A GUATEMALAN FUNERAL.

Some of the Peculiar Customs of Central American Caribs.

I heard a jingle of bells this afternoon, and, supposing a fire had broken out, was about to start for the scene of the conflagration, when the landlady informed me that it was only a funeral and said it would pass the house. A few minutes later, hearing a sort of wild music, mingled with shouts and laughter, I ran to the door just in time to see a couple of half drunken men, shoeless and hatless, coming along at a brisk pace, bearing a coffin on their shoulders. It was simply a rough box wrapped in a piece of striped calico, and swayed from side to side as the bearers rolled along. Following was a woman, the widow, I was told, carrying a rude cross covered with flowers and laughing immoderately. Next to the hilarious chief mourner came the band, consisting of one accordion, two fiddles, a tin horn and a drum, all run to their full capacity.

Next came a mixed crowd of men, women and children. The men were attired in the usual costume of the country, a pair of cotton drawers and shirt, worn outside. The women wore a single garment, sleeveless and low-necked, coming barely to the knees. The children were arrayed in their innocence only. All were smoking, laughing, or dancing by turns. Altogether it was the most cheerful funeral I had ever witnessed.

I had returned to the table when my attention was once more called to the street by a chorus of wild yells and uproarious merriment. Stepping out I discovered the cause. One of the bearers had stumbled and fallen, throwing the coffin to the ground with such force that one side was partly broken out, exposing one arm and a ghastly hand half closed. But it was a contented, well-behaved corpse, and took the whole thing as a joke. Presently the bearer staggered to his feet, the coffin was replaced, and the procession moved merrily on.

The landlord, however, insists this was a very tame affair, and assures me that the burial services of the rich are very much livelier. In such cases the body is dressed up in the best shirt the estate affords. It is then carefully tied in a chair in an upright position, and thus carried to the graveyard, while the whole town turns out to do him honor by discharging crackers, rockets and a variety of native fire-works, while the drinking is general and the joy unbounded. I hope to be able to record a first-class affair soon. The owner of three huts and a pair of mules is quite low, and we are waiting patiently for him to die. The natives also exhibit a good deal of anxiety, and every little while one of them will steal up to the window to note progress and report to the eager crowd.

As usual in times of great public excitement the news is very contradictory. A little while ago it was announced that he was almost gone. A confused murmur ran through the assembly and an occasional shout, with a random cracker or two, was heard. The next report, however, was most discouraging. The watcher was seen fleeing as for his life and the sick man following close in his wake with a huge club. The last bulletin was more favorable, the doctor having arrived with his whole stock in trade, and those who are posted predict that the sick man will be ready for burial to-morrow.

Those are the Caribs, the direct descendants of those wild, fierce tribes discovered by Columbus on his first voyage and found inhabiting the southern islands of the West Indies—differing entirely in appearance, customs and disposition from the surrounding nations, to whom they were a constant terror.—Guatemala Cor. Pittsburgh Post.

SCHOOL AND CHURCH.

The number of Indian church members in the United States is 28, [illegible].

—The Protestant Episcopal diocese of Maryland has a communicant list of more than 26,000. It contributed in 1882 $287,000 and in 1888 $438,000.

—The city of New York has 600 Sunday-schools, with a total of 187,000 scholars and teachers. Philadelphia has 916 Sunday-schools, with a total of 195,802 teachers and scholars.

—Whitfield's old Tabernacle, in Tottenham Court road, London, has been declared dangerous, and is now to come down. This will remove one of the most interesting relics in the city.

—The Presbyterian Banner calls attention to the fact that of the 474 ministers who left the Established Church of Scotland at the disruption in 1843, sixty-five are still living, among whom is the venerable ex-president of Princeton College, Rev. James McCosh, D. D., LL. D.

—Amherst College claims the honorable distinction of supplying from its graduates a larger number of ministers than any other American college [illegible] Yale or Oberlin [illegible] as many as Williams [illegible] as Dartmouth [illegible] as many as Harvard.

—The Advance of Chicago thinks that every church should have a name which should declare as far as possible what it is and what it represents. [illegible] "First Presbyterian," [illegible]

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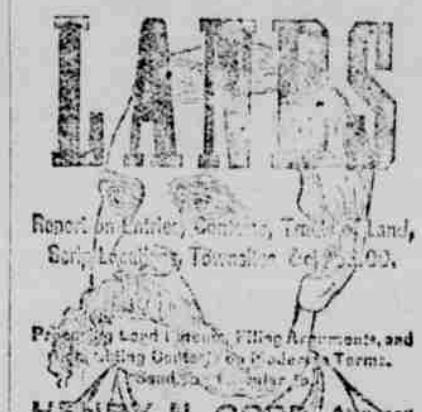

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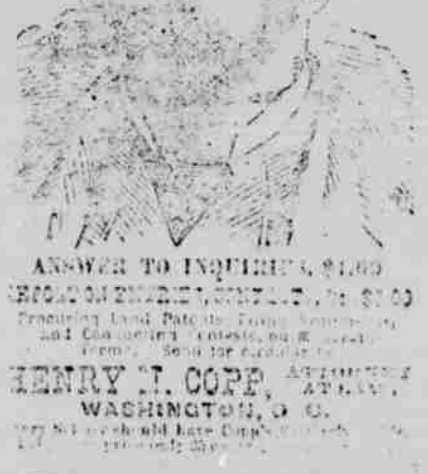

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