgrown with rank grass, and occupied only by a few straggling donkeys pasturing upon it. One whole side of this plaza is taken up by a church and convent of vast proportions, built more than two centuries ago by the Spaniards. It is the grandest of all these gigantic structures with which that powerful brotherhood made their entrance into Yucatan. In front of the church is a large stone platform, four feet high and several hundred feet square. The interior is somber and gloomy enough without the alleged ornaments of flowers and creepers, which were piled up in the niches of the wall, in a funeral urn, painted black, with a white stripe around the top, containing the bones of the dead, as is well known in the village. Under it is a queer sort of monument, looking much like an old-fashioned pump, bearing a Spanish inscription which I translate for you:

Behold the end of our troubles—Death, Earth, Nothing!

In this ruin repose the remains of Donna Lorenza, a certain amount of wealth, wife and tender mother, prudent and virtuous. To the Lord direct our prayers for her.

A near-by altar is decorated with several skulls and cross-bones; and in the rear of the church is a charnel-house, full of ghastly horrors, dug up from rented graves—some of them of the most recent date—awaiting their turn for cremation. The convent is an enormous structure, built entirely of stone, 400 feet long, connected to the church by a spacious corridor. The entrance leads to a large, magnificent portico, with high stone pillars, from which a broad staircase ascends to another corridor, 20 feet wide, running through the whole building. In the center of this upper corridor—which is paved with stone and lighted by six enormous domes—are the cloisters, once occupied by a number of nuns. It has been abandoned, and the cloisters are now dismantled and untenanted, a few only of the principal ones being used for shops, offices and lodgings. From the side-walks, which are broken, and weeds grow out from the floor, and bats make homes in the walls unchallenged. The old garden, which must once have been in harmony with the grandeur of the convent, is now a mass of weeds. High walls and picturesque fountains, parterres of flowers still remain, like ghosts of former beauty. Olives, oranges, and other fruit trees grow together, affording shade for browsing goats and donkeys.

The convent building is on a level with the ground, and the nuns' cells, and sitting there in the sleepy sunshine, and the light of a dream. The view spread out below is a vast plain, covered with a roofed, one-storyed, embowered in trees and overgrown with weeds. Except when disturbed by the loud ringing of matin and vesper bells, the stillness is broken only by the singing of birds, for the convent is situated in a very fertile "chance" of very dense woods, and is surrounded by musins from fresh meat, fishes, confectionery, bread, soap, shoes, hardware, millinery and musical instruments. Since the convent is actually a modern building for two things—the excellence of its built lights and the beauty of its women. It has a Postoffice department and telegraph office, and is a place of living, good food, good society and pleasant surroundings. Ticul is considered the best village in Yucatan, and of Merida. Almost in the center of the ruins of an ancient city—and, indeed, which modern town is largely constructed from that of the aborigines, for many of its walls and pavements are made of sculptured stones from the ruins of the ancient city. The houses are ornamented with heads, ears and other relics of an unknown people. To reach the ruins, you go down a long, narrow street, past a tall, slender, shrouded by cocoanut and orange trees, which shade the Indians wear hammocks and plant palmleaves into sombrero; their naked children going about them; past the camp santo, in front of which stands a giant ceibo-tree (now 60 years old), famed for its size throughout the country, that are covered with wild flowers and woodlands—the haunt of stent birds and gorgeous plumage, for a peculiarity of Merida is that, however beautiful, more complete, because for generations it

RABBIT TO MAN.

SOMETHING EXTRAORDINARY IN PROGRESSIVE SURGERY.

Account of the Transplanting of a Nerve—Possibilities of a Future Development of the Idea.

(From the London Times.)

We published on Saturday an extract from a medical journal containing an account of the successful transplantation of nerve from a rabbit to man, but the history of this new departure in surgery was so veiled behind orthodox technicalities as to be scarcely at all calculated to convey to the general reader the amount of information which the importance of the subject seems likely to render acceptable. The operation was performed by Dr. Gersung, of Vienna, and the patient was Professor von Fleischl, the distinguished occupant of the Chair of Physiology in the University of that city. It appears that Dr. von Fleischl, sixteen years ago, accidentally wounded himself while conducting a post-mortem examination, and that the consequent severe inflammation of his right arm and hand led ultimately to the loss of the terminal joint of his hand, and, in the hope of relieving the pain, amputation somewhat further back was performed, but to follow, according to the report, by the direct communication of "neuritis," the history became a little vague, because the word "neuritis" which is most properly applied to a class of tumors which form upon nerves, and which is mainly of redundant nerve tissue, is applied with less exactness to tumors of other kinds of which nerves may be the seat, and which are applied also to the termination of the proximal terminations of severed nerves, enlargements which sometimes occur after the

best performed amputation. Which seem to depend on some personal peculiarity of the patient, which are not to recur again and again after repeated amputations further back, and which are attended by the most agonizing suffering. It may be presumed that the neurotoma of Professor von Fleischl was of this kind, and, in the hope of obtaining relief, he underwent several fruitless operations, which were directed to dissecting out and removing portions of the nerve which were trapped along a ridge on their way home when they came to a spot that overlooked a large tract of low land, with many deepening streams. Through it ran a small brook. The sight that attracted the attention of the men was a large bear standing in the creek, and another one was seen to be following closely by three cub. The spectators were not more than a hundred feet away from the bear family, but had not time to get a look at the animal, and watched the maneuvers of the bears. At this season of the year bears shed their coats of fur, and are better seen than in the winter months. They now begin in search of food, and during the summer, in addition to that got in an occasional visit to a sheep pasture or pigsty, is ants, grubs, angle-worms, fish, frogs, and the like. They are very fond of tender growths of wild grass and water-weeds. They seek the "down timber" in search of ants and grubs. Every stump and log is searched by them, and they are detected by their claws and teeth, the spot where the nests are soon laid bare and their contents lapped up. The bear family whose presence the fishermen were so anxious to see, after this manner. The old bear that stood in the creek remained perfectly motionless, gazing intently in the stream, some distance off, and under the tree for the dog to watch over it. The dog lay down on it, and Phil mounted the fence, where he sat, contentedly with his chin on his hands, and his elbows on his knees. "What do you want to lie for?" asked Phil.

"What did you throw water on me for?" "I didn't throw water on you." "You did, though, because you of the boys did, and I'll polish you to death ere long, if you don't get me down." "Take away your devilish dog, Phil, says he, 'or I'll bate the life of ye.'" "Like to see you," says Phil. "Watch him, Rover," and with that he got an old pig to look at him, and under the tree for the dog to watch over it. The dog lay down on it, and Phil mounted the fence, where he sat, contentedly with his chin on his hands, and his elbows on his knees. "What do you want to lie for?" asked Phil.

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"LITTLE PHIL."

HIS FIRST VICTORY WAS OVER A DISTRICT SCHOOLMASTER.

An Unconditional Surrender on the Part of the Pedagogue—His Broken Promise.

The following story was credited in war times to Major Lyman J. Jackson, of the Eleventh Ohio Infantry:

"Phil Sheridan used to go to school at Somerset to an Irish school teacher of the Irish sort, named Patrick McNally, who believed that the intelligence, moral and physical faculties were developed upon a liberal use of birch, and this discipline can verify testify that it was his truly scientific.

One terribly cold morning of 1841 or 1843, Patrick's scholars got up at the little ahead of time. They crawled in through the window to get warmed, and, once in, the chief enemy of mankind and the most common cause of insanity of a bucket full of ice-water, tempted them to trick the teacher. They fastened the bucket of water over the door in such a manner that the opening of the door would tilt it upon the head of anyone entering, and retired to watch the result from a neighboring haymow.

Patrick soon came trotting along, rubbing his hands vigorously to keep them warm, hurriedly turned the key, and bolted in just as the bucket turned over his head. It is not a "bull" to say that his Celtic blood was heated by the chilling water. His situation was a bad one. There wasn't a boy to be had anywhere about. He looked around, inside and out, and there wasn't a soul to be seen. So he armed himself with a pair of open knives, and, raising fire and set down to dry, fully determined to log the first boy that entered. An unfortunate little fellow soon came, and, as he looked at the large bucket of water, he was seized by the collar and shook him fiercely, "to shake the truth out of him," he said. The astonished boy, not knowing what to do, and not daring that boy to do anything of the sort, setting him down by the fire, he again placed himself in a position of attack.

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RETURNED TO LIFE.

A REMARKABLE INSTANCE OF RESUSCITATION.

A Young Man Apparently Drowned and Mourned as Dead Finally Cheats the Coroner.

The misadventure of Samuel Nace, says the Philadelphia Press, is a remarkable story of apparent death and resurrection. Nace is a large and brawny young man, with an attractive face, except for the absence of an eye, which was lost several years ago through an accident, and gives him a factious cast of countenance even in his most solemn moments. At present he lives with his mother at the southeast corner of Front and Jefferson streets, and is employed as a driver by a business house at Second and Girard avenues.

Last summer Nace and his mother lived at Thompson and Adrian streets, and was employed by the firm of Stead & Murphy as a laborer. On a Wednesday in the latter part of August he was ordered with one other employe to go to Queen street wharf, where they were to load some into one of the firm's wagons. While busily engaged at the dock, and standing on the cap log of the dock, Nace lost his balance and fell into the water. He was not seen for some time, and a search was made, but he was not found. It was about 2 o'clock in the afternoon, and the cry of a man overboard brought a great crowd of wharf laborers and "longshoremen" to the scene. The body remained in the water until nearly five, and a search party of skillful rescuers were about abandoning the search, when it was suddenly sighted of the bow, doubled like a ball, and caught with a net. As it was being hauled up, it was seen to be a young man, and the cry of a man overboard brought a great crowd of wharf laborers and "longshoremen" to the scene. The body remained in the water until nearly five, and a search party of skillful rescuers were about abandoning the search, when it was suddenly sighted of the bow, doubled like a ball, and caught with a net. As it was being hauled up, it was seen to be a young man, and the cry of a man overboard brought a great crowd of wharf laborers and "longshoremen" to the scene. The body remained in the water until nearly five, and a search party of skillful rescuers were about abandoning the search, when it was suddenly sighted of the bow, doubled like a ball, and caught with a net. As it was being hauled up, it was seen to be a young man, and the cry of a man overboard brought a great crowd of wharf laborers and "longshoremen" to the scene. 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