

HER OLD CALIFORNIA HOME ABOUT TO BE DESTROYED

THE little weather-beaten house where the famous professional beauty and the most celebrated ball-dancer of her day, Lola Montez, lived for nearly three years in Grass Valley, Nevada County, Cal., is about to be removed to make way for a modern structure.

Among all the strange people who have at some time dwelt in California, there's none so eccentric as the beautiful, vivacious Lola Montez was. There are anecdotes almost without number throughout this State concerning the unique life that she led in the rough and tough mining camp of Grass Valley. All the gray-haired men who were once youths and young men in the early mining camps of Central California have vivid recollections of the excitement that pervaded San Francisco and all the mining towns when Lola Montez came from New York across the Isthmus of Panama to the Golden State in the early summer of 1853.

At that time San Francisco was a city of about 30,000 people, and it was the gayest, liveliest and most extravagant city of its size in the world. Lola Montez had heard of the golden dollars in the new El Dorado and sent her manager to San Francisco to arrange a series of dancing performances for her in the larger towns of California. No theatrical or operatic star ever had the reception in this State that Lola Montez had.

When the steamer bearing the dancer and her party reached the wharf at San Francisco over 7000 people were gathered to greet her. For days there had been little talked of other than the coming of the most fascinating and vivacious woman in all Europe. When she descended the gang plank from the steamer and was helped to an open carriage the multitude cheered as if for a popular potentate. Hundreds of men ran excitedly on foot alongside of and at the back of the carriage while Lola Montez was driven to her hotel. For days there were throngs of men constantly in the streets about the hotel, waiting a chance to see the celebrated beauty. Seats at the old American Theater, on the corner of Sansome and Halick streets, where she appeared were sold at prices ranging from \$7 to

LOLA MONTEZ FROM A PAINTING ORDERED BY THE MAD KING OF BAVARIA.

LOLA MONTEZ HORSEWHIPS HER SLANDERER.

GORDON ROSS

ATTIRED IN HER DANCING GARB SHE VISITS THE COUNTRY MINISTER.



mines had created the liveliest kind of people. So in the winter of 1856-57 she sold her property in Grass Valley and sailed from San Francisco for Australia. I heard from her several times in Australia and subsequently in Bombay and Cairo.

A fact not generally known among the millions of people who have heard and read of the wonderful beauty of Lola Montez is that she left one child in California, a daughter, Rosalind Hull, who died last January in New Orleans at the age of 44 years. The father was Patrick Hull, and when Lola Montez went to Australia she left her baby girl (whom she barely knew herself and had never seen

\$20 each. The whole house at the first performance sold for about \$4500, and had it been as large as almost any of the better theaters in the large cities to-day the sale would have undoubtedly been \$7000 or \$8000. When the dancer appeared to perform her famous spider-dance the audience rose as one person and shook the building with tumultuous applause. The plot was a part of her own life among the nobility in Bavaria and Wurtemberg. There were six performers in the drama. Lola Montez was gorgeously gowned that night and in excellent humor, but when the echoes of the burst of extravagant applause died away the audience was disenchanted. The play proceeded faintly. The spider dance was given several times and suddenly there were no further echoes. Lola Montez saw that she had been overadvertised. Six more performances to fair audiences were given and then there being no further demand for seats the engagement closed. She spent the little fortune as quickly as she gathered it.

Every one admitted that she was a most fascinating and beautiful young woman, who had had wonderful opportunities to become the brilliant conversationalist she was, but the public looked upon her as an adventuress, who cared only to harvest a lot of California golden dollars and then sail away to other climes. Among the champions of the woman was a young Irish editor, Pat Hull of San Francisco. He and Lola became best friends. She said Pat was the best story-teller she ever knew. Pat had been a stump speaker in Ohio and Pennsylvania in the campaign of 1848 and President Taylor appointed him to come to the Territory of California and supervise the census of 1850. Pat liked the country and became an editor in San Francisco. He had the proverbial Irish wit and his audacity pleased Lola Montez. He was not at all good-looking and was uncouth in his dress. So when it was announced in November, 1853, that he and Lola had married there was a sensation in the city. Pat and Lola went to Monterey on their wedding tour and a few

weeks later to Sacramento. It seems that there the bride met an agent sent to California by King Louis of Bavaria, bearing a request for the beauty to return to Paris. Pat got mad about his wife receiving messages from old admirers and in a war of words his clothing and personal belongings were thrown from the second-story window of the Golden Eagle Hotel in Sacramento and his wife bade him begone. Pat returned to San Francisco and obtained a divorce as soon as the law permitted.

At about that time Lola Montez met in Sacramento two old friends of hers, Mr. and Mrs. George Knapp, whom she knew in New York, and with whom she came to California. They were living in the raw new mining town of Grass Valley, away up in the Sierras, in Nevada County. They, too, invited her to visit them there. The young woman accepted, and, strange to say, she fell in love with the rude wild town at once. There were but few well-built houses there then, and not over half a dozen of them had more than three rooms each. Most of the houses and stores were built of rough redwood boards. There were over 2500 red-shirted men in town and about 300 women. There never was a more democratic community. Every one made money and spent it. In the population were sons of some of the best American and European families. They had come there to dig riches in the mountains. There were two nephews of Victor Hugo, from Paris; a son of Senator Foote of Mississippi, a son of Moses Grinnell of New York and a nephew of Charles Sumner. Graduates from Oxford and Harvard associated with ignorant Mexicans and refugees from justice.

This phase of life had a fascinating interest for Lola Montez. She established a home there, which is still painted out to visitors in the town.

Mrs. Dora Knapp, who recently died at Ontario, Cal., was the closest to Lola Montez of any one in California. Shortly before her death Mrs. Knapp had a talk with the writer of these lines concerning the life of the famous beauty and dancer in the mining town of Grass Valley. Mrs. Knapp spoke as follows:

"We knew Lola Montez as the Countess of Lamsfeldt, a title that the King of Bavaria conferred on her. She was angry if any one referred to her as Lola Montez in her home and she said she did not want to be known as Mrs. Pat Hull. Yes, the Countess was a marvelously beautiful woman. She had dark blue eyes, a wealth of brown hair, an olive complexion, a graceful, plump figure and the most shapely neck and arms I have ever seen. Her vivacity was infectious. She was quick to anger, and her devotion was as extreme as her hate. The very day the Countess arrived in the ramshackle old stage coach in Grass Valley she was pleased with the place. She never kept anything back that came into her mind, and we knew from her manners that she had come to the very locality she had longed for. The opinion obtains that Lola Montez went to live in Grass Valley because she was too poor to live respectably in a large city or among fashionable people. While she was subsequently quite poor, it is not true that she was financially embarrassed in Grass Valley. She had at that time at least \$14,000 to her credit in New York and San Francisco banks, and I know she frequently had letters from titled gentlemen in Europe begging her to come there and live off their rich bounty. It was simply because she was weary of splendor and fast living of the people whom she had known for nearly a

decade that made Lola Montez turn with such fondness to a life in a mining town such as Grass Valley.

"Of course, every one in Grass Valley wanted to see Lola Montez dance and in the course of a week an entertainment was arranged in the old Alta Hall, in the second story of a building that had a large saloon downstairs. The seats were \$5 each and there were a few rows of chairs in front that were listed at \$10 each. The whole house was sold in a day and there was such a call for another entertainment that a few evenings later the second dancing was given at the same schedule of prices to another packed house. That was the last public performance that the young woman ever gave in California.

"In the course of a fortnight the Countess leased the little Strottenberg cottage on what is now Mill street. It was a cross between a rude mountain trail and a country street in those days.

"The Countess introduced the evening salons at Grass Valley. She had to be in a whirl of some social excitement all the time, much as she claimed, and at times believed, she really loved the peace and quiet of a secluded cottage. Every one in Nevada County knew about the pretty French woman's 'fandangos', as they were enviously called by the hundreds of persons who craved an invitation to them. Only a year or so ago United States Senator W. M. Stewart of Nevada chatted with me about Lola Montez's salons, and how he used to count the days between each salon, for he was often asked to join them.

"One day she had a war of words with a local editor named Shipley about an article on some local subject. The next week Shipley published an item insinuating that the meetings at the Countess' home were disgraceful. As soon as the Countess saw the item she dressed herself in her riding habit and with her

riding whip in hand went straight down to see Shipley. She found him near where the American Hotel now stands and gave him as many hard cuts across the face as she could until Shipley, who was a large man and towered above her, caught the whip and wrenched it from her grasp.

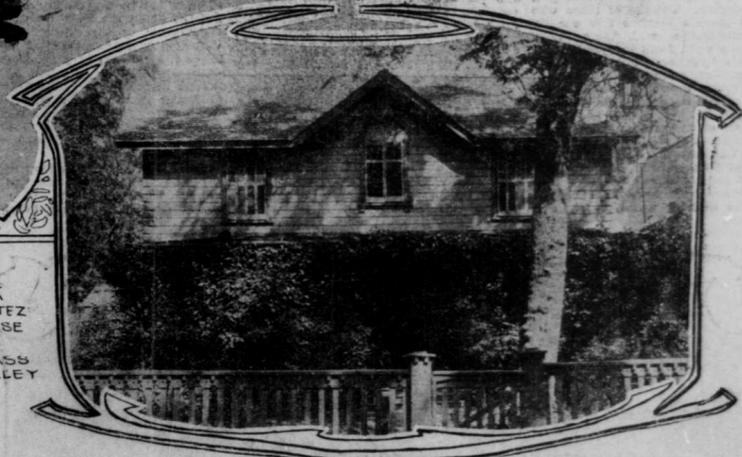
"Another time she came here and found a man playing with her bears. She ordered him from the premises. He told her to go to Hades, and she ran into the house and, coming out with a loaded musket in her little hands, chased him down Mill street. When one of her bears died her grief was inconsolable for a few days. Once, when she heard that a Methodist clergyman named Wilson had spoken of her as a shameless devil in the guise of a beautiful and fascinating dancer, she went home, dressed in her old-time dancing garb, with very short, breezy skirts and a low-necked and sleeveless waist and long silk stockings, and putting on a pair of heavy shoes walked calmly down the street to the pastor's house, knocked at the front door and asked for Rev. Mr. Wilson. Mrs. Wilson was simply paralyzed to have a caller so dressed at her house and could not speak. When Mr. Wilson came in his parlor the Countess told him she had come to show the gen-

tleman how really modest the dress of a stage dancer was and asked him to tell her wherein her deviltry existed. A short time after she repented her act and sent a good money donation to the pastor's family as a peace offering.

"There were some excellent traits in Lola Montez. She was easily moved to help the poor and suffering, and she had devotion for a good woman who had a mean husband and an unhappy home. She once told me the noblest thing in all the world was a good mother and a true wife.

"Along in 1858 the Countess' money was running low. The nephews of Victor Hugo went back to France; the many young men were tired of the salons. All the songs that the Countess spoke proficently had been sung threadbare, the musical instruments had become well worn and there was not a new story to be told, a humorous or pathetic recitation to be made and no original jokes remained to be cracked. The Countess plainly was restless to return to her former life of gaiety, and the letters she had always received from admirers in Paris and London gave her reason to believe she might be a favorite in Europe again. A letter from a friend urged her to come to Melbourne, Australia, where the new gold

but a few days altogether) with Mrs. Samuel King at Sacramento. Mrs. King was the wife of a rich gold miner, and she wanted to adopt the baby, but the mother for some eccentric reason would not listen to such a proposition. When Lola Montez sailed out of the Golden Gate for the Antipodes she sent a message to Mrs. King that the baby girl would be claimed in a year or two more. Mrs. King was delighted never to hear from the unnatural mother again. Later the Kings moved to Portland, Or., where Rosalind King was given all the advantages of a fine home, a thorough schooling and was tenderly loved by her foster parents. She never spoke of her mother, and she repented the way her own mother had cast her off. She inherited the Lola Montez eyes and physical outlines, but she had her father's sober expression and serious ways. She was an exceptional pianist. She married Louis Devereaux, a scion of an old aristocratic family in New Orleans. In her eighteenth year, and after a long tour in Europe she and her husband settled in the City of Mexico and removed to New Orleans three years ago. There Mrs. Devereaux died, leaving two children—probably the only descendants of the most famous European beauty of forty-five and fifty years ago.



THE LOLA MONTEZ HOUSE AT GRASS VALLEY