



REX AND HIS QUEEN RECEIVING HOMAGE IN THE NEW-ORLEANS MARDI GRAS PROCESSION.

MARDI GRAS CARNIVAL.

Features of This Year's Celebration To Be Finer than Ever Before.

For the reason that Lent comes especially late this year the Mardi Gras Carnival just preceding it, and which will be celebrated on March 7 at New-Orleans, will be especially gorgeous. In having to wait so long for the festival the people of the Crescent City have become impatient, and when the day of all days in their calendar does come they intend to celebrate it with extraordinary revelry. Unusual sums have been spent in preparing for the fête, and according to all reports the visitors will number from 100,000 to 150,000.

The days that come before Mardi Gras, however, are by no means uneventful in the gay metropolis of the Gulf. Indeed, the Mardi Gras season really begins as far back as January 6, the date of the Twelfth Night Revellers' ball. Since that time there has been a continual succession of dances, debutante parties, opera parties, coaching parades, "steam yacht picnics," plantation house parties and café parties.

On various nights the many secret carnival organizations also have their balls, and each one tries to outdo the others in the splendor of its costumes and masquerades. To-morrow night, for example, the Comus Society has its ball; on February 28 is the Atlantæus ball; on March 2 the Momus ball, and on March 6, the night before the culminating day of Mardi Gras, the Proteus ball.

Although New-Orleans has had a Mardi Gras every year since 1857, its people never tire of the carnival, because the occasion is never celebrated twice in the same way. Each year the street pageant consists of floats of new and startling designs, and no clue is given in advance of what may be expected. New organizations are constantly being added to the four great societies of Momus, Proteus, Rex and Comus, which figure most prominently in the street procession, and as all the societies give masked balls in the evening after the parade the pleasures of the day with each succeeding year become more and more diversified. Because of the rivalry among the members of the four big societies, which alone are represented by floats in the street pageant, the outdoor celebration has become especially gorgeous. At the last Mardi Gras the Mystic Crewe of Comus presented twenty tableaux mounted on floats, portraying "Izdu-bar," the Babylonian mother of all beauty. At the same time the men of Proteus appeared with the same number of tableaux, each indicative of some letter of the alphabet. "D" stood for a dragon, for example, and "S," for the snow, portrayed by a float which seemed to have just arrived from the Arctic zone.

The presentation of gifts to beautiful women at the balls has come to be one of the most extravagant features of the occasion. One Northern woman caused such a furor at the various balls she attended last year that she needed six men to help carry away her presents. She not only received them from every man with whom she danced, but from scores of others who were able only to press her hand.

At the Mardi Gras of 1890 Miss Sallie Fannie Grant, of Atlanta, so captivated the masked knights, although only a spectator, that she received among a hundred other gifts the great gold keys of the city suspended on a gold chain of huge links, which was placed about her neck by the mysterious grand duke of the Rex court.

Each of the societies also ballots annually for a queen, so that every carnival has a dozen or more queens, all resplendent in the robes of a day's royalty.

The day following Mardi Gras is Ash Wednesday, the initial day of Lent. With the dawn of that day the city changes as completely as a player shifting from the role of jester to that of monk. All evidences of the gayety of the day before have disappeared, and the dancers of the preceding night are to be found wending their way solemnly to church.

HORSES IN OVERALLS.

Legs Protected After Tendons Are Burned with Electricity.

Physical culture, systematically applied, having made it possible to clip seconds from record performances by human athletes, horsemen have determined to apply the same methods to the lithe-limbed racers of the turf. It has been demonstrated that the speed of a racehorse can be increased by the systematic manipulation of

the muscles that do the work when the animal is bounding toward the finishing point, carrying with him the hopes and fears of countless backers. It is now part of the duty of the trainer of a racehorse to flex the muscles and tendons of the thoroughbreds under his care. This is partly done by manipulating with the hand or massaging the muscles of the horses exactly as the muscles of a human being are massaged to make them flexible and springy. Huge sums frequently depend upon a fraction of a second or speed and the horse whose muscles have been carefully massaged prior to a race goes to the post with a decided advantage over the animal which is just as fast in every respect, save the additional life in the tendons provided by the energetic work of the horse masseur.

When the king of the turf is retired to the stable for the off period of racing he is now kept in thorough condition by daily massage treatment, all the tendons and muscles that are used during his performance on the track being carefully rubbed and kneaded to keep them flexible. If the tendons show signs of being the worse for wear, and it must be remembered that the strain on the tendons of a horse as he pounds down the racetrack at top speed is enormous, then extreme measures are resorted to to restore them to their pristine flexibility. The up to date stable is provided with tools especially made to burn the tendons of a horse that has gone stale. An electric machine is used for this purpose, the iron being applied to the tendons by the skilled hand of the stableman and the

stiffness literally burned out of the worn tendons.

There are veterinary surgeons who make a regular business of treating racehorses by the physical culture method. In the stables of these men are to be found some of the finest horses on the turf. Some have gone stale, and the secret being carefully guarded, are under treatment by massage and burning for restoration to their former speedy condition.

After the tendons have been burned it is necessary to keep the horse quiet and prevent flies from irritating him. The simple method of protecting the animal's legs is to encase them in a pair of overalls. Sorry indeed is the appearance of the proud king of the turf when he is returned to his stall after electric treatment, with his forelegs, and sometimes his hind legs as well, covered with overalls.

IN QUAINTEST MEXICO.

Some Aztec Customs Still Prevail— Diminutive Vegetables.

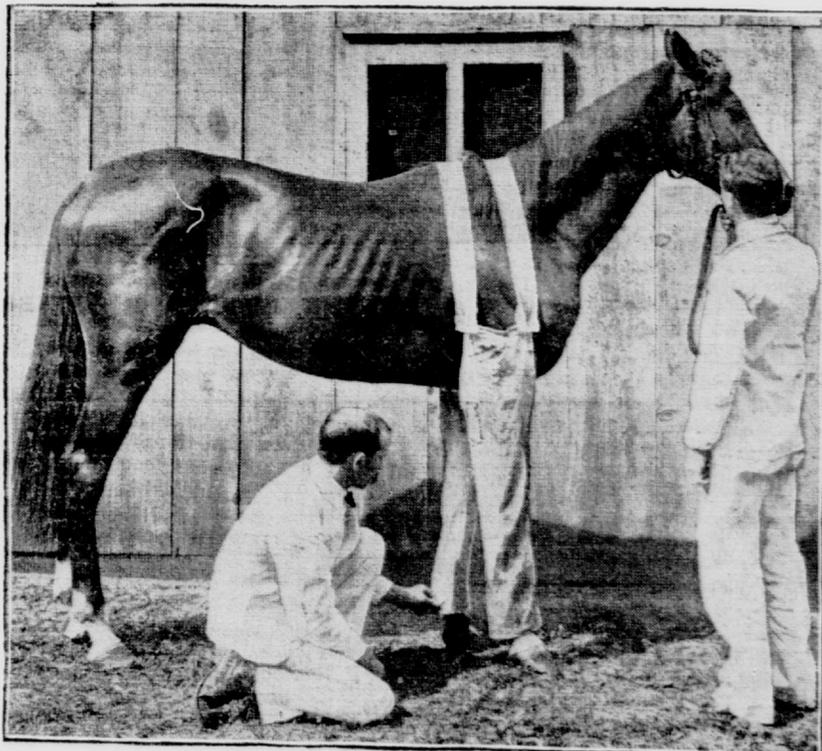
While Cortez destroyed a civilization and a people in Mexico, many of the customs of the Aztecs have been perpetuated by their conquerors and may be seen and marvelled at to-day by the visitor to the land of "the fair god." Not the least picturesque of these is the method of storing grain in the conical houses which dot the land for miles around in some districts and are practically uniform in size. Instead of increasing the size of the house, more were built, and in some places it is difficult to make out at a distance what an aggregation of these huge cones may be. One of the questions asked by the observant visitor is, "Did the Mexican, or rather his Aztec ancestor, design the grain house first and then, pleased with its shape, pattern his hat after it, or vice versa?"

Though within a few hundred miles of the most progressive country in the world, where little is done by hand that can be accomplished by the aid of machinery, there are many places in Mexico where the medieval civilization of Spain reigns as completely to this day as if there were no modern world outside.

History is silent as to the date of the origin of the primitive bellows which is in use in many parts of our sister republic. It was brought over by the Spaniard several centuries ago, and it has never been changed or improved upon since then. How many centuries it existed in Spain in identically the same form before Columbus sailed westward is unknown, and how long it will be before the Mexican realizes that he can buy a modern bellows not far from home, and, above all, will consent to use it, is a problem.

The apparatus is manipulated by a boy, who alternately pulls on ropes held in both hands and shoves with his feet. The bellows itself is directly beneath the cumbersome frame which supports the operator. The result of the boy's labors is about one-tenth the wind that is ordinarily supplied by the small rotary blower used on a modern portable forge.

The Spaniard or his descendants in the Americas would look with scorn upon the 3,000-year-old plough of the Chinese agriculturist, but there are thousands and thousands of ploughs



A RACER'S FORELEGS ENCASED IN OVERALLS AFTER ELECTRIC TREATMENT.