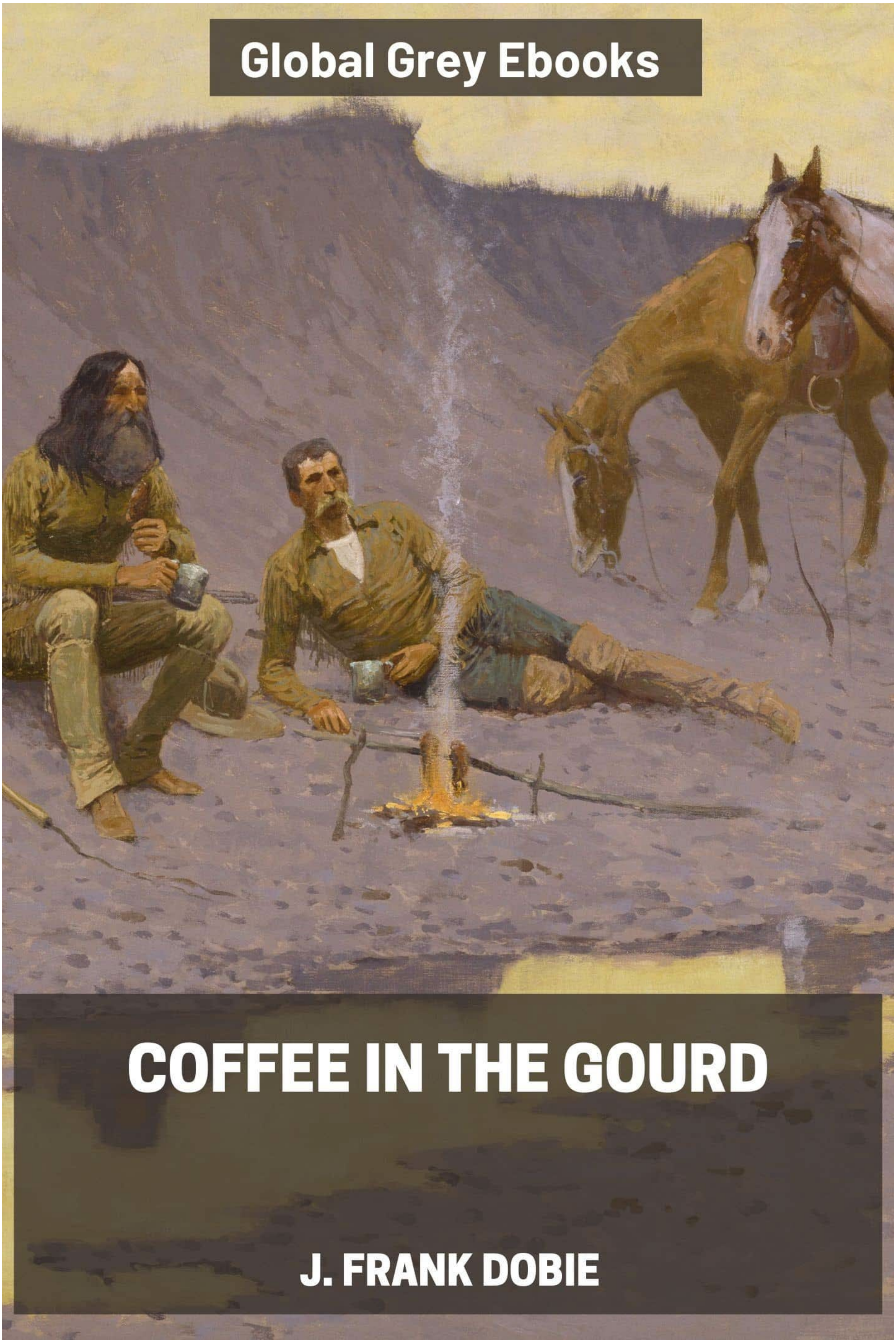

COFFEE IN THE GOURD

J. FRANK DOBIE

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Contents

Rebaptized In Ink

I never have liked the title Publications; it connotes nothing but dry-as-dustness. Yet an organization that issues volumes at more or less regular intervals needs some such general title. As editor, I decided years ago to retain Publications as a sub-title and to give each year-book issued by the Texas Folk-Lore Society an individual name. Now that the first volume under my editorship--a very modest volume that will never set the world on fire--is being reprinted, I seize the chance to give it a Christian name, at the same time allowing it to retain its honorable, but entirely undistinctive, family name. There were only five hundred copies in the original edition; I expect the twelve hundred copies in this edition to be unexhausted when, as must be, I shall some day cease to be editor.

Those who have danced the old square dances will remember the call,

Ducks in the river, going to the ford,
Coffee in a little rag, sugar in a gourd.

The rhyme is quoted by John Craddock in his article on “The Cowboy Dance” in this volume. I think I have heard, as a variant, “coffee in the gourd.” Anyhow, since we are no longer six, coffee is any day better in a gourd than sugar. I keep a gourd to drink out of, and any liquid from it tastes better than from any other receptacle--except a horn.

I would give a good deal if John Craddock could know that he is responsible for the name. As long as he was able to write he kept on contributing to the Texas Folk-Lore Society. Although he never mastered the technique of writing, for he was stricken too young, he had the most original imagination I have ever met. Will Thomas, another contributor in this volume, is gone, too; genial, natural, a representative Texan, and a “man-thinking” he was.

While the plates for reprinting Coffee in the Gourd are being produced through photo-lithography, the use of black India ink, of white China ink, and of paste to insert a few reset lines has eliminated some of the glaring errors in the original edition. I wish I had lived in Shakespeare’s time, when typographical errors were not regarded as a sin.

J. FRANK DOBIE

Austin, Texas
June, 1935

The Texas Folk-Lore Society Since 1916

In 1916, under the able editorship of Dr. Stith Thompson, University of Texas, then secretary of the Texas Folk-Lore Society, the Society issued Number I of its Publications. In that volume was a history of the Society from its organization, December 29, 1909, up to 1916. The activities of the Society since then may be briefly sketched.

Number I was an interesting and representative volume, as a review of its contents, which follows, will show: Preface, George Lyman Kittredge; History of the Folk-Lore Society of Texas, Robert Adger Law; Texas Play-Party Songs and Games, R. E. Dudley and L. W. Payne, Jr.; Finding List for Texas Play-Party Songs, L. W. Payne, Jr.; Religious Beliefs of the Tejas or Hasanias Indians, Adina De Zavala; The State Industrial School Boys' Slang, A. W. Eddins; How Sandy Got His Meat: A Negro Tale, A. W. Eddins; Traditions of the Waco Indians, Dorothy Scarborough; A Mexican Border Ballad, Ben D. Wood; Wild Horse Stories of Southwest Texas, W. Prescott Webb; Folk-Lore and its Influence in Determining Institutions, J. E. Pearce; The Hell Hounds: A Negro Tradition, W. S. Hendrix; The Prehistoric Development of Satire, Stith Thompson; Unexplored Treasures of Texas Folk-Lore, John A. Lomax.

In April, 1916, the Society met at Austin; the next year it met at San Marcos. Then came the World War, a scattering of the folk-lorists, a dissipation of all interests in such past or receding things as folk-lore. For almost five years the Texas Folk-Lore Society was quiescent. However, in the spring of 1922 some of the old members got together and decided to resurrect it. They did. The eighth annual meeting was held in Austin, with an exceedingly interesting program, before well attended and enthusiastic audiences.

Financially, the Society is in good condition. After he had made the "annual public address" in 1916, Professor Barrett Wendell of Harvard University made the Society a gift of $100.00. Of course, during the years of its dormancy, no dues were collected from the members, and many have been lost track of or have themselves lost track of the Society. However, during the past year something like seventy names have been added to the membership. The issuing of the present volume will add many more members, and, with an annual publication, the membership will no doubt increase.

The present publication is made possible only by the generosity and interest of the Board of Regents of the University of Texas. Realizing the educational importance of an interest in Texas folklore and the collection and publication thereof, at their meeting last July, they granted the Society a subsidy of $100.00 to be used in publishing folk-lore collected. This aid in no way makes the Society a University of Texas institution; the Society maintains its original status. The Regents simply recognized the oneness of the ultimate aims of the Society with the ultimate aims of the University of Texas, or with the ultimate aims of any educational institution, for that matter.

Texas Legends Number For 1924

The Texas Folk-Lore Society has decided to issue next year a volume made up altogether of Texas Legends. Already dozens of Texas legends are in hand. But there are hundreds untouched. There is no reader of this page that could not dig up one legend. Therefore, ye Texas folk-lorists, dig! We are bound to have one of the most interesting volumes ever conceived of--to borrow Bully Bottom's eloquence--by the tongue of a Texas man.

Of buried treasure stories alone there must be as many as there ever were Mexican inhabitants in Texas. Apparently, wherever Santa Anna marched, he buried wagon loads of silver; wherever burros trod, they staggered under aparejos of silver bullion destined to be buried in flight from Indians. There are more "lost mines" in Texas by far than there are known ones. Men have gone broke and committed suicide following the legendary directions to buried treasure. There are legends of cunning lobos, of wily and beautiful mustangs like the famous "Pacing White Stallion" or like some "man killer" horse such as Philip Ashton Rollins tells of in his excellent book, The Cowboy. There are legends of daring mavericks, glimpsed only by moonlight, that lived without water, of snow white deer with "mad stones" in their stomachs, of the

"sly coyote trotting here and there
And the little grey hawk hanging aloof in the air."

There are legends of "lovers' leaps," of old fords, of caves, of springs, of trees and plants. There are legends of hermits and of haunted houses. The negroes still have their legendary stories and the Mexicans have theirs. Connected with the names of places and streams, many legends yet linger no doubt, as the astounding legend of the River Brazos, for instance. Surely there will be no dearth of material.

Scattered here and there through Texasana are legends. The Texas Legends number should gather these stray publishings together as well as legends that have never been written down. Whoever comes across a reference to a legend can materially contribute by sending it in. Follow three such references that may serve as models: Legend of the Brazos River, Davis, M.E.M., Under the Man-Fig, pp. 1-3; Mysterious Gold Mine of El Paso County, Hunter's Frontier Magazine, Vol. I, No. 6, pp. 177-179; Legend of Eagle Lake, Texas Pioneer Magazine (The American Sketch Book), Vol. VII, No. 2, pp. 99-102. It is likely that a great many legends have been printed from time to time in the country and city newspapers. Consult editors, question old-timers.

It is quite likely that there will never be another organized effort to gather into one place the legends of Texas. Now is the time to go folk-loring. One restriction, though, should be remembered: that no legend should be adorned, "doctored," or changed from its usual form. It should be written as it is usually told.

L. W. Payne, Jr., Professor of English in the University of Texas, was the first president of the Texas Folk-Lore Society and the chief contributor to the first Publications of the Society. He has lectured on "Texas Folk-Lore" over the state and thus has become widely known aside from his authorship of various textbooks.

Max Sylvius Handman is a native of Rumania, though he has been in America twenty years. He has studied in Germany and Chicago, where he later taught. He is at present Professor of Sociology in the University of Texas, having been here since 1917. During the War he was a member of the Staff of Experts of the American Commission to Negotiate Peace and also on the Committee on Public Information.

W. H. Thomas, a native of Texas, was one of the charter members of the Texas Folk-Lore Society, and is now serving his second term as President of the Society. In 1912 the Society published a monograph of his entitled “Some Current Folk-Songs, of the Negro.” Mr. Thomas is Professor of English at the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas.

Victor J. Smith, a Texan also, while teaching in the Sul Ross State Normal College at Alpine, explored at large the Big Bend Country for Indian remains. At present he is doing graduate work in the University of Chicago.

J. R. Craddock is a son of a pioneer Texas cowman and was born to the cow country. What he writes is not hearsay. He is a good folk-lorist because he is a better cow puncher. His home is in the Spur country, on the Plains. At present he is attending the University of Texas.

W. P. Webb, another Texan, has long been an active worker in Texas folk-lore. He is Adjunct Professor of History in the University of Texas, his “field” being the Texas Rangers in particular and the West in general. For the present year he is on leave of absence doing graduate work in the University of Chicago.

A. W. Eddins contributed to the first number of the Publications of the Texas Folk-Lore society. He is teaching in the city schools of San Antonio and is now gathering Mexican folk-lore.

Dorothy Scarborough, though she is now instructing in English at Columbia University, is a native Texan. For a time she was Assistant Professor of English at Baylor University and has served as President of the Texas Folk-Lore Society. She is the author of three books, The Supernatural in Modern English Fiction, From a Southern Porch, and Humorous Ghost Stories. She is at present working on a book to be entitled Negro Folk-Songs From the South, one chapter of which is to be largely made up of the material used in her article herein printed.

Florence Johnson Scott, Vice-President of the Texas Folk-Lore Society, is interested in journalistic work. She lives at Rio Grande City, where she is collecting folk-lore at first hand.

Mary A. Sutherland, one of the pioneer women of Texas, is the author of The Story of Corpus Christi, a fascinating little book of local history, interspersed with legend and other local lore. Recently she contributed to the library of the Society a rather rare old volume entitled San Antonio de Bexar by William Corner. She is a prominent member of the Daughters of the Confederacy.

Julia Estill, though not of German descent, is a native of the Fredericksburg country about which she writes so intimately. She is a graduate of the University of Texas and is principal of the high school of Fredericksburg.

J. Frank Dobie, editor of the present volume, was born and reared on a ranch in the Texas border country, and although he is now an instructor in the University of Texas, he will always belong to the range.

One Evening As I Sat Courting

BY L.W. PAYNE. JR.

The following ballad was given to me by Mr. Preston Churchill, a freshman student of mine from Fort Worth. He states that he learned the ballad at Fort Worth when he was seven or eight years old (about 1910 or 1911) from a migratory family coming from the vicinity of Amarillo, Texas. They were poor and illiterate, and their chief method of earning a livelihood was picking cotton in the late summer and throughout the autumn. Their custom was to leave in August or early September and go as an entire family to the farmers living from twenty-five to one hundred miles from Fort Worth, remaining away from Fort Worth until the cotton-picking season was over. The ballad was brought back by the family when they returned one winter from their cotton-picking expedition. It was the favorite song among a number that the family sang, and Mr. Churchill was so impressed with it as a child that he memorized it accurately. "I again heard this song," says Mr. Churchill, "in the summer of 1922 at Tucumcari, New Mexico. A sheep-herder--at least I was told that he was a sheep-herder--sang it. He gave about three more verses of the song, but I do not remember them." The last part of the ballad relates the manner of death of the heroine, but Mr. Preston cannot recall any of the details of these additional stanzas, though he thinks the girl grieved herself to death.

The composition has all the earmarks of a late ballad. A few old words seem to indicate that there was an earlier original. In the fifth stanza "rush and cruel" may be a corruption for "rash and cruel" or perhaps "harsh and cruel." The old or obsolete form "gare" for "gore" seems to be a survival of older ballad diction. In the sixth stanza the word "muvven" is entirely new to me. I do not find it recorded in Wright's Dialect Dictionary nor in The Oxford Dictionary. It may be a corruption of "heaven." Mr. Preston is certain that he has reproduced the word exactly as he learned it. In the last stanza, "o'er-casting" is probably a corruption for "o'er-cast them."

One evening as I sat courting,
My brothers seemed to interfere,
Saying, "This courtship must soon be ended,
Or we'll force him a long ways to his grave."

The next morning they rose early
For a game of hunting for to go;
Upon this young man they both insisted
To come along and with them go.

They rode o'er hills and over mountains
And over lands that were unknown,
Till they came to a place in a lonesome valley
And there they killed and left him alone.

They got up, and on returning,
Their sister asked where he might be.
They said, "We lost him in our game of hunting;
No more of him you will ever see."

She went to bed all heavy-hearted,
And in her dreams her true love came,

Saying, “Your brothers killed me rush and cruel,
And in a gare of blood I’ve lain.”

The next morning she rose early,
She dressed herself, put on her gloves,
Saying, “I’ll ride all day to the end of muvven,
Or find the object of my love.”

She rode o’er hills and over mountains
And over lands she did not know,
Till she came to the place in the lonesome valley,
And there she found him dead and cold.

His dark blue eyes were forever faded,
His lips were salty as the brine,
But she kissed him o’er and over, weeping,
“He was a darling friend of mine.”

She got up, and on returning,
Her brothers asked where she had been.
She said, “Hold your tongues, you deceitful villains;
Far across the sea you both will land.”

The next morning they rose early
For a trip across the sea to roam,
But the ship was sunk, and the waves o’er-casting,
And they were buried in the foam.

Human Foundation Sacrifices In Balkan Ballads

BY MAX SYLVIUS HANDMAN

I

“London bridge is falling down” would hardly suggest the lurid and bloody custom of burying a human being under bridges and churches in order to secure their foundations. Yet quite likely this innocent old nursery rhyme harks back to such a custom, and no doubt the belief in the efficacy of such sacrifices survives to this day, and not alone among primitive or barbarian societies. The building of the Brooklyn Bridge brought out a crop of stories of human beings who had disappeared without a trace, and raised many fears in the hearts of easy believers. Fifty years ago Lord Leigh was accused of having sacrificed a human being in order to ensure the security of Stoneleigh Bridge. In 1865, while the Turks were building a block house at Ragusa, they captured two Christian children for the purpose of burying them in the foundation. In 1867, when taking down Blackfriars Bridge in London, the bridge having been built a hundred years before, the architects found in the foundations an assortment of human and animal bones. The foundation of many churches in England when opened up will disclose skeletons built into them. The custom so highly esteemed in Medieval Europe of burying great men in the churches, the remnant of which is still seen in the burials in Westminster Abbey, will be illuminated by the information collected about foundation sacrifices.

By means of the substitution familiar to students of folklore, we find the use of human beings as guardians of the new structure given up for the use of animals. In certain parts of France (Anjou and Maine) the custom survived until recently of burying a frog or another small living animal when erecting a new structure. In parts of England and Scotland it is the custom to bury a man’s nails, a cow’s hoofs, a cat’s claws, or a piece of silver under the door post. In other parts a chicken is struck until its blood covers the stone behind the fire-place. In others again an animal heart is stuck full of pins and buried in the foundation. One is reminded of the burying of statues in the foundations of buildings in Medieval Rome. The Maoris in New Zealand carve on the ground-plates which support the house the figures of prostrate slaves, and so manage to pass off a colorless imitation before these latter-day evil spirits, so fallen from their high state. In fact, the custom of foundation sacrifices is found to exist or to have existed throughout Europe, India, Western Asia, North Africa,--and in due time evidences of its having existed everywhere will be discovered.

In the course of time there appeared a further substitution in the use of blood instead of the whole animal, blood being considered as the place wherein the spirit of the departed is most at home. Hence the killing of a hen in Ireland or the custom of covering the hearthstone with blood referred to above. The besmearing of the doorposts with the blood of a sacrificial lamb referred to in Exodus XII (“And they shall take of the blood and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses.”), which should serve the purpose of “a token upon the houses” so that the plague might not smite the inhabitants therein, may have some connection with the custom under discussion.

The growing skepticism and refinement of the present age make even the use of blood impossible, and we find the Rumanian peasant using water in a red jar, while for the christening of ships wine has been thought more appropriate,--probably red wine at first, and champagne for a battleship, befitting its high and noble purpose.

II

The explanation of a good deal of this strange and weird custom is furnished us by the Arab who consecrates the ground on which he is to raise his tent by slaying a sheep on it with the words “Permission, O possessor of this place.” It is consistent with the primitive and barbaric man’s notion (the barbarian is our next door neighbour) that every place is the abode of a spirit, and to presume to occupy or in any way lay claim to such a place is to infringe on his prerogatives and do violence to his possessions. But to do violence to a spirit cannot pass with impunity. The spirit will sooner or later take his revenge, and the ways in which spirits can torment are many, dark, devious, and dangerous. The best thing to do is to take out a sort of insurance against spiritual molestation by means of some sort of sacrifice. This sacrifice must be in keeping with the importance of the building to be erected. An ordinary tent or house can be bought off with an animal, or a rich man’s house with a slave; but a sacred structure such as a temple or a bridge needs a sacrifice of special worth and importance, one perhaps involving serious pain or discomfort to the one making it.

This primitive or semi-primitive conception of a propitiated spirit willing to allow an invasion of his preserves has its counterpart in another conception. One need not necessarily appease the spirit; one can call upon the good offices of a counter-spirit. Instead of making it amatter between the human being and the spirit, let the two spirits fight it out, provided that one can assure himself of a spirit strong enough. Now nothing can be stronger, according to primitive man, than the spirit of a human being who has been murdered on a certain spot. On that spot the spirit of the massacred human being reigns supreme, and he is indeed too much enrages and revengeful to be an easy one to deal with. And so chapels and temples and churches are placed on the spots where saints have been martyred. The transition from the belief that the spirit of the deceased would protect the spot of his decease to the utilization of his protecting mania for purposes foreign to him, is not at all difficult to make, given sufficient time and the underestimated power of logical reasoning of the primitive mind. In short, from the belief that a murdered man will out of vindictiveness protect the spot of his demise we come to the belief that in order to protect a certain spot against the invasion of a hostile spirit or alien man, it is only necessary to secure the body of some one who shall be buried under the foundations or within the walls of the building to be erected.

A bridge and a church were naturally the first structures to need such a protection. Bridges have always been sacred. The Roman High Priest was called Pontifex Maximus, the Great Bridge Builder. In the Middle Ages bridges were built and cared for by the monks (Blackfriars Bridge). As to temples and churches, the implication is plain enough. It was not until later that the protection of the dead body was extended to fortresses or the building of special cities.

III

Balkan ballads have preserved these beliefs to this day, by embodying them in artistically constructed productions. The Serbs have invested the building of the city of Skodra (Scutari) with the legend that the foundations could not be laid until the builders interred the wife of one of the three leaders of the undertaking. The Magyars give a similar legendary account of the building of the city of Deva, where the goodwill of the landowning spirit was obtained by means of the sacrifice of the wife of one of the builders. Among the Bulgars the ballad tells how the masterbuilder when he saw approaching a certain young woman, fell from the scaffolding and was killed. His dying injunction was that the foundations of the city of Solun

(Saloniki) could never be raised until the young woman in question should be interred. (Overcoming of one spirit by another.) Among the Greeks the ballad centers around the building of the bridge over the river Arta, which required the sacrifice of the wife of the masterbuilder. Among the Albanians, it is the Fox's bridge over the river Dibra which carries a similar tale.

The Rumanian ballad is the only one dealing with the building of a Christian Church. It is the most complete artistically, and at the same time it is most familiar to the present writer.

The church around which the ballad centers is the Cathedral of Curtea de Arges, the mausoleum of the reigning Rumanian dynasty. The king who is spoken of in this ballad, lived in the sixteenth century. It is probable that this Rumanian ballad was taken over from other Balkan sources, probably Bulgarian (as indicated by the similarity of the name of the hero in the two ballads, Manole in Rumanian and Mano in Bulgarian) and applied to the building of this famous cathedral. I venture this as a probability not because the sixteenth century is too late a period for foundation sacrifices, but because of the greater likelihood of borrowing, in the light of the history of the Balkan Peninsula. The ballad runs as follows:

The Black King is looking for a spot fit to have raised on it a great and noble church, a monument to himself and a place of worship. He meets a shepherd on the road and asks him if in his wanderings he has come across the ruins of an old structure. The shepherd offers to lead him to that spot, and there he decides to erect his sacred edifice. His staff of workmen is made up of nine famous builders headed by Manole (Emanoil), the great masterbuilder. The building begins, but what is raised during the day crumbles during the night, and this goes on for a week. Then Manole thinks and meditates and while doing so he falls asleep. In his sleep he has a dream which tells him that they are laboring in vain until they shall immure within the rising walls a beautiful young wife. Manole tells his dream to his fellow-workers and they all swear to immure the first wife from among those of the workmen who shall appear bringing her husband his daily food. All the other builders warn their wives of the approaching peril and they stay away. Honest and heroic Manole alone abides by the understanding and says nothing. With a trembling heart be raises his eyes in the morning and observes from afar the faithful and devoted wife bringing his food to him. With an agonized spirit he prays to the Lord to send a fearful rain so that all the rivers will rise and all the streams will swell and so prevent the faithful woman from coming to her death. But though the rain floods and the streams swell, she is not prevented in her coming. Then Manole prays that a wind may blow, strong and terrifying, that will tear out trees by their roots, and so frighten his wife that she will tarry long enough for someone else to come before her. Then the winds blow, but no more than the waters can they deter her. In despair he prays that the Lord send a deep and dense darkness to make her stumble and scatter the food so that she will have to go back home and prepare more. The darkness comes; she stumbles, scatters the food, but faithfully returns home and prepares more, and at last bravely arrives at the place of work. Broken hearted, but hiding his emotions, Manole takes her by the hand and leads her playfully to the wall, and playfully he and the other builders begin to put brick on brick around her. She smiles at first, but on seeing that the work proceeds rapidly and in earnest, she becomes frightened. She begs her husband to desist from his play as the wall is hurting her. With a sigh he begs her quietly to bear her burden and be sacrificed in order that the cathedral may at last be raised. She has no other thought now but that of the child left at home motherless. Who will nurse it? she begs. The fairies will see it and they will nurse it, replies Manole. Who will bathe it? The rain will fall and will bathe it. Who will sway its cradle until it falls asleep? The wind will blow gently and will sway it to sleep.

I have given only that part of the ballad which bears directly on the subject of foundation sacrifices. In its present forms with its numerous variants it contains other matters dealing in some way with the same cathedral or with the mythical master-builder Manole. These have been incorporated into the ballad In a manner familiar to students of folklore. That the evident purpose of the ballad is to glorify wifely duty and praise honesty in abiding by a contract does not invalidate the fundamental character of it as a literary survival of the old custom of foundation sacrifices.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

The general subject of Foundation Sacrifices will be found treated of by A. C. Haddon in The Study of Man, London, 1898; E. B. Tylor in Primitive Culture, Vol. I, p 104, sqq.; E. Westermarck, The Origin and Development of Moral Ideas, Vol. I, pp. 461-66 (bibliography) ; and the article entitled, “Foundation and Foundation Rites” in Hastings’ Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol. 6.

The Balkan Ballads are collected and discussed by Lazar Saineanu in Studii Folklorice, Bucuresti, 1896, pp. 47-66.

The Serbian ballad in a German translation by Jacob Grimm is in a collection entitled Serbische Volkslieder published by the Insel-Verlag, Leipzig; in a French translation it will be found in Chants de Guerre de la Serbie by Leo D’Orfer, Paris, 1916, pp. 177-184; and in an English translation in Servian Popular Poetry, translated by John Bowring, London, 1827, pp. 64-75.

The Bulgarian version I take from Saineanu; although Prof. R. Tsanoff informs me that he has published an account of the Bulgarian ballad in English, I have not been able to find it.

The Greek version will be found in English in Vol. I, pp. 70-73, of Greek Folk Poesy by Lucy M. J. Garnett, London, 1896.

The Rumanian version has many variants. The most familiar one is that given by the poet Vasile Alexandri, although it is abridged and polished; see Poeziile Populare ale Romanilor, Ed. Minerva, pp. 122-126. The accepted scientific version is that given by G. Dem. Theodorescu in Poesii Populare Romane, Bucuresti,. 1885, although the spelling, fashionable among academic circles at that time and employed by Theodorescu, makes it a little difficult reading; a more recent collection published by the Rumanian Academy and edited by Gr. G. Tocilescu entitled Mat erialuri Foictori stice, Bucuresti, 1900, gives, three variants on pp. 18-28; while another variant will be found in Cantece de Tara by Tudor Pamfile, Bucuresti, 1913, pp. 19-24. Finally, a collection of folklore from among the Rumanians living in Serbia, Dela Romanii din Serbia, by G. Giuglea and G. Valsan, Bucuresti, 1913, gives two variants on pp. 177-183.

The Decline And Decadence Of Folk Metaphor

BY W. H. THOMAS

The Encyclopedia Britannica says that the literature of folklore falls into two sharply defined classes, viz., synthetic works and collections. Correspondingly, folklorists may be placed in two classes, those that merely collect, and those that interpret and compare. Still a third class might be made-those that enjoy. I feel that if such a division is not recognized, and the pursuit of folklore made to conform thereto, we folklorists are in danger of sinking to the level of philatelists, numismatists, and others of that ilk. I also feel that chief stress should be laid on the interpreting and comparing of folklore, and not on the collecting. The latter requires no great mental effort. Those that can do this best have to thank geographical situation or temporal juncture. Of course we must collect and enjoy, but it is, perhaps, not amiss for me to urge upon the members of this society, thus early in its career, to try to see folklore in its largest significance. To be brief, if art has always been the handmaid of religion, what Is folklore to be the handmaid of? To me the pursuit of folklore shall always be worth while for the light it throws on the evolution of society and its institutions. For instance, as I was collecting these metaphors I was very much interested in seeing bow far they chime in with that relatively recent theory that is attracting so much attention these days, viz., economic determinism--or the theory that art, both in content and in form, has it roots deep down in the economic life of a folk.

I have used the word “metaphor” advisedly but somewhat loosely. Some of the things I have in mind are metaphors, some similes, some comparisons, and some merely pieces of imagery. It is simply this. Unlettered folk seem to be fond of making comparisons to natural objects to express their ideas and feelings. Vividness and freshness are qualities always present. I will not venture to say what I mean by a folk, further than that the term seems to me to include anybody that is not a folklorist.

The assertion that folk metaphor has declined and decayed implies that folks have declined and decayed. This is true: and an exposition of this fact would have been only the converse of my thesis,--and more tangible; but then it would have been an essay in sociology and not in folklore.

I have made a simple classification of all the folk metaphors, similes, and comparisons that have chanced to get embedded in my memory. We have (1) those that have’ been inherited, and (2) those that have been created by the present generation. Of course, both kinds are employed by the present generation. But their employment is now less frequent and their creation seems to have almost ceased. I have further divided the first class into (1) those that have lost absolutely their appositeness and (2) those that are, I might say, illegal. I shall set down here for you only a few that are typical. The inapposite class, I am sure, will appeal to those of you who have at some time caught yourself asking, “Well, I wonder how that could have originated?” There is now and has always been current in my community the saying, with reference to a man that is financially very able, “He’s got more money than Carter had oats.” Yet there never has been a man in this community by the name of Carter and the acreage devoted to oats has always been insignificant. Hence you can see that the phrase has lost every particle of its force. Another of this kind is “as tight as Dick’s hatband.” Just who Dick was and how tight the hat band was that he wore will probably never be known. The following similes, metaphors, and comparisons I have classed, generally, as illegal: “as hungry as a wolf,” “as strong as an ox,” as mad as a setting hen,” “as cold as a cart wheel,” “as limber as a dish rag,” “as happy as a lark,” “as proud as a peacock,” “as meek as a lamb,” “as crazy as a bat,” “as drunk as a fool,” “hot as blue blazes,” “quick as lightning.”

A good example of pure metaphor is: “If you don’t mind, you will go through the forest, and take a crooked stick after all,” said of a young lady who has failed to gather her rosebuds while she might have gathered them.

I call these illegal because they are the property of a dead generation. For instance, how meaningless is it for a present-day person to say, “I am as hungry as a wolf,” when he has never seen a wolf except at a circus. What sense is there in saying, “as mad as a settin’ hen,” when an incubator is on almost every farm? “As strong as an ox” was once expressive when that animal was used for draft purposes, but one rarely finds an ox-team to-day. Take the metaphor of the crooked stick referred to above. I once heard a young lady use that metaphor as she sat with her feet on a steam radiator. However, there are a few figures in this list that, like Shakespeare, are not for an age but for all time. For instance, “as quick as lightning.” The age cannot be imagined when that will not be apropos.

Life has been said to be a complete correspondence to environment. The same may be said of successful figurative language. This is why I say that folk metaphor has decayed. It no longer reflects its environment but that of a past age. And there seems to be nothing in our present age that stimulates metaphor. However, the various technical slangs of today come pretty near to corresponding to the metaphors of folks when all communities were mostly agricultural and domestic. I believe I can, by using a single illustration, make you realize that folk metaphor has decayed. A man of two generations ago, when he desired to express the intensity of the cold of a morning of low temperature, generally said, “It’s as cold as a cart wheel this morning.” This same man’s grandson always says, “Gee, it’s cold as hell this morning, ain’t it?”

Right here a pertinent inquiry is, Why has folk metaphor decayed and declined? Without expatiating, I contend that the decline is due to the overshadowing of the country by the towns, the spread of book education, and the worship of something we call Efficiency, physical exhaustion, and the almost universal desire in America to become something other than what we are. I don’t believe that metaphor will ever revive as long as so many of us are divorced from reality. A quiescent stage of social evolution, too, is, I think, its most favorable medium.

The task I have set myself is to collect all these folk metaphors, similes, and comparisons that I feel sure have come into existence within the last few years. I regret that I haven’t a larger collection of these newly coined comparisons, but I have been collecting only a few months and this is a task that cannot be hurried. I here set down a few that 1 know to be of recent origin. Within the past year this simile has gained currency in my neighborhood. A negro from the day-laboring class meets another who has a more stable means of livelihood. The latter says, “Hello, Bill, how you gettin’ ‘long these days?” The reply is: “I don’t know--living like a wild cat--don’t catch nothing, don’t eat nothing.” I once rode up to an old negro that was “chopping cotton” with several assistants. I asked him how many men he was working. When he replied “five,” I counted them, and then pointing to his ten-year-old boy, I asked if he called him a man. He said, “Boss, he’s a man at the table.” I was once present at the birth of a metaphor. One little negro was busy mending a plow, while a smaller negro was pestering him. The larger one then said to the smaller one, “If you don’t stop, I’ll make you rabbit away from here.” That was the first time I ever heard “rabbit” used as a verb. But it is now more or less common. And any one that has ever seen a Molly Cottontail get up and seek safety in flight knows that this metaphor is almost the perfection of language. One of the most picturesque expressions to denote loyalty I ever heard is this: “I likes you; I’ll go to the bluff and look over with you,” implying that the one would succor the other almost to self-sacrifice. The last one I shall exhibit I know, by applying the method of the higher criticism, to be, in origin, synchronous with the high cost of living. Two old cronies meet, not having seen each other in several years. One says, “Bill, how much family have you got now?” Bill replies with a smile of good fortune, “Pshaw, fellow, there’s nothing running around my house but the fence.”

The Cowboy Dance

BY J. R. CRADDOCK

Turning back to the west of some ten years ago, before the automobiles and phonographs became numerous, before the country became too thickly populated, we find an honest, hospitable people who worked with a will and played with a zest. It was then truly the land of the open door, where the stranger was always welcome and a man's word was his bond. Here people lived a simple life of contentment, untroubled by driving ambition and free from all convention. Their "gatherings" were few, and at them the individuals felt themselves under no obligation to conform. Hence, the picnics, the "meetings," the "sociables," the dances, were all highly flavored with the individuality of the locality,--but none more than the cowboy dance.

An old-time cowboy dance was not announced in any specified manner. The news was given out and scattered by means of the "grapevine telegraph." At the beginning, several weeks before the dance was to "come off," several men were deputized to "ride it up." These men made a tour of the country and invited every person they happened to meet, regardless of who it might be. The invitation usually contained the phrase, "Everybody invited and nobody slighted."

Following the invitation to the dance, there was always a noticeable bustle about the community. Even the steadiest working ranch-hands "knocked off" early, dressed in their "Sunday go-to-meeting" clothes, and rode away in a mysterious manner. A cowboy often put himself to a great deal of trouble to take his girl to a dance. Buggies were always scarce in the ranching country, and sometimes it was necessary for the "puncher" who contemplated taking his "lady friend" to a dance to hire a buggy from a livery stable at the nearest town. A typical case of the trouble a cowboy will put himself to on an occasion like this is that of Bill , who had a girl living twelve miles from the ranch where he worked. To make arrangements with the girl, he rode twenty-four miles. To procure a buggy he rode sixteen miles to town and drove the same distance coming back, making thirty-two miles. Then he drove to the girl's home, covering, the twelve miles, and thence to the dance, covering eight miles. After the dance Bill drove the eight miles back to the girl's house, the twelve miles to the ranch, and made the thirty-two mile round trip to return the buggy. In all, till covered a distance of one hundred and twenty-eight miles, in order to take his "best girl" to the dance.

Some time during the day on which the dance was to "come off," several of the neighbors "dropped in" to help prepare for it. The furniture was all moved into one room or into the yard. The home stock were fed early and turned into the "starve out," to make room for the visitors' horses in the corral. Pictures and ornaments were usually left in their places, these forming the only decorations for the rooms. The pictures for the most part were enlargements of the members of the family or of near relations; the other ornaments, decorated cards upon which were printed such maxims as "Welcome," "God bless our home," "What is a home without a mother," and "God bless mother and father."

The people began to arrive about sundown. Each group was hailed with loud and merry greetings. Gossip occupied the time until the arrival of the fiddler, but when he put in his appearance, all concern and attention were bestowed upon him. The fiddler was usually a unique character. He was in most cases a lazy, shiftless individual who never was known to refuse a drink. He had an "improvised" vocabulary, he "opined" and "calculated" and considered his own judgment as final and infallible on all subjects. For a long time he would tune his fiddle before the admiring crowd. With startling skill he would fasten his knife to the bridge of it to intensify the sound. He had a rattlesnake rattler always on the inside of his fiddle as a charm against dampness. When the fiddler started playing, all signs of his habitual laziness vanished, and he became strangely animated. He “kept time” with his head and his foot simultaneously, moving and tilting his head to the variation of his music while he patted his foot. The fiddlers all learned to play without instruction; therefore each of them had a different interpretation for the tunes they knew.

When a sufficient crowd had gathered, the dancing began. The girls were lined up on one side of the room and given chairs. If there were not enough chairs to “go round,” trunks and boxes were used. When a man wished to dance with a young lady, he went over to her and said, “Pardner for the next dance?”, and if she had none, he added, “May I have the next?” If she gave her consent, the bargain was closed. If a man was refused a dance by a girl he was “stung” or “stood up” by her, and should he be “stung” twice in one night he was considered “slighted” by the lady, and he customarily would not ask her for another dance.

Each man who danced made a donation to the fiddler. The dance usually started with a waltz, which was very beautiful. The cowboy held the lady’s right hand in his left and put his right arm about her. He was always considerate and held a large handkerchief in his right hand to keep from soiling the lady’s dress.

After the dance had been “going on” for some time, those who came from a distance began to arrive. When these late corners got close enough that they could hear the music of the fiddle, they would “pour the quirt” to their horses and ride yelling up to the very door. The men often came as far as forty miles to attend a dance, and it always seemed that the farther they came the more popular they were with the girls.

When the square dance started, a “caller” was selected, who automatically became the center of all attraction. The caller was always some person who was forward and “loud-mouthed.” He had a care-free way about him that was evident even in dress. His boots were apt to be of the fanciest pattern that could be had; he would likely wear his “lock-rowelled” spurs. He would have a rattlesnake skin slipped over his belt, which he buckled on the side instead of in the center. His shirt was of a fancy pattern and a flaming color; he wore a “stamped leather, collar” with a gaudy tie, having a small section of cow’s horn slipped over it to serve in place of a knot. A pair of new buckskin gloves hung from the pocket of his “peg-topped” trousers and a “Bull Durham” tag hung from a sack in his shirt pocket. He assumed an indifferent air and seemed utterly unaware of the importance attached to him. The caller sometimes led in the dance and called for it at the same time. Sometimes calling from memory, filling in forgotten parts with new words, and often inventing entirely new calls, he chanted the calls in a rhythmic monotone that fitted well with the music of the fiddle. The performance of the dancers varied with the calls of the caller.

The swinging formed the major part of the dance. One way of swinging was by grasping the hands as the couple passed, another was by the interlocking of the elbows as the dancers met, followed by a quick turn and a release. The dancers moved with a kind of shuffle that was timed to the music. The feet of the dancers as they pounded the floor in unison stirred up the dust from between the boards, and several times during the night the dance was halted until the dirt could be swept out into the yard. It was not an unusual thing for a girl to dance her shoe soles through in one night. The “punchers’” thick-soled boots of course lasted longer.

The “calls” of the cowboy dance were exceedingly picturesque. A few examples of these calls follow:

Choose your partner, form a ring,
Figure eight, and double L swing.

First swing six, then swing eight,
Swing 'em like swinging on a gate.

Ducks in the river, going to the ford,
Coffee in a little rag, sugar in a gourd.

Swing 'em once and let 'em go,
All hands left and do-ce-do.

You swing me, and I'll swing you,
And we'll all go to heaven, in the same old shoe.

Chase the possum, chase the coon,
Chase that pretty girl 'round the room.

How will you swap, and how'll you trade
This pretty girl for that old maid?

Wave the ocean, wave the sea,
Wave that pretty girl back to me.

Swing your partners, once in a while,
Swing them all in Indian style.

Rope the cow, and kill the calf,
Swing your partner, a round and a half.

Swing your partners before you trade,
Grab 'em back and promenade.

Grab your pardner and sail away,
Hurry up, it's breaking day.

Swing 'em round, and round an' round,
Pockets full of rocks to weigh 'em down.

There comes a girl I used to know,
Swing her once and let her go.

When you meet your pardner, pat her on the head,
If she don't like coffee, give her corn bread.

Three little sisters, all in a row,
Swing 'em once and let them go.

Old shoe sole is about wore out,
Grab a girl and walk about.

Swing 'em east and swing 'em west,
Swing the girl that you like best.

There was something about the cowboy dances that cast a spell over participants and onlookers alike. Those who were forbidden by the strict country church to dance came often to look upon the gaieties of their "sinner friends" with envy and hunger in their eyes. At first they might refuse stoutly the invitations to dance, but too often the tantalizing music of the fiddle, and the high nasal twang of the caller's voice caused even the most religious to join in the dance. When a church member took part in a dance he was said to have "danced himself out of the church" and he had to be "saved" at the next revival. With some persons it was a habit to "dance out of the church" in the winter and to be "saved" at the "camp meeting" the following summer when dancing was not in vogue.

Black coffee was served to the guests in the kitchen, where the children were put to sleep on the floor. As for the men, there was always a little whiskey on hand somewhere; between dances some man would wink at another and motion with his head. Following this mysterious procedure, several of the men would leave the room, and the bottle would be passed around, each man taking a swallow. In some instances, the boys would forget and take too much and get on a "high lonesome." As long as the men behaved they were not molested, but when a man got "tanked up" and showed it, he was frequently "cooled off" by a series of blows on the head, and then carried away to the harness shed and locked up or guarded until he was sober or until the dance "broke up."

The dancers as they moved about the room presented a pleasing spectacle. Singling them out, one would be impressed by the great variety that the gathering afforded. Style was not followed so closely then as now, and the girls would be dressed in many ways. The dresses were long, reaching almost to the ankle. White dresses with light pink or blue ribbons were the most popular. Between dances the girls would "fix up" in the dressing room. In those days a girl would not powder her nose in public. The boys were dressed in various ways; some wore shoes and common suits, while others wore fancy hand-made boots and all of the other regalia that make up a cowboy's "garb." The farmer boys would wear "hand-.me-down" boots in their effort to copy the cowboy's dress.

The dance was often varied by amusing or exciting incidents. When a "new beginner" wanted to learn to dance he was given a little extra attention. All care was taken to get him "balled up." Some of the girls were unusually strong, and when they swung the "new beginner," they would sometimes send him reeling against the wall; the dance was prolonged beyond its usual length for his special benefit, that he might get "blowed" or "winded."

The dances usually lasted all night and into the next day. Some of the "punchers" who had ridden forty or fifty miles to attend a dance might sometimes have to leave early in order to begin work in the morning. When a man left he announced his "farewell" dance, danced it, and departed. Sometimes, though, after he had mounted his horse and started away, his ears caught the strains of a favorite selection. When he heard these, he could not resist the temptation to return for another "farewell" dance. Then he danced in his "chaps" and his riding clothes. His return often arose from his desire to "show off" his new "chaps," quirt, or other trapping. As he reluctantly rode away, he would sometimes give the cowboy's call. This call is weird and melancholy; it is the call that the cowboy uses as he rides around a herd at night to solace himself and to quiet the restless cattle. This call is strange in that it cannot be imitated. It comes from the depths of the cowboy's soul, mellowed by loneliness and inspired by the spell of the prairies. It was a fitting and impressive farewell from the lonely rider as he started away on his long ride.

When the dance broke up, the people shouted to one another as they "hooked up." After many farewells, they drove away, shouting as they went. Each man "prided" himself on his "rig," and to show off he would try to "pass everything on the road." The departing crowd would often leave the gates open expecting the last corner to close them, arid the land owners habitually rode their fences and shut their gates on the morning following a dance. Some of the boys would ride over fences and leave them down, or play such pranks as taking the gates off the hinges and dragging them with their ropes. After the rattle of the last buggy had died away, the "blowout" became a part of the community history.

Miscellany Of Texas Folk-Lore

BY W. P. WEBB

The folk-lore presented here is nothing more than a miscellaneous collection. A few of the selections bear unmistakable signs of authorship; others are parodies on well-known religious or popular songs. Each selection, however, has this feature in common with all folk-lore: it lives and is handed down by word of mouth by some class or group.

I

HOBO SONGS

The first songs I shall give were collected from two hobos who were placed in the police station at Cuero, Texas. They were picked up as suspicious characters after a local diamond robbery and placed in prison. Upon being liberated, they found it impossible to get out of town, and voluntarily returned to the police station and asked to be locked up for the night and fed. One of the school boys happened to get in conversation with them and got one song in the hobo's own handwriting. The hobo wrote an excellent business hand, and the punctuation and capitalization showed him to be a man of more than average education. On the morning--following I went down to the police station and got some other songs. The hobos talked freely and interestingly. They said they learned the songs when in the I. W. W. (International Workmen of the World, or I Won't Work). They spoke of the I. W. W.'s as "Wobblers." I asked one where they were from. He shrugged his shoulders, sucked his cigarette, and said: "Oh, everywhere. We've been to the Pacific and to the Atlantic, so we can't say where we're from." After a moment he added rather whimsically, "We been everywhere looking for work, and--never able to find it."

The first song, an obvious parody, was sung to the good religious tune of "Hallelujah, Thine the Glory."

HALLELUJAH, BUM AGAIN

When spring time does come,
O won't we have fun.
We'll throw up our jobs
And we'll go on the bum.

Chorus:

Hallelujah, I'm a bum,
Hallelujah, bum again,
Hallelujah, give us a handout
To revive us again.

I went up to a house
And I knocked on the door,
A lady came out
And said, "You've been here before."

Chorus:

I went up to a house
And I asked for a piece of bread,

A lady came out
And said, “The baker is dead.”

Chorus:

I went up to a house
And I asked for a pair of pants;
A lady came out
And said, “I don’t clothe no tramps.”

Chorus:

I went into a saloon,
And I bummed him for a drink;
He gave me a glass
And he showed me the sink.

Chorus:

“Why don’t you go to work
Like other men do?”
“How the hell are we going to work
When there’s no work to do.”

Chorus:

YOU’LL EAT PIE BYE AND BYE

Holy Rollers and Jumpers come out,
And they holler and jump and they shout,
But when eating time comes around they will say,
“You will eat on that glorious day.”

Chorus:

You will eat bye and bye,
In that glorious land way up high,
Work and pray, live on hay,
You’ll eat pie in the sky bye and bye, that’s no lie.

Another ballad, and the best one given by the hobo, is entitled “Tramp, Tramp, Tramp, Keep on a-Tramping.” He said he learned it out in Denver where the “wobblers” ran the Salvation Army off the street. The tune is familiar to all.

TRAMP, TRAMP, TRAMP, KEEP ON A-TRAMPING

He walked up and down the street
Till the shoes fell off his feet,
Across the street he spied a lady cooking stew.
And he said, “How do you do,
May I chop some wood for you?”
But what the lady told him made him feel so blue.

Chorus:
“Tramp, tramp, tramp, keep on a-trampin’,
There is nothing here for you;
If I catch you ‘round again,
You will wear the ball and chain,
Keep a-trampin’, that’s the best thing you can do.”

Across the street a sign he read,
"Work for Jesus," so it said.
And he said, "Here is my chance, I'll surely try."
And he kneeled upon the floor
Until his knees got rather sore,
But at eating time he heard the preacher cry.

Chorus:

Down the street he met a cop,
And the copper made him stop,
And he said: "When did you blow into town?"
And he took him to the judge,
But the judge he said, "Ah fudge!
Bums that have no money need not come around."

Chorus:

The last song is but a parody of "A Soldier of the Legion."

THE DYING HOBO AT THE WESTERN WATER TANK

Out in Denver on a cold November day,
Inside an empty box-car, a dying hobo lay.
His partner stood beside him, with low and drooping head,
Listening to the last words the dying hobo said.

"Tell my sweetheart back in Denver not to weep for me,
Not a tear in her eye must lurk,
For I'm going to a land where I don't have to work;
You can sleep out nights, and don't have to wear no socks,
And little streams of whiskey come trickling out of the rocks.

"Hark! I hear a whistling, I must catch her on the fly;
Farewell, partner, I must leave you, I'm not afraid to die."
The hobo stopped, his head fell back, as he sang his last refrain.
His partner swiped his hat and socks, and caught the east bound train.

II

RAILROAD SONGS

Ole J. Gould owns the Katy line, the C. B. & the Q.,
Owns the C. & A, Cannon Ball, gettin' richer every day,
And if you niggers doan look out, he'll own the Santa Fe.

A few more words I'll write to you,
Before I bid you all adieu,
And if I live two months or three,
I vow I'll leave old Santa Fe.

GOING TO LEAVE THE I. & G.

I went down to my mother's house,
I overstayed my time,
Early Monday morning.
The boss struck me thirty-nine,

Called me in to breakfast,
And scarcely gave me time,
To eat a piece of buttered bread
And an old bacon rind.

Chorus:
Going to leave the I. & G.
Tra-la-la-la-la,
Going upon the T. & P.
Tra-la-la-la-la.

Ole Mistress, will you be so kind
And give me a bite to eat,
A little, piece of buttered bread,
And a little piece of meat,
A little piece of custard pie,
To soothe my appetite.

Chorus:

All along the I. & G.,
Waiting for a freight,
Roving the old Island down,
With not a bite to eat.
If the brakeman catches me,
My waiting's all in vain,
It's skip out, you jolly bum,
And catch the next freight train.

Chorus:

III

SLUM SONGS

THE PEANUT GIRL AND THE POLICEMAN

Listen to me, all you fair maids,
While a story I will tell;
It's all about a peanut girl,
Who cut a mighty swell.

She lived with her mother up seven pair of stairs,
On' the Bowery near Grand;
But her place of business was on Broadway,
Where she kept a peanut stand.

A rowdy or a spree one day,
As down the street was bent,
He ran against the peanut stand,
And away the peanuts went.

A young policeman standing by
With a big club in his hand,
He marched the rowdy off to jail
For upsetting the peanut stand.

She loved the young policeman then,
And he bought her peanuts too,
She loved his German silver star,
And his coat all trimmed in blue.

They loved each other like Shanghai fowls,
Roving round in spring;
They went to the lager beer saloon
To hear the Dutchmen sing.

Some part of the song seems to have been left out here, as the narrative is broken.

The Atlantic Cable brought no news,
And peanuts took a rise;
And the peanut girl is a bankrupt now,
And the young policeman lied.

The next song belongs in the same class as “Albert,” the famous negro song. It makes use of a refrain at the end of each stanza that seems absolutely meaningless.

DEPEND ON ME, CHOLLIE, GOD KNOWS

Twinkle, twinkle, said a little star,
Here comes Brady on a cable car,
Knockin’ out windows, breakin’ down doors,
Tryin’ to keep even with the Sandy slows (St. Louis--)

‘Pend on me, Chollie, God knows.

Brady walked down the street,
Stepped into Duncan’s saloon,
Told old man Duncan to consider himself under arrest.
Old man Duncan placed a 44 right in Brady’s chest.

‘Pend on me, Chollie, God knows.

News came around that Old Brady was dead,
Came to his wife. “It can’t be so,
For my husband left here ‘bout an hour ago.”

‘Pend on me, Chollie, God knows.

“Mama, mama, give me my hat,”
“No, my chile, I can’t do that,
Wrap this shawl around your head,
Go and see if yo’ daddy is dead.”

‘Pend on me, Chollie, God knows.

Next morning at nine o’clock,
Buggies and hearses had formed a line,
To carry old Brady to the burying ground.

‘Pend on me, Chollie, God knows.

Friends and relations were knocking about,
When they heard that Brady was dead.
They all went home and dressed in red,
Came down the street singin’”Brady went to hell with a Stetson on.”

‘Pend on me, Chollie, God knows.

(Given by Walter Roher, Cuero, Texas.)

IV

COWBOY SONGS

More of the cowboy songs than songs of any other class have been collected in Texas. These given here have been obtained at first hand from the cowmen. They are interesting as variants to the songs collected by Mr. Lomax and others.

The following songs were obtained from a man who lives at Uvalde. He had been a cowboy, but as ranching has about passed out, he has turned his attention to the moving picture business instead. He had in his possession a home talent production of wild west life produced by himself in the rough mountainous country of Uvalde, which he carried from town to town in automobile and showed for one or two nights at local theaters. From him I obtained “Pap Runnels” and “Boggus Creek.”

PAP RUNNELS

Well, mates, I don’t like stories,
Nor I’m not going to act,
But as for around this campfire,
That is no truthful fact.

You all have heard of Boggus,
I used to run with Jim.
And many a hard day scoutin’
I’ve had long-side o’ him.

We camped at old Fort Reno,
A trapper there used to dwell,
They called him old Pap Runnels,
You scouts all know him well.

We camped at Powder River,
And killed a buffalo calf,
We cooked a piece of liver
And baked a piece of ham.

While resting quite contented,
We heard three shots or four;
Putting out the fire and listening,
We heard a dozen more.

So hastening to our rifles,
And fixing on our gear,
For we knew that old Pap Runnels
Had fixed his traps up there.

So mounting quick as lightning,
To go was our desire,
Too late, the painted Hasques
Had set the house on fire.

We tied our horses quickly
And waded up the stream;

Among the vines and rushes
We heard a muffled scream.

Among the vines and bushes
A little girl did lie;
Saying, “My father is murdered
And here I must die.”

BOGGUS CREEK

As I rode in the town of Fort Griffin in the spring of ‘83
An old Texas cowman came riding up to me,
Saying, “How do you do, young fellow, and how would you like to go
And spend one summer season in the hills of Mexico?”

“It’s being out of employment,” to the drover I did say,
“For me to go to New Mexico depends upon the pay,
But if you pay good wages and transportation too,
I wouldn’t mind to go along and spend a month or two.”

“Oh, yes, we pay good wages, free transportation too,
But if you grow homesick, Fort Griffin bound to go,
I’ll never loan you a horse to ride from the hills of Mexico.”

“O listen to that old driver’s talk, O listen what a gag.”
It’s ten or twenty cowboys, all stout able-bodied men,
Our trip it was a pleasant one--
Until we reached old Boggus Creek out in old Mexico.

Now our pleasures have all ended and our troubles have begun
The first hail storm we had on us, Gosh, how those cattle run.
They run through thorns and thickets, our lives we had no show,
For there’s no worse hell on earth than the hills of Mexico.

Go home to wives and sweethearts, tell others not to go
To the God-forsaken country of old New Mexico.

V

NEGRO SONGS AND STORIES

The following two stories were contributed to me by Cuero school girls.

THE BLACK CAT STORY

One night it wuz late befo’ my ole man, Alex, come hum, an it wuz late befo’ I could wash de dishes. As I went to pouhr out de dish watah, I saw a big post standin’ in the yahd. I nevah see dat post dar befo’, so I watched it, and sho nuff dat post ‘gin to grow biggah and biggah. Den ater a spell it ‘gin to grow littler and littler entil it tu’ned into a trunk. Dis trunk was all solid gold, wid knobs of black cat heads, and deys eyes wuz shinin’ lak fire. Den I wuz skeered an called Alex, but Alex say he couldn’t see nothin’. But I looked and see dat trunk jus’ a-rollin’ around de connah by itself. I run to my room an got into my baid and undah de covah, and evah time I look up I see de black cat standin’ dar.

THE HAUNTED HOUSE OF CUERO

Ma and me had been washin’ fo’ ole Misses Stell all day, an’ she jus’ would hab it no yuther way that we must stay and make her some o’ them flapjacks what you eat wid sorgum lasses which we uster make. An’, sir, just about when we done got through and cleaned up de keechen, I looked out de window, an' I sees a great big black cloud a-risin' from de north. I jus' gits up an' declares to ole Misses Stell dat we mus' be a-gwine, for I believe it gwine to start a-rainin' an we wanter be home 'fore it started, 'cause de younguns was all at home an' a-waitin' for dar supper. So ma and me, we jus' gets our bundles, an' away we starts. We jus' walks so fas' until I declare one of dese hear things dat dey ride in dese hear years couldn't have gone as far, for we shore did flew.

It was a long way from Misses Stell's an' when ma and me was about half way it starts onto rainin' and ma and me justs starts to walk faster, an' jus' starts to prayin' fo' de Lord to let us git home to our chillern an' out o' dis rain, When we gits down in de lane, I says to ma, "Let's go in this hear house, fo dar ain't no one a-libin' here fo de las' six years."

Well we goes in an' we sees a light a-shinin' in from up stairs, an' we jus' goes up dem stairs like de little mice, an' when we wuz in de second story, we seed dat de light came from the third story. We jus' starts up dem der steps, and when we got to de top de light goes out, an' someone says, "Who's dar?" I jus' gits up de nerve to say, "Two of dese hear black niggers dat libs across de field." An' jus' then de door opens and all I seed was a whole lot o ghosts all a-sittin' around a coffin.

Ma an' me we jus' flew down dem steps, an' we gits outside and starts across de field, I look back and sees dem all a-comin' ater us. We jus' flew in de house an' fell on our knees an started a-prayin' to de Lord for mercy, and de little chillern dey jus' axed us what we was a-prayin' for. We jus' can't answer dem chilluns' questions. You jus' kaint git one of us niggers to go in dat house dat's three stories high dat's on de outskirts of dis hear town.

These songs were obtained from a Gatesville negro named "Rags."

IF YOU GO FISHIN'

If you go fishin', I'm a-goin' a-fishin' too,
You bet yo life yo sweet little wife can catch as many fish as you.
When you go fishin,' you tryin' to flirt,
The fish you is fishin' for is got on a skirt.

GEORGE WASHINGTON

Geo'ge Washin'ton, I hate to say you nevah tole a lie,
I wish there wuz no Washin'ton, I do, I hope I die.
When I wuz a little boy some white man felt o' my haid,
Said, "Some day you may be president,"--some day I nevah see.
Somebody lie, dat's sho as you born, somebody lie on me.

COME OUT DAT KITCHEN, LIZA

Last night I went out callin' in de white folks' yard,
Liza says, "Come right in, set right down, but please doan make no noise."
She sliced the ham, put it in the pan,
Must a let it cook too hard;
The scent went up stairs, and the white folks knows,
And then they yelled out loud.

Says, "Come out o' that kitchen, Liza,
Great God, quit scorchin' dat ham."
The onliest thing I see just right,
Get yo clothes, you bettah exit tonight.

Says, “Come out o’ that kitchen, Liza,
You’d better quit scorchin’ dat ham.”

I’M GOIN’ BACK TO ARKANSAS TOMORROW

‘m goin’ back to Arkansas tomorrow,
I’m goin’ back to Arkansas today.
I’m goin’ to roll the cotton bales over,
Oh, niggah, niggah, won’t you roll dat cotton,
Oh, Lordy Massa, Oh, Lordy Massa.

Oh, Massa, Massa, don’t you hear dat baby cry,
Some folks say dat baby goin’ to die,
Goin’ back to Arkansas tomorrow.

EVERY DARKY WORKIN’ ON THE LEVEE

Every darky workin’ on the levee,
Waitin’ fo’ de steamboat to come down,
Must be good ole Sandy Lee comin’;
Everybody workin’ on the levee,
Waitin’ fo’ de steamboat to come down.

DE DEVIL AND HIS WIFE

De Devil an his wife playin’ seven up,
Playin’ fo’a silvah half dollah,
De Devil turned a jack from de bottom of de pack,
You hear de people ovah de river holler.

The next song was obtained for me by one of the school girls from a negro cook in Cuero, Texas. It makes use of the refrain, and gives advice to the wicked. The first stanza is one line repeated four times, no doubt for the purpose of getting the emotion of the singer aroused by the idea that the first line conveys, the idea of the everlasting life.

Eye that believeth on de Lord, gonna hab evahlastin’ life,
Eye that believeth on de Lord, gonna hab evahlastin’ life,
Eye that believeth on de Lord, gonna hab evahlastin’ life,
Eye that believeth on de Lord, gonna hab evahiastin’ life.

God tole Satan in de days of old, gonna hab evahlastin’ life;
You may hab Job’s body, but I want his soul, gonna hab evahlastin’ life.

Run along, Job, and git yo crown, gonna hab evahlastin’ life,
Eye that believeth on de Lord, gonna hab evahlastin’ life.

I saw an angel standin’ in de moon,
Gonna hab evahlastin’ life,
He’s talkin’ ‘bout the things gonna happen soon,
Gonna hab évahlastin’ life.

I saw another one a-standin’ in de sun,
Gonna hab evahlastin’ life,
He’s talkin’ about de things dat’s jus’ been done,
Gonna hab evahlastin’ life.

I saw another one a-standin’ in the east,
Gonna hab evahlastin’ life,

He’s tellin’ God’s chillern to live in peace,
Gonna hab evahlastin’ life.

I saw another one a-standin’ in the south,
Gonna hab evahlastin’ life,
With a silver trumpet in his mouth,
Gonna hab evahlastin’ life.

I saw another one a-standin’ in the west,
Gonna hab evahlastin’ life,
He’s tellin’ God’s chillern to take their rest,
Gonna hab evahlastin’ life.

I saw another one a-standin’ in the north,
Gonna hab evahlastin’ life,
He’s tellin’ God’s people to bear their cross,
Gonna hab evahlastin’ life.

Imagine a dice game going on in a corner between a horse, a flea, and a mouse. The mouse is not necessary to the dice game, but is indispensable for the rhyme scheme. In this game if one darky is a point ahead he says: “I’m a hoss on you”; if behind, “That’s a hoss on me.”

A boss and a flea an’ a little mice,
Settin’ in the conner shootin’ dice;
Hoss’ foot slipped, an’ he fell on de flea.
Flea cried out: “That’s a hoss on me.”

Brazos Bottom Philosophy

BY A. W. EDDINS

A Brazos River fisherman caught a mud turtle on one of his throw lines and to get his hook back cut off the turtle's head and left the turtle scrambling and struggling on the ground.

Presently two young negro men came by and one said to the other: "Dar's a daid turtle."

To which the other replied: "Nigger, dat turtle am not daid, hit's a-crawlin'."

"Course hit's daid, hits haid's cut off. How cum anybody with hits haid cut off hain't daid?"

"How cum any body crawlin' round is daid? Daid bodies don't crawl."

"Go yer a dime he's daid," said the first.

"I fades yer," said the other.

And they took the still struggling turtle and hurried to Uncle Toby, who was a good judge of small matters and always decided important things for the rest of the community.

Each one pleaded his case eloquently; there was a dime at stake, and both were anxious to win. After much questioning and deliberation, Uncle Toby made his decision as follows: "I done tole yer boys hit's jest lack dis, that are turkle am daid but he don't know hit!"

OLE SIS GOOSE

Ole sis goose wus er-sailin' on de lake, and ole brer fox wus hid in de weeds. By um by ole sis goose swum up close to der bank and ole brer fox lept out an cotched her.

"O yes, ole sis goose, I'se get yer now, you'se been er-sailin' on mer lake er long time, en I'se got yer now. I'se gwine to break yer neck en pick yer bones."

"Hole on der', brer fox, hold on, I'se got jes as much right to swim in der lake as you has ter lie in der weeds. Hit's des as much my lake es hit is yours, and we is gwine to take dig matter to der cotehouse and see if you has any right to break my neck and pick my bones."

And so dey went to cote, and when dey got dere, de sheriff, he wus er fox, en de judge, he wus er fox, and der tourneys, dey wus foxes, en all de jurrymen, dey was foxes, too.

End dey tried ole sis goose, en dey 'victed her and dey 'scuted her, and dey picked her bones.

Now my chilluns, listen to me, when all de folks in de cotehouse is foxes, and you is jes er common goose, der ain't gwine to be much jestice for you pore nigger.

The “Blues” As Folk-Songs

BY DOROTHY SCARBOROUGH

There are fashions in music as in anything else, and folk-song presents no exception to the rule. For the last several years the most popular type of Negro song has been that peculiar, barbaric sort of melody called “blues,” with its irregular rhythm, its lagging briskness, its mournful liveliness of tone. It has a jerky tempo, as of a cripple dancing because of some irresistible impulse. A “blues” (or does one say a “blue?”--what is the grammar of the thing?) likes to end its stanza abruptly, leaving the listener expectant for more, though, of course, there is no fixed law about it. One could scarcely imagine a convention of any kind in connection with this negroid free music. It is partial to the three-line stanza instead of the customary one of four or more, and it ends with a high note that has the effect of incompleteness. The close of a stanza comes with a shock like the whip-crack surprise at the end of an O. Henry story, for instance--a cheap trick, but effective as a novelty. Blues sing of themes remote from those of the old spirituals, and their incompleteness of stanza makes the listener gasp, and perhaps fancy that the censor has deleted the other line.

Blues, being widely published as sheet music in the North as well as the South, and sung in vaudeville everywhere, would seem to have little relation to authentic folk-music of the Negroes. But in studying the question, I had a feeling that it was more or less connected with Negro folk-song, and I tried to trace it back to its origin.

Negroes and white people in the South referred me to W. C. Handy as the man who had put the bluing in the blues. But how to locate him was a problem. He had started this indigo music in Memphis, it appeared, but was there no longer. I heard of him as having been in Chicago, and in Philadelphia, and at last as being in New York. Inquiries from musicians brought out the fact that Handy is now manager of a music publishing company, of which he is part owner, Page and Handy, and so my collaborator, Ola Gulledge, and I went to see him at his place.

To my question, “Have blues any relation to Negro folksong?” Handy replied instantly, “Yes, they are folk-music.”

“Do you mean in the sense that a song is taken up by many singers who change and adapt it and add to it in accordance with their own mood?” I asked. “That constitutes communal singing in part, at least.”

“I mean that and more,” he responded. “That is true, of course, of the blues, as I’ll illustrate a little later. But blues are folk-songs in more ways than that. They are essentially racialthe ones that are genuine (though since they became the fashion many blues have been written that are not Negro in character), and they have a basis in older folk-song.”

“A general or a specific basis?” I wished to know.

“Specific,” he answered. “Each one of my blues is based on some old Negro song of the South, some folk-song that I heard from my mammy when I was a child. Something that sticks in my mind, that I hum to myself when I’m not thinking about it. Some old song that is a part of the memories of my childhood and of my race. I can tell you the exact song I used as a basis for any one of my blues. Yes, the blues that are genuine are really folk-songs.”

I expressed an interest to know of some definite instance of what he meant, and for answer he picked up a sheaf of music from his desk.

“Here’s a thing called Joe Turner Blues,” he said. “That is written around an old Negro song I used to hear and play thirty or more years ago. In some sections it was called Going Down the River for Long, but in Tennessee it was always Joe Turner. Joe Turner, the inspiration of the song, was a brother of Pete Turner, once governor of Tennessee. He was an officer and he used to come to Memphis and get prisoners to carry them to Nashville after a kangaroo court. When the Negroes said of any one, ‘Joe Turner’s been to town’, they meant that the person in question had been carried off hand-cuffed to be gone no telling how long.”

I recalled a fragment of folk-song from the South which I had never before understood, but the meaning of which was now clear enough:

“Dey tell me Joe Turner’s come to town.
He’s brought along one thousand links of chain,
He’s gwine to have one nigger for each link.
He’s gwine to have dis nigger for one link!”

Handy said that in writing the Joe Turner Blues he did away with the prison theme and played up a love element, for in the song Joe Turner became not the dreaded sheriff but the absent lover.

Loveless Love, a blues which Handy calls a blues ballad, was, he said, based on an old song called Careless Love, which narrated the death of the son of a governor of Kentucky. It had the mythical “hundred stanzas” and was widely current in the South, especially in Kentucky, a number of years ago. Handy in his composition gives a general philosophy of love instead of telling a tragic story as the old song did.

Long Gone has its foundation in another old Kentucky song, which tells of the efforts a certain Negro made to escape a Joe Turner who was pursuing him. Bloodhounds were on his trail and were coming perilously close, while he was dodging and doubling on his tracks in a desperate effort to elude them. At last he ran into an empty barrel that chanced to be lying on its side in his path. He sprang out and away again. When the blood-hounds a few seconds later trailed him into the barrel, they were nonplussed for a while, and by the time they had picked up the scent again, the darkey had escaped.

The song was printed a a broadside. I reproduce by permission the words. It is interesting to note that the chorus varies with some verses, while it remains the same for others.

“LONG GONE”
Another “Casey Jones” or “Steamboat Bill”

EVERYBODY IS SINGING

“LONG GONE”
With These Seven Verses

EVENTUALLY you will sing “LONG GONE” with a hundred verses

FIRST VERSE:

Did you ever hear the story of Long John Dean,
A bold bank robber from Bowling Green,
Sent to the jailhouse yesterday,
Late last night he made his getaway.

CHORUS:

He’s long gone from Kentucky,
Long gone, ain’t he lucky,

Long gone and what I mean,
He's long gone from Bowling Green.

SECOND VERSE:

Long John stood on a railroad tie,
Waiting for the freight train to come by,
Freight train come by puffin' and flyin',
Ought to seen Long John grabbin' the blind.

CHORUS:

He's long gone from Kentucky,
Long gone, ain't he lucky,
Long gone and what I mean,
He's long gone from Bowling Green.

THIRD VERSE:

They offered a reward to bring him back,
Even put bloodhounds on his track,
Doggone bloodhounds lost his scent,
Now nobody knows where Long John went.

CHORUS:

He's long gone from Kentucky,
Long gone, ain't he lucky,
Long gone and what I mean,
He's long gone from Bowling Green.

FOURTH VERSE:

They caught him in Frisco and to seal his fate,
At San Quentin they jailed him one evening late,
But out on the ocean John did escape,
Cause the guard forgot to close the Golden Gate.

CHORUS:

John's long gone from San Quentin,
Long gone and still sprinting,
Long gone I'm telling you,
Shut your mouth and shut mine, too.

FIFTH VERSE:

A gang of men tried to capture Dean,
So they chased him with a submarine,
Dean jumped overboard, grabbed the submarine,
And made that gang catch a flyin' machine.

CHORUS:

Now he's long gone and still a- swimmin',
Long gone with them mermaid women,
Long gone just like a fish,
My, that boy's got some ambish.

SIXTH VERSE:

A vamp thought she had Long John's goat,
She took his watch and money right from his coat,
John stole- all she had now she thinks he's a riddle,
He didn't leave her enough clothes to dust a fiddle.

CHORUS:

He's long gone from Kentucky,
Long gone that guy is some lucky,
Long gone from this queen,
Long gone from Bowling Green.

SEVENTH VERSE:

When pro'bition said I'll lick John Barleycorn,
I never thought she'd do any harm,
But she's chased him strong, didn't stop to wait,
And blacked his eye in every state.

CHORUS:

Now John's gone and he left me weeping,
Long gone but only sleeping,
But from the Drug Store we catch his breath,
Long gone and scared to death.

Handy said that his blues were folk-songs also in that they are based on folk-sayings and express the racial life of the Negroes. "For example," he said, "The Yellow Dog Blues takes its name from the term the Negroes give the Yazoo Delta Railroad. Clarksville colored people speak of the Yellow Dog because one day when some one asked a darkey what the initials Y. D. on a freight train stood for, he scratched his head reflectively and answered: 'I dunno, less'n it's for Yellow Dog.'" Another one of his blues came from an old mammy's mournful complaint, "I wonder whar my good ole used to be is!"

He says that presently he will write a blues on the idea contained in a monologue he overheard a negro address to his mule on a Southern street not long ago. The animal was balky, and the driver expostulated with him after this fashion:

"G'wan dere, you mule! You ack lack you am' want to wuck. Well,you is a mule, an' you got to wuck. Dat's whut you git fo' bein' a mule. Ef you was a 'ooman, now, I'd be wuckin' fo' you!"

The St. Louis Blues, according to its author, is a composite, made up of racial sayings in dialect. For instance, the second stanza has its origin in a Negro's saying, "I've got to go to see Aunt Ca'line Dye," meaning to get his fortune told, for at Newport there was a well-known fortune teller by that name. "Got to go to Newport to see Aunt Ca'line Dye" means to consult the colored oracle.

Been to de Gypsy to get mah fortune tole,
To de Gypsy done got mah fortune tole,
'Cause I'se wile about mah Jelly Roll.
Gypsy done tole me, 'Don't you wear no black.'
Yas, she done tole me, 'Don't you wear no black.
Go to St. Louis, you can win him back.'

I asked Handy if the blues were a new musical invention, and he said, "No. They are essentially of our race and our people have been singing like that for many years. But they have been publicly developed and exploited in the last few years. I was the first to publish any of them or to develop this special type by name." He brought out his Memphis Blues, his first "blues" song, in 1910, he said.

The fact that the blues were a form of folk-singing before Handy published his, is corroborated by various persons who have discussed the matter with me, and in Texas the Negroes have been fond of them for a long time. Early Busby, now a musician in New York, says that the shifts of Negroes working at his father's brickyard in East Texas years ago used to sing constantly at their tasks and were particularly fond of the blues.

Handy commented on several points in connection with the blues-for instance, the fact that they are, he says, all in one tone, but with different movements according to the time in which they are written. The theme of this modern folk-music is, according to Handy, the Negro's emotional feeling apart from the religious. As is well recognized, the Negro normally is a person of strong religious impulse, and the spirituals are famous as expressing his religious moods,--but they do not reveal all his nature. The Negro has longings, regrets, despondencies and hopes that affect him strongly, but are not connected with religion. The blues, therefore, may be said to voice his secular interests and emotions as sincerely as the spirituals do the religious. Handy said that the blues express the Negro's two-fold nature, the grave and the gay, reveal his ability to appear the opposite of what he is.

"Most white people think that the Negro is always cheerful and lively," he explained. "But he isn't, though he can be that way sometimes when he is most troubled in mind. The Negro knows the blues as a state of mind, and that's why this music has that name."

Handy said that the blues were unlike conventional, composed music, but like primitive folk-music in that they have only five tones, like the folk-songs of slavery times, using the pentatonic scale, omitting the fourth and seventh tones. He added that while most blues are racial expressions of Negro life, the form has been imitated nowadays in songs that are not racial.

The blues, Handy pointed out, represent a certain stage in Negro music. "About forty years ago such songs as Golden Slippers were sung. That was written by a colored man but is not a real folk-song. At about that time all the songs of the Negro liked to speak of golden streets and give bright pictures of heaven. Then about twenty years ago the desire was all for coon songs. Now the tendency is toward blues. They are not, as I have said, a new thing among the Negroes, for they were sung in the South before the piano was accessible to the Negroes, though they were not so well known as now."

It is not often that a student of folk-songs can have such authentic information given as to the music in the making, for most of the songs are studied and their value and interest realized only long after the ones who started them have died or been forgotten. Rarely can one trace a movement in folk-song so clearly, and so I am grateful for the chance of talking with the man most responsible for the blues.

Even though specific blues may start indeed as sheet music, composed by identifiable authors, they are quickly caught up by popular fancy and so changed by oral transmission that one would scarcely recognize the relation between the originals and the final results-if any results ever could be considered final. Each singer adds something of his own mood or emotion or philosophy, till the composite is truly a communal composition. It will be noted in this connection that the song called "Long Gone" announces of itself that while it is first published in seven verses, people will soon be singing it "with one hundred verses." (Negroes ordinarily speak of a stanza as a verse.) The colored man appropriates his music as the white person rarely does.

Blues also may spring up spontaneously, with no known origin in print, so far as an investigator can tell. They are found everywhere in the South, expressing Negro reactions to every concept of elemental life. Each town has its local blues, no aspect of life being without its expression in song. Here, as in much of the Negro's folk-song, there is sometimes little connection between the stanzas. The colored mind is not essentially logical, and the folk-song shows considerable lack of coherence in thought. Unrelated ideas are likely to be brought together, and stanzas from one song or from several may be put in with what the singer starts with, if they chance to have approximately the same number of syllables to the line. Even that requirement isn't held to, for a Negro in his singing can crowd several syllables into one note, or expand one syllable to cover half a dozen notes. The exigencies of scansion worry him but slightly.

The Texas Negroes are especially fond of blues, and, as I have said, were singing them for years before Handy made them popular in print. W. P. Webb published, in an article in the Journal of American Folk-Lore, some years ago what he called a sort of epic of the Negro, which the singer called Railroad Blues, which didn't stick to one subject, even so popular a one as a railroad, but left the track to discuss many phases of life. Fragments of blues float in from every side, expressive of all conceivable aspects of the Negro's existence, economic, social, domestic, romantic, and so forth.

Morton Adams Marshall sends an admirable specimen from Little Rock, Arkansas, which, however, was taken down in Southern Louisiana, reflecting one black man's bewilderment over the problems of love.

DON'CHER LOOK AT ME, CA'LINE!

Don'cher look at me, Ca'line,
Don'cher look at me.
You done busted up many a po' niggah's heart,
But you ain't a-goin' to bust up mine!
Oh, it's hahd to love,
An' it's mighty hahd to leave,
But it's hahder to make up yo' mi-ind!

A fragment sent by Mrs. Cammilla Breazeale, of Louisiana, expresses an extreme case of depression, without assigning any cause for it.

Ah got de blues, Ah got de blues,
Ah got de blues so doggoned bad,
But Ah'm too damn mean--I can't cry!

A good many of these fugitive songs have to do with love, always excuse enough for metrical melancholy when it is unrequited or misplaced. Mrs. Tom K. Bartlett, of Marlin, Texas, sends two specimens having to do with romance of a perilous nature. The first one is brief, expressing the unhappiness felt by a "creeper," as the colored man who intrudes into another's home is called.

Baby, I can't sleep, neither can I eat.
Round your bedside I'm goin' to creep.
Four o'clock, baby, four o'clock.
I'll make it in about four o'clock.

Mrs. Bartlett says of the next: "You will brand me as a shameless woman when you read this. I wrote it without a blush, however, and say that I have read as bad or worse in classic verse and fiction."

Late last night
When the moon shone bright,
Felt dizzy about my head
Rapped on my door,
Heard my baby roar,
"Honey, I'se gone to bed!"
"Get up and let me in,
'Case you know it is a sin.
Honey, you haven't treated me right.
I paid your big house-rent
When you didn't have a cent."
"Got to hunt a new home tonight!"

CHORUS

"Baby, if you 'low me
One more chance!
I've always treated you right.
Baby, if you 'low me
One more chance!
I'm goin' to stay with you tonight!
Baby, if you 'low me
One more chance!
I'll take you to a ball in France.
One kind favor I ask of you,
'Low me one more chance!"

Then this coon begin to grin,
Hand in his pocket,
Pulls out a ten.
Then her eyes begin to dance,
"Baby, I'll 'low you
One more chance!"

The central character in a ditty sent by Louise Garwood, of Houston, advocates adoption of more bellicose methods in dealing with the fair dark sex. No wheedling or bribing on his part!

Ef yore gal gits mad an' tries to bully you-u-u.
Ef yore gal gits mad an' tries to bully you,
Jes' take yore automatic an' shoot her through an' through,
Jes' take yore automatic an' shoot her through an' through!

A similar situation of a domestic nature is expressed in a song given by Gladys Torregano, of Straight College, New Orleans, through the courtesy of Worth Tuttle Hedden.

A burly coon you know
Who took his clothes an' go,
Come back las' night
But his wife said, "Honey,
I's done wid coon.
I'se gwine to pass for white."
This coon he look sad,
He was afraid to look mad,

But his wife said, "Honey,
I can't take you back.
You wouldn't work,
So now you lost your home."

CHORUS

Oh, my little baby,
Don't you make me go!
I'll try an' get me a job,
Ef you'll 'low me a show.
All crap-shooters I will shun.
When you buy chicken,
All I want is the bone;
When you buy beer,
I'll be satisfy with the foam.
I'll work both night and day,
I'll be careful of what I say,
Oh, Baby, let me bring my clothes back home!

"Oh, Baby, 'low me a chance!
You can even wear my pants.
Don't you give me the sack.
I'll be quiet as a mouse,
All round the house.
If you'll take me back,
Tell the world I ain't shook,
I'll even be the cook.
I won't refuse to go out in the snow,"
"Don't you tell, my little ink-stand,
Life's dreaming is over.
So there's the door,
And don't you come back no more!"

Mrs. Bartlett contributes another that describes the woes of unrequited love, which she says was sung by a colored maid she had some years ago.

Ships in de oceans,
Rocks in de sea,
Blond-headed woman
Made a fool out of me!
Oh, tell me how long
I'll have to wait!
Oh, tell me, honey,
Don't hesitate!

I ain't no doctor,
Nor no doctor's son,
But I can cool your fever
Till the doctor comes.
Oh, tell me how long
I'll have to wait!

Oh, tell me, honey,
Don't hesitate!

I got a woman,
She's long and tall,
Sits in her kitchen
With her feet in the hall!
Oh, tell me how long
I'll have to wait!
Oh, tell me honey,
Don't hesitate!

A brief song from Texas uses rather vigorous metaphors in addressing some one.

You keep a-talkin' till you make me think
Your daddy was a bull-dog, your mammy was a mink.

Oh, ho, Baby, take a one on me!

You keep a-talkin' till you make me mad,
I'll talk about yore mammy mighty scandalous bad.

Oh, ho, Baby, take a one on me!

Whiffin' cake is mighty bad,
But that's a habit I never had.

Oh, ho, Baby, take a one on me!

A negro lover does not sonnet his sweetheart's eyebrows, but he addresses other rhymes to her charms, as in the blues reported by Professor W. H. Thomas, of College Station.

A brown-skinned woman and she's chocolate to the bone.
A brown-skinned woman and she smells like toilet soap.
A black-skinned woman and she smells like a billy-goat.
A brown-skinned woman makes a freight train slip and slide.
A brown-skinned woman makes an engine stop and blow.
A brown-skinned woman makes a bull-dog break his chain.
A brown-skinned woman makes a preacher lay his Bible down.
I married a woman; she was even tailor-made.

The colored man in a song sent by Mrs. Buie, of Marlin, obviously has reason for his lowness of spirits. Po' Lil'l Ella is a favorite in East Texas saw-mill districts.

I'll tell you something that bothers my mind,
Po' li'I Ella laid down and died.
I tell you something that bothers my mind,
Po' li'l Ella laid down and died.

I wouldn't 'a' minded little Ella dyin',
But she left three chillun.
I wouldn't 'a' minded little Ella dyin',
But she left three chillun.

Judge, you done me wrong,
Ninety-nine years is sho' too long!
Judge, oh, Judge, you done me wrong,
Ninety-nine years is sho' too long!

Howard Snyder heard one of the workers on his plantation in Mississippi singing the following song, which could not be called entirely a paean of praise for life.

I WISH I HAD SOME ONE TO CALL MY OWN

I'm tired of workin', but I can't fly.
I wish I had some one to take my care.

I wish I had some one to call my own,
I'm tired of livin' an' I don't want to die;

I'm tired of coffee and I'm tired of tea,
I'm tired of you, an' you're tired of me.

I'm so tired of livin' I don't know what to do;
You're tired of me an' I'm tired of you.

I'm tired of eatin' an' I'm tired of sleepin';
I'm tired of yore beatin' an' I'm tired of yore creepin'.

I'm so tired of livin' I don't know what to do;
I'm so tired of givin' an' I've done done my do.

I done done my do, an' I can't do no mo';
I've got no money an' I've got no hoe.

I'm so tired of livin' I don't know what to do;
You're tired of me an' I'm tired of you.

Other interests of the colored man's life beside love are shown in another song from Professor Thomas' monograph. Note the naive confusion of figures in the first stanza, "a hard card to roll."

JACK O' DIAMONDS

Jack o' Diamonds, Jack o' Diamonds,
Jack o' Diamonds is a hard card to roll.

Says, Whenever I get in jail,
Jack o' Diamonds goes my bail;
And I never, Lord, I never,
Lord, I never was so hard up before.

You may work me in the winter,
You may work me in the fall;
I'll get even, I'll get even,
I'll get even through that long summer's day.

Jack o' Diamonds took my money,
And the piker got my clothes;
And I ne-ever, and I ne-ever,
Lord, I never was so hard-run before!

Says, whe'ever I gets in jail,
I'se got a Cap'n goes my bail;
And a Lu-ula, and a Lu-ula,
And a Lula that's a hard-working chile!

And so the blues go on, singing of all conceivable interests of the Negro, apart from his religion, which is adequately taken care of in his spirituals and other religious songs. These fleeting informal stanzas, rhymed or in free verse that might fit in with the most liberate of verse-libertine schools of poetry, these tunes that are haunting and yet elusive within bars, have a robust vitality lacking in more sophisticated metrical movements. One specimen of blues speaks of its own tune, saying “the devil brought it but the Lord sent it.” At least, it is here and has its own interest, both as music and as a sociological manifestation. Politicians and statesmen and students of political economy who discuss the Negro problems in perplexed, authoritative fashion, would do well to study the folk-music of the colored race as expressing its feelings and desires, not revealed in direct message to the whites. Folk-poetry and folk-song express the heart of any people, and the friends of the Negro see in his various types of racial song both the best and the worst of his life.

Customs Among The German Descendants Of Gillespie County

BY JULIA ESTILL

To one born and reared among the hills of Gillespie County, the unusual features of Fredericksburg, its county seat, and the peculiarities of its native population are taken as a matter of course until the exclamations of an observing visitor call attention to the fact that a really unique condition exists in the mountain community. To the observant stranger within the gates, the bright splashes of local color, evident to him at every turn, and the community life, totally unlike that to which he has been accustomed, are of rare interest.

Approached from any direction, the town appears like a dream village suspended among the hills. Truly the German pioneers, who selected the site in May, 1846, chose wisely when they laid out Fredericksburg between the branches of a swift-flowing stream tributary to the Pedernales River, and surrounded by flattopped mesas which yielded a good quality of limestone for houses and fences. The stately live oaks still to be found along the streets of Fredericksburg testify to the majesty of the virgin forest trees in the fertile valley where the little village sprang up as if by magic.

Only a few reminders of old colony days remain, however, to attract the casual observer. The old rock mill, built on the banks of Baron's Creek, and turned by its turbulent waters, has gone to decay and the stream itself is almost dry. Twenty-five years ago the march of progress swept down Main Street and tore from its foundations the majestic old church which, in early days, served as town-hall, fortress, school, and sanctuary. The queer octagonshaped structure blocked traffic and was unsightly, besides! Thus have many of the original buildings been torn away to give place to more modern structures far less picturesque, leaving Fredericksburg still a unique village, however, in which the old and the new are quaintly blended.

Among the most interesting buildings still to be seen, a picturesque reminder of earlier days, is the Nimitz Hotel on lower Main Street, standing at the crossroads, a most convenient place for travelers to stop for a substantial meal served in the same old dining-room where Generals Lee and Longstreet, and, perhaps, Sidney Porter refreshed themselves in days gone by. If you desire, you may drive your car into the back yard where the old stage coach used to stand behind the substantial wall of stone twelve feet high. For the asking, you may have a "cabin" opening out upon the "upper deck" of the old ship-shaped hostelry. The queer four-poster bed, once the property of General Lee, is yours for the night, should you care to sleep in it. In the parlor, below stairs, you will find paintings of the infant Fredericksburg, of the old mill at Barton Springs, Travis County, and a representation of the tragic death of Isolde. Through the broad windows, the delicate odor of lilacs mingled with the aroma of Banshee roses from the old-fashioned garden will steal in to make you forget you are in the world of today.

A drive over the town will show you the quaint log-and-stone huts of unique architecture and careful workmanship basking stolidly in the sun on the by-streets, and the little brown Catholic church with its old-world belfry, where you expect to find a monk in his cowl telling his beads. Beside it stands protectingly the handsome stone edifice built in recent years.

But queerest of all to you will be the "Sunday houses." Nowhere else in the world do they exist. They may be found almost anywhere in Fredericksburg: on Main Street nestling comfortably against the village smithy; in the fashionable suburbs beside a modern bungalow.

The custom of building Sunday houses originated with the farmer of Gillespie County, who, being of an independent nature, chose to buy a town lot and build, under his own vine and oak tree, a box-like structure of lumber, sometimes with only one room on the ground floor and a second surmounting it, with stairs leading up on the outside.

To this "city home" the farmer comes on Sunday morning when his family is religiously inclined; or on "Second Christmas," "Easter Monday," or "Pentecost Monday" when the young folks want to attend the public balls that begin promptly at 2 p. m. in the various halls. When shopping is to be done, or a sick member of the family needs medical attention, in comes the farmer to his Sunday house, where he is independent and safe from disturbance.

Of necessity, then, these temporary homes are furnished, one room often serving as kitchen, pantry, dining room, bedroom, and living room. But, at any rate, the relative or good friend in town is not thrown into a panic by the unexpected descent of a family of more or less dimensions to eat dinner and remain over night. And the thrifty farmer goes home with money in his pocket, for he has not been forced to partake of boarding-house fare. Besides, he has the supreme satisfaction of knowing that he is under obligations to no man.

Later, when the farmer is a-weary of labor in the fields, and has a plump little bank account all his own, he and his faithful wife, who has helped him accumulate this wealth by practicing thrift and economy, leave the old home to their son, and come to town to spend a peaceful old age in the Sunday house to which, perhaps, a room or two and a little front porch have been added.

For the convenience of out-of-town members owning no Sunday houses, several Protestant churches in Fredericksburg have built houses in the church yards, where the members gather at noon to eat the lunches prepared at country homes the day previous. These combination kitchens and dining-rooms are provided with oil-cloth covered tables, home-made benches, and a cook-stove where food may be warmed and coffee boiled. Young and old remain for Sunday school, which is held at two in the afternoon.

A beautiful custom in Fredericksburg is the ringing of "Abendglocken" (evening bells) at sunset every Saturday. When the last chime has floated cloudward from the seven spires of the hamlet, a holy quiet seems to settle over, the town; and when the twilight melts into darkness, and the stars come forth from the deepening blue, the weary laborer feels that after all "God's in his heaven; all's right with the world."

In general, the American-Germans are a gregarious people: they love the society of their fellows; and they can have a wonderful time where just two or three are gathered together. Occasionally you find a hermit thrush who "warbles his native woodnotes wild" to the accompaniment of a hand-made organ with pipes of newspapers far out in the hills; but he is the exception. (Such a character really existed in Gillespie County several years ago. He lived in a cave and really did have this peculiar "pipe organ" upon which he played.)

The women in town set apart certain days when their particular friends are bid to a "Kaffee-Kraenzchen" (coffee-circle), or Kaffee-Klatsch as it is sometimes called, an afternoon affair at which guests sit about and chat, busying themselves meanwhile with a bit of crochet or sewing; for bridge is to them unknown.

After an hour or so, the hostess announces that coffee is served, whereupon the guests betake themselves to the dining-room, where a wholesome meal is spread: "Schmierkaese" with thick yellow cream; wild plum jelly and watermelon jam; homemade bread and sweet, fresh butter; and occasionally, in season, a small plate of thinly-sliced, home-cured raw sausage. Then there is always a whole family of cakes: “Mandel-brot” (almond-bread), “Pfeffernuesse” (pepper nuts), “Zimmitsterne” (cinnamon stars), “Lebkuchen” (ginger-bread) and “Kaffee-kuchen” (coffee cake). And all the while savory brown coffee flows freely. It seems, in fact, that the cookie jar in Fredericksburg homes is never empty, for an afternoon guest in the parlor will invariably be offered a plate of small cakes, and, in the old days, “em Glaeszchen Wein” (a small glass of wine).

“Kaffee-Kraenzchen” pale into insignificance, however, when compared with weddings, confirmation fests, and birthday celebrations. On these high days and holidays, all the relatives (and they are legion!) are bid to the feast, which, in the language of Irving Russel, is “a ‘ticlar sarcumstance.” The fatted porker has been slaughtered, and, besides the immense roast, there are quantities of sausages, great and small, of the beef-pork, venisonpork, liver, and blood varieties. Several turkeys and perhaps a goose have been sacrificed. Besides these meats, the long hospitable board groans with eatables of all kinds: homemade noodles, Irish and sweet potato salads, rice with a “topping” of cinnamon and sugar, bean salad, and occasionally a salad of fruit prepared by a member of the younger generation. The herring salad is never missing from the feast of this kind. It is made by mixing boiled smoked herring, diced, with beets, hard-boiled eggs, pickles, apples, Irish potatoes, and vinegar, all properly seasoned. Everyone drinks coffee. But the cake is saved for “four o’clock coffee,” when the table is reset, with fifteen or twenty cakes accompanied by a wonderful variety of cookies. The invariable first course, however, consists of sliced sausage, bread, butter, and several kinds of “home-grown” cheese: “Schmierkaese” (cream cheese), “Koch Kaese” (cooked cheese), and “Hand Kaese” (ball cheese). Occasionally, too, there are cream cheese pies made of cheese, cream, butter, eggs, and raisins. Oh, there is always food in abundance.

The hill folk of Gillespie County have more “fests” than people of other sections, it seems. Besides Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year’s Day, there are “Second Christmas” (the 26th), “Second Easter” (Monday), and “Second Pentecost” (Monday), “when young and old come forth to play.” The first of these holidays is for sacred observances; the second for festivities. Then there are merry-makings everywhere; and nothing can dampen the holiday spirit of the crowd.

These customs were, no doubt, brought by the original settlers from the Fatherland, as were also the customs of St. Nicholas’ visits, the Christmas tree in the home, and the coming of the Easter Rabbit.

St. Nicholas first visits the homes in Fredericksburg on the night of December 6th and occasionally thereafter until Christmas Eve, surreptitiously leaving candy and fruit in little stockings hung from the bedposts and often peering through the casement to see whether or not the children of the household are obedient to their parents.

But the day of all days for children as well as for grown-ups is the 24th of December, for it is then that at least one Santa Claus comes to the homes. He enters about the time the candles on the cedar tree are lighted and the home circle is gathered in the “best room.” Every child is then asked to pray. This is the little petition the children lisp: “Ich bin klein, mein Herz ist rein; soll niemand drin wohnen als Jesus allein” (I am small; my heart is pure; no one shall abide there save Jesus alone).

Santa, being satisfied, then leaves an apple or an orange with each child and repairs to the neighboring house,--if the children have all responded with the prayer. But woe to the unruly youngster, usually a sophisticated boy, who refuses to pray! He is soundly rapped with the huge stick Santa carries concealed under his mantle. Sometimes two or three of these Santa

Clauses visit the same house in a single evening; and the program is usually repeated each time. On Christmas night all the churches have enormous trees for the children. Each child repeats a few verses in a lively monotone, and after the program receives a bag of candy, fruits, and nuts, and often a small present.

The next holiday the children look forward to is Easter. By this time blue-bonnets and "Osterblumen" (Easter blossoms: "butter-and-eggs") are out, and Saturday afternoon, the wee tots, accompanied by an older sister or friend, go forth with baskets to gather wild flowers for the Easter nest to be made in the garden later in the evening.

That night great bonfires burn on the hills east and west of town: the Easter Rabbit Family are gathered around the boiling cauldron, busy with brush and dye, preparing rainbow-hued eggs to delight the human children on Easter morning. That night, when the little folks are abed, the Rabbit Family distribute the eggs, leaving in each nest at least eight brightly colored eggs.

The Kindermaskenball (children's masquerade ball), too, is a great event. Then practically all the children in town gather at one of the public halls for a frolic. Nymphs, fairies, butterflies, brownies, gnomes, witches, peasant maids, flower girls, and clowns skip about merrily until 10 o'clock when they are either whisked off home by their elders, or (in case the elders, themselves, want to enjoy an hour or two of dancing) put to bed in the dressing room, which is provided with a bed or two and numerous quilts for pallets.

Besides these holidays and merrymakings that delight the children especially, are the various "fests" for grown-ups. Chief among these are the shooting fests and the "Saengerfests" (singer fests). The country people take special delight in the former, for the festivities are held in some sylvan grove far from the city's dust and heat. The band, composed of country boys and men who blow lustily (and often discordantly!) on the wind instruments so dear to their hearts, entertains the multitude at intervals all day long. Between times, the crowd surges down to the rifle range, where boys and men try their skill at shooting the bull's eye. There is a bounteous feast spread at noonday, of course, and the usual cake and coffee at four o'clock. The festivities wind up with a dance at night.

The Saengerfests are great events, too. Nearly every community in Gillespie County has its choral club composed of men who sing the old German melodies taught to them by their fathers. Every spring or autumn there is a big gathering of all the singing clubs for a song festival. Then the "hills re-echo the mighty sound." In the old days the fest smacked somewhat of a Dionysian festival; but now there is only music and song.

Until a few years ago the "Little Theater" flourished in Fredericksburg, the prime motive for organizing the Casino Club in 1874 being to give amateur theatricals once or twice a season. The plays were good wholesome ones, too, most of them in the German language; and many of the players had considerable talent. No one but Casino members was allowed entrance. The performances were held in the old ship-like hotel salon, which, after the performance was cleared of chairs and swept for (lancing.

The Casino "Sylvester," or New Year's Eve ball, was one of the crowning events of the winter season. This, too, was held at the Nimitz Hotel. Then all the girls came out in new evening dresses, and the men wore their best Sunday suits. The leader of the grand march, one of Fredericksburg's "von's," invariably wore conventional evening dress; but he was the only gentleman present who was thus attired.

At midnight when the church bells "rang out the old, rang in the new," the lights in the ballroom were extinguished and everywhere excited voices could be heard wishing everybody a happy new year, while above the din, resounding smacks came distinctly to the ear -for the Casino was all one big family, you know! When the greetings were over, the entire company marched into the dining-room for a midnight supper. Needless to say, the merrymaking continued until the clarion call of the cocks “awakened the slumbering morn.”

Several theatrical clubs give live performances followed by dances in Fredericksburg today; but the older people sigh for the halcyon days of the Casino-the times of real “Deutsche GemuetIichkeit” which, they feel, will never return.

Truly, if Peter Hildesmueller and his neighbor, Hugo Hefflebauer, were to return to the village in the valley they left seventy years ago, they would find that time had wrought many changes. The days of skat and pinochle are over; “Beer-suppe,” “Hasenpfeffer” and “Wienerschnitzel” are delicacies of the past; the young people no longer talk proudly of “Der alte Kaiser Wilhelm” and “unser Vaterland” in the pure German language of their forefathers. No doubt the visitors would shake their puzzled heads in disappointment, puffing thoughtfully meanwhile on their longstemmed Meerschaum pipes, and pass back through the neglected vineyards to the recesses of the Bear Mountain caves, there to await for another seventy years the return of “Die guten alten Zeiten” (the good old times).

Following them into their retreat would go the defiant shriek of the sturdy little locomotive which, since 1913, has been ushering progress from the big outside world into Fredericksburg. As the clouds of gray smoke filled the valley and settled lightly over field and town, the colors, once so bright in the local scheme of things, would blur, and fade away at length, leaving only a prosaic gray town among the hills where once stood the unique little “Dorf” of Fredericksburg.

Customs And Superstitions Among Texas Mexicans On The Rio Grande Border

BY FLORENCE JOHNSON SCOTT

[The data for this paper have been gathered from neighboring Americans and from Mexican friends; from Mexican servants who have practiced their superstitions under my own observation; and from teachers, doctors, and officials who are in a far more intimate position with the Mexican folk than I could ever be in. The social customs described are for the most part those of the upper class of Mexicans, while the superstitions are generally confined to the peon class. All of the customs and superstitions described are extant today, but with the coming of the Americans and the maintenance of well equipped public schools, they are already about to die out.]

I

THE RIO GRANDE VALLEY

It is an accepted fact that immigrants of every nation cling to the traditions of their home land; and nowhere is this more in evidence than on the Rio Grande border of Texas, where the Mexican influence is so strongly felt. The history of this country dates back one hundred and seventy-five years to the rule of the Spanish viceroys. Originally, the land on both sides of the Rio Grande was divided into strips called porciones and granted to his followers by the king of Spain. At the time of the Spanish grants, however, no towns were founded on the north side of the river, that territory being recognized as a good ranching country and used as such.

Even after the differences between the United States and Mexico had been settled by the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, and American Texans had penetrated southward to the river, this valley country, until about the opening of the present century, remained practically separated from the remainder of the state by a chain of sand dunes seventy-five miles long. Until the coming of the railroads, it was entered only by a long and hazardous stage route, or, in the lower section, by water. Meanwhile, the vast leagues of land, for the most part, remained in the hands of the descendants of the original patentees.

Twenty years ago, though, with the building of the St. Louis, Brownsville, and Mexican Railroad, the influx of Americans began in earnest. During the last few years it has rapidly increased until today modern American towns with modern ideas and modern customs dot “The Valley.” Alongside these new centers, nevertheless, groups of the Mexican population placidly persist in their old ways and their old beliefs that came a hundred years ago from old Mexico.

Here and there among the industrious American towns, will be found villages of Mexican jacales. These are often poor excuses for homes. A one or two-room shack, thrown up with willow branches, reinforced with moss and thatch, and covered with adobe, may constitute a permanent home for a family of ten or twelve. In addition to the family, two or three dogs, a few cats, always the family milk-goat, wander in and out of the house. If there be chickens, they too are welcome in the casita.

II

LANGUAGE AND MANNERS

All along the border the Spanish language is spoken. For legal reasons, business conducted by Mexican merchants must be carried on in English, though Spanish is heard on the streets and to a great extent in the homes.

Though education is compulsory, though the children attend school for a part of the year at least, and though all schools of the public system are taught in English, yet on the playground and for any kind of communication with each other, the Mexican children lapse back into Spanish. It alone is used in their homes; consequently the ordinary child acquires a very limited vocabulary of English.

Hand in hand with the retention of the mother language on the American side of the river, is an old custom held to by many of the Mexican women, of retaining their maiden name when they are married. Señorita Maria Gonzales on becoming the wife of Juan Peña automatically becomes, in plain English, Mrs. Peña; but what a Mexican woman will do, is to say that she is Señora Gonzales de Peña, or Mrs. Gonzales de Peña. Her son, should his name be Jesus José, in turn becomes Jesus José Gonzales y Peña. Sometimes, for convenience' sake, the youngster will leave off one or the other of his names; then complications set in. The authorities find it difficult to take a census in a Mexican community, because of this old custom, as oftentimes the children are counted twice, first under one name and then the other. Where legal matters are involved there is no end of trouble. Especially is the tracing of heirs a tedious undertaking, which often requires years of labor and research. To complicate matters, the porciones are in many cases as yet undivided. A few acres will belong to a thousand or more heirs. This old custom of keeping property in one family name is a lasting one, in spite of much opposition against it.

The old forms of salutation are still maintained. These people are the greatest handshakers in the world. Even though the same person is encountered several times the same day, the performance must necessarily all be gone through again. Men embrace each other, throwing one arm around each other's neck and giving a sort of cheek brush. Women are great kissers, always on both cheeks.

To weddings and different kinds of entertainments, the formal invitation is obligatory. For affairs of any size, invitations are printed and either mailed or delivered by messenger. When these are not sent out, a committee is asked to go to each house and personally invite the guests: The telephone (American style) is never used for this purpose.

Always to a dance there must be an invitation. Should the party be so impromptu as not to allow time for invitations to be printed, a comite por invitacion is detailed to go to the home of each family listed in the community blue book. The parents are invariably included in the invitation, whether or not they are wanted. The address of "Mr. and Mrs. Peña and Family," is still a polite usage on the border. Quite unexpectedly the family sometimes turns out en masse.

Dancing is the chief amusement of the Mexican people. Strange as it may seem, Sunday is the day for recreation. The young people dance beautifully, with that sense of rhythm that appears to be inherently bred in them. Even on the American side of the borderland, a young lady is seldom seen in public with a gentleman escort. Some of the boys and girls who have been educated in the States, and have glimpsed the liberty of American boys and girls, chafe at these restrictions, and attempt to introduce reforms. Those of the old regime look on with disapproval, and tongues wag bitterly.

So, to the dance goes the young lady, accompanied by her parents or an adult chaperone. The mothers seldom dance, but appear to enjoy watching on the side lines. They keep a watchful eye ever on the young people, who have in the dance one, of the few opportunities for seeing and talking with each other. They make the best of it, but all under the eye of the chaperones. No strolls to the balconies, nor to an automobile outside. Such things are still unheard of to a well-bred Mexican girl.

The senoritas appear greatly to enjoy the promenade, with which their dance begins. They walk twice or three times around the hall before they begin dancing. Then during intermissions they repeat this. At the end of the dance, they may take another extra turn before they go back to sit with their mothers until they are claimed for the next dance.

Generally both Mexican and American music is played at the dances. Extreme jazz is not popular. In rendering a jazz selection, the Mexican orchestra manages to tone the tune down considerably. Occasionally an old fashioned dance is played, so that the older people may take part. They seem very fond of one dance which is called the dance, and which resembles the schottish. Often during an intermission musical numbers and recitations are interspersed by those talented in the arts. When a lady is asked to sing, play, or recite, it is necessary for her to be accompanied to the platform or the center of the room where she is to perform by a committee of at least two other people. They must stand beside her until she has finished whatever she started out to do. This would seem harder on the committee than on the performer. She has at least an opportunity of relaxing her muscles in the performance of her number, while those who go to make up the committee stand at the attention of a sentry on guard.

Even the informal dances are strong on committees. Aside from the one who has the sending of the invitations in charge, there must be another on refreshments, another for ceremonies, one for music, and perhaps numerous others.

Among the better class of Mexicans, the parents have a pleasing custom of entertaining with a party or dance for their young folk as they return from boarding school or college. This is in the nature of a surprise party, and takes place the evening of their return, Sunday, Monday, or whenever.

A number of Mexican holidays are observed. In fact, more celebrations are held on those days than on American or Texas holidays. Diez y seis, the “Sixteenth of September,” is the anniversary of the Grito de Dolores; El Cinco de Mayo celebrates Mexican independence from the French. Birthdays of Miguel Hidalgo, Iturbide, Benito Juarez, and other patriots are observed annually. The Mexican anthem is sung with much fervor on these occasions. Incidentally, the American anthem is included in the program, and folk songs are often sung.

A custom observed among the merchants is the giving of a pilon to the children. This word means literally a loaf of sugar, but its real interpretation has come to mean something extra, and it is doled out to the small boys and girls when they make purchases. If the merchant should for a moment forget, a small voice will pipe up: “No tienes pilon?” Woe to the merchant who does not comply with this custom, for he is immediately boycotted.

III

WEDDING AND FUNERAL CEREMONIES

The customs and ceremonies in vogue during the engagement and wedding of a Mexican couple are not only interesting, but very quaint and pretty. They savor of Europe, but then the Spanish introduced European customs into Mexico; so it is not surprising that there should be a resemblance.

Some of the courtships are still made through a musical campaign. But the youthful lover no longer takes his guitar and strums a love song beneath the window of his novia. Now-adays, he and two or three of his fellow companions suffering from similar heart affliction club together and engage a commercial orchestra, which goes from the home of, one sweetheart to another. La Paloma and La Golondrina are favorite serenades, but American melodies are also played.

During an engagement, extreme rules of formal etiquette are called for. When a couple have made up their minds to be married, the young man in question sends a committee of his friends, generally of mature years, to call upon the parents of the girl to ask their permission. No definite answer is sent to the young man by his own committee. After due deliberation, the parents of the bride select their committee and by them send their ultimatum. If the answer be favorable, the parents of the groom make a call on the parents of the young lady. Definite arrangements are then entered upon.

The plans for the wedding are perfected and carried out by the family of the bride, but it is understood that the groom will pay all the expenses. In cases where the groom has no immediate family or where his family lives at a great distance, gold pieces sufficient to cover all expenses are given to the mother of the bride. The amount he gives depends upon his means. The more worldly his possessions, the more elaborate he is expected to make the wedding. Where the man is well-to-do, he is expected to have a suitable home in readiness to take the bride to. Even the linens for the home are bought by him. In the matter of trousseau, the bride’s parents may furnish her with whatever they care to; but everything that she wears on her wedding day, including her going-away suit, is the gift of the groom. He pays, in addition, for the cake, the refreshments, and the entertainments that generally follow the nuptial rites.

The invitations differ in style from those commonly used in this country. Instead of the wording appearing on the first page of the folder, the invitations are a double-decked affair, so to speak. On the left-hand page of the inner sheet appear the names of the bride’s parents; then on the right-hand page is a duplicate announcement, except that the names of the grooms parents are used. Below, in the middle of the page, are given the date and place of the ceremony.

The ceremony varies according to the religious beliefs; but the majority of the border Mexicans are Catholics. The marriage service then takes place at the church. In Mexico, both a civil and a religious ceremony are required, and many of the better families in the States also insist on two. No Mexican girl, no matter how poor her own circumstances or those of the man she marries, feels truly married without a white dress, a veil, a wax wreath, and a dance of some kind to follow the ceremony. Often the dance starts on the eve of the marriage, lasting until six o’clock the next morning, at which time the ceremony is performed.

Still another unique feature of the Mexican marriage is the arras, which is in the nature of a dowry of thirteen pieces of gold that is given to the bride as a good luck symbol. Sometimes the arras is given by several friends, and the whole makes a nice nest egg for the bride.

The customs and ideas associated with a death in a Mexican home, the elaborate funeral rites, the peculiarities of mourning are difficult to describe. Therein ancestral notions and practices are rigidly adhered to.

The funeral notice is not used; but an invitation is issued. One would no more think of going to a funeral without having received an invitation than of attending a wedding to which one had not been bidden. The women rarely appear during the ceremony, but remain in a secluded room and wear black shawls over their heads.

Only the men accompany the remains to the grave. In many places, where a commercial hearse is not available, automobiles or other vehicles are used. These are decorated with flowers and draped with lace curtains. Where the distance is not too great, the body is borne to the cemetery by the pall-bearers. When the death has been that of an infant, the small casket is placed in a baby buggy and laboriously pushed to the cemetery. Small children march in the funeral procession, carrying flowers in their hands, which they place over the tiny grave.

An odd funeral observance is that of having the guests photographed. The men of the family in greeting the guests thank them profusely for their attendance.

Strict mourning customs are observed. The deepest black that can be obtained is worn by the women, and oftentimes by the children, even by those as young as five or six years old. The mourning period varies, according to the relationship of the deceased. As almost all of the families have a large connection of aunts, uncles, and cousins, they are seldom out of black. It is a well known fact that there is a greater demand for black fabrics in a Mexican community than for any other kind. The customary black crepe that is tied on the door is never removed, but is left for the weather to wear off. When wearing mourning, ladies never appear in any kind of public gathering except church services. Anyone who dares to violate this custom is severely criticized. Even those who do not approve of these antique notions are often forced to observe them in order to escape censure. All musical instruments are closed and locked during the mourning period. Every mirror is either veiled or turned to the wall, as is any photograph of the deceased. In some families the beard of the men is allowed to grow uncut for one month following a death.

Observances of death anniversaries are always held. Special requiem mass is customary to people of the Catholic faith. The border Mexicans, however, prepare a bier for the first anniversary, which is placed in the church, identical in position with that of the casket the previous year. Invitations to this mass are issued. Following the service, a feast is participated in at the family residence.

The cemetery is a place of great pride. It is called Campo Santo, literally meaning the Holy Field. Profusive decorations are used, metal flowers and wax wreaths of all colors, made to withstand the weather, being placed in great numbers on the graves. Especially on All Souls' Day, November 2, the graves of ancestors and loved ones are decorated. Candles are burned about the tomb and the relatives sit all day beside the grave. Booths are erected all around the graveyard, where candies, fruits, and flowers are sold.

IV

OMENS AND SUPERSTITIONS

The peons of the rural districts are full of superstitious fears, inherited from generations of ignorant forebears, and daily they exercise their beliefs in charms and omens. But of all their beliefs, none is more curious than that in the "Evil Eye"--a superstition shared, in some instances, even by Mexicans of the aristocratic class.

It is claimed that the human eye has a magic power over persons or things, and the person exercising this power is said to make Ojo (Eye). Upon seeing a person or thing and admiring that person or thing, one must touch what he has seen and admired, else the person seen will become sick or the object will break. According to the belief, every one is possessed of the power to "make Ojo." Thus if I should while walking on the street meet an old woman who was a complete stranger to me, and if she should admire my arms or hair, she would not be satisfied to pass on without having stopped me and touched that part of my body that she admired. If some believer in the "Evil Eye" whose good will I had should come into my house and admire some object to any extent, he or she would not be content to leave the house without having touched that object. On the other hand, I, not believing in this occult power, might unconsciously cause someone to suffer by admiring his or her eyes, or complexion, or some cherished object. I could cite instances of people who had never even heard of the belief being summoned to administer treatment for the Evil Eye.

The superstition seems to be observed more in connection with children than with grownups. Perhaps this is because it is often much harder to diagnose a child's illness from outward symptoms than an adult's. And so it comes about that if the parents cannot tell what ails the child, they are wont to lay the cause on someone who has been looking at it. Not long ago a family, only recently from Mexico, had a child only a few weeks old to become very sick. The mother, though a young woman of some education, believed in the Evil Eye. As the baby grew worse, the mother and her relatives grew to believe that it was suffering from the Evil Eye. When remedy after remedy had been tried and doctors found of no avail, the blame for the illness was fixed on an out-of-town person whom it was impossible to recall. The baby died-the doctors said of undernourishment; but the mother firmly believes that the baby would have lived if the accused person could have been present to administer the proper treatment. It should be added that those suffering from Evil Eye attribute it generally to envy or malice, though, as has been said, innocent offenders are not only possible but common.

The test for El Ojo is to crack an egg over the head of the person supposed to be suffering from it. If the patient is really suffering from the Evil Eye, then a small eye will form in the yolk of the egg. Hurried steps are then taken to ascertain the identity of the person responsible for the affliction. The offender is certain to suffer from a sick headache; so in various ways the family of the afflicted one come to fix the blame. The offender found, he must go to the sick person, take a mouthful of water, and from his own mouth transfer it into the mouth of his victim. This remedio is supposed to effect instantaneous cure, but if it does not, there are other prescribed treatments. In each and all of them, however, the offender takes the place of the nurse.

A malady peculiar for its treatment among the peons is that known as Susto (literally, "fright"). A peon who has been badly frightened may have fever and suffer from lack of appetite. Should his malady be pronounced Susto, he must go to a graveyard and take a pinch of dust from four corners of a grave. If not near a burial place, he may, instead, go to a cross-roads and take a pinch of dust from the four corners of the highway. Then to the dust must be added a piece of red ribbon, a gold ring, and a sprig of palm leaf that has been blessed. From this mixture a tea is made and seven doses are swallowed. However, the tea has an external efficacy also. It is suddenly poured into a brass kettle that has been heated very hot. The sizzling sound made by the escaping steam gives the patient a start, and acts as a sort of antidote to the shock from which he is suffering.

Still another cure for the Susto is for the patient to lie flat on his back while some member of the family wields an old broom lengthwise just above the body. Meanwhile the "sustoed" person must with closed eyes repeat the Lord's Prayer once and the Hail Mary twelve times. The broom treatment is supposed to drive away the Evil Spirit.

Great significance is placed in dreams. If one dreams of a snake, then one is likely to encounter an old enemy. If in the dream the snake is overcome, then the enemy will cause no harm; if, however, the dream snake escapes, then the enemy is about to pursue.

Tuesday is the unlucky day of the peons. If faithful to their traditions, they never start a journey or commence any important business on that day. With them, as the world over, thirteen is an unlucky number. To drive a nail after dark is to invite bad luck, and in a Mexican community one never hears hammering after dusk.

Two old beliefs regarding babies are maintained. One is that if the fingernails of an infant are cut before it is a year old, the child's eyesight will be impaired. The second is that a pronounced soft spot on an infant's head indicates that "the memory is falling in."

A peon sneezing in the presence of another should instantly exclaim "Jesus!" This custom. is said to have originated in Spain during some plague, when the word was uttered as a sort of prayer.

Pedro And Pancho

BY MRS. MARY A. SUTHERLAND

The two sketches which follow were, in Mrs. Sutherland's words, contributed "more for reference than for publication." But they illustrate so appropriately some of the superstitious characteristics of the border Mexicans treated of in the article preceding, that they are here printed. Their own charm, however, is sufficient warrant for their inclusion.--Editor.

PEDRO

Pedro was my man of all work. I liked Pedro and he said that he liked "Madama Americana mucho." Anyway, he was a daily fixture in my house, keeping it neat, as he kept the lawn. Any work pointed out was grist to his busy hands until one fateful day I put him to dig a deep pit in the garden. At noon I called him to dinner. And what a changed man! His hands shook as with palsy, sweat stood out in great beads on his brow, and he refused to meet my glance; fear was written over him from his bare toes up. In answer to my question, "Are you sick, Pedro?" he humbly replied, "No, madama," and he left the table without having touched food. I knew the race too well to press the question. Later he came to tell me that his work was done. I paid him his daily wage, and gave him, as usual, a package of food for his children. Later I found that he had left the package on the gallery.

I then stepped out to inspect Pedro's work. On the brink of the pit I found the cause of the trouble: a neat pile of human bones, bones that were old when Columbus was preparing to discover America, only the larger ones being present. And Pedro had piled them up in plain view that I might know that he had discovered my crime. He did not return on the next or any other day, but a week later I saw him passing, on the opposite side of the street. I called to him, but he pulled his hat to shade his face and mended his pace. The unkindest cut of all, though, was from his little son who trotted at his heels. The cute little Aztec who ate my cookies, and who loved to come to see Madama, he also shaded his face and fled in terror, bawling as he ran.

Then I understood. Poor, ignorant Pedro had listened to the gruesome tales of his race (and they can and do tell them), tales of travelers decoyed by women and murdered for their wealth. Had he not seen proof of my nefarious deeds, and placed them to confront me, that I might know that he knew me for what I was, and that he would have no more of me? I never saw Pedro again, but I feel that his children know that their father had a narrow escape from sudden death, and that the story is told in the jacales, on dark nights, to eager listening ears, and that my reputation with them is on a par with that of Lucrezia Borgia, yet safe as to my own race-for the Mexicans seem to feel a delicacy in discussing affairs of their white neighbors. Perhaps, and more than perhaps, there is a reason.

FRANCISCO

My next servant answered to the name of Francisco, but we called him Frank. He was the Beau Brummell of his section of Mexican town, a leader of the younger set, yet a willing worker at anything that came his way. He was a real find, and, best oX all, he loved his job. Why not? The Captain's cast-off clothes fitted him to the dot, shoes, hat, and all, and he was in clover, as it were. But conditions were too good to last.

One day while we were working in the Captain's room and Frank was growing rich in raiment, he asked me if I knew anything of "Masuro." "Masuro--I think that's what you call heem, bad, ver bad mans; always got room upstairs. Nobody see heem. My father, he tell me that ol Devil always there. He sit on throne with his tail wrap around the altar, and sometime he eat baby for supper."

"Frank," I asked, "are you talking of the Masons?"

"Yes, ma'am, that's heem, bad, ver bad."

"But," said I, "you are in the room of a Mason. These clothes were worn by a member of the order, and some night when you are coming from the baite, suppose you should meet the Devil and he should say: 'That man's clothes smell of the order. Come on, sir, to the lodge so that I can try you out; I think you belong'."

But Frank was off with a yell. Two bounds and he was down stairs and on his way, sans clothes or pay for the day's work, and again I was short of help, for they never come back if once offended. Once excite suspicion, and even under the greatest stress they are off you forever.

Weather Wisdom Of The Texas-Mexican Border

BY J. FRANK DOBIE

[The weather signs recorded in this article have been garnered almost altogether from a goodly number of years lived on ranches in the border country.]

"He that observeth the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap." The thing is finely said and no doubt prefigures a truth; but the wisdom of Solomon was not weather wisdom, and had the wise king gone out from his palace with its porch of pillars and its terraces of "algum trees" to the shepherds "abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night," I imagine that he might have learned some new thing in the way of "discerning the face of the sky." For folk who herd and harvest have always been weather wise; and passing their lives in battle with nature, they seek to forecast the maneuvers of the elements with a zeal and curiosity little understood by the house-bound souls of towns and cities. Thus, the Mexican vaqueros and pastores who tend their pastures and herds on the border lands of Texas have come to possess a weather lore of signs as curious and various as may be found anywhere in the world perhaps.

Many of these signs are accepted, and, if not fully believed in, at least hoped in, by the American farmers and ranchmen. In all the vast, periodically desert territory stretching from Arizona to the Gulf of Mexico, no two native men of the soil ever meet without an exchange of the majority of these five questions:

"Well, how is the dry weather serving you?" "How has the rain been over in your section?" "When you reckon it's going to rain?" "How's the grass (or crops) over your way?" "It's getting awful dry, ain't it?"

Out in the arid lands this talk of the weather is not a mere pour passer le temps; it is charged with feeling and earnest solicitude. There, the justice of the old English proverb, "Change of weather is the discourse of fools," hardly applies, although everyone knows and quotes the saying: "Nobody but a fool or a newcomer will prophesy weather in Texas"--a saying vaunted before strangers but never remembered in their absence. Upon the weather depend the very necessities of life, and concerning it the talk of the dependents may well afford to be inconsistent.

Not many border Mexicans claim to read the atmosphere directly, but all ascribe to insects, birds, and beasts a prescience that they themselves for the most part disclaim. A sign almost universally believed to forecast rain is the climbing up of snails on weeds, bushes, posts, etc. The snails know, it is argued, when water is coming and, accordingly, seek a dry lodging. The fact that they may climb up months before it finally does rain in nowise dashes the faith in their weather divination.

A sign in which most Mexicans place yet more credence is the crawling out of rattlesnakes. Of course, the rattlers always lie up in very hot or very cold weather and come out on days of moderate temperature, in the spring, early summer, and fall-which are the rainy seasons, if any season of the Rio Grande regions can be called rainy. Nevertheless, on certain days, rattlesnakes do, for reasons unknown, come forth more abundantly than on other days of apparently identical weather attributes; and when they do, prophesies of rain are always correspondingly numerous.

The snakes need not be seen-only trailed. Experienced natives can tell by his trail in which direction a snake is traveling. If the trails are numerous and their direction is toward high ground, an old settler with an optimistic turn of mind might go out and buy a herd of cattle on the prospect for rain. I know of one pioneer who. claims to have learned this rain sign from the Indians. It may be entitled to some regard, but certainly the rattlesnake swims in water as naturally as does the moccasin. Dry land creature though he is, I have watched two of his kind swimming back and forth across a waterhole, apparently for no other reason than for fun. They were careful to keep their rattles pointed up high and dry, though. According to popular belief a rattlesnake never gets his rattles wet; hence his precaution against rain. Hence also the western custom of placing rattles in a fiddle as a charm against damp strings.

Another snake sign is this: if a dead snake tossed in the air falls on its back, with the white of its belly showing, rain is foretold; if, on the contrary, it falls on its belly, back up, dry weather will continue. Owing to the location of the serpentine center of gravity, however, the snake inevitably falls belly up! It is hardly necessary to say that rain does not inevitably follow. There are at least two variants of the same superstition: one is that if the dead snake is simply turned belly up, rain will be induced; the other, that if the snake is hung on a limb, it will rain. Consequently, while it is an unwritten law of the border that every man shall kill every rattlesnake found, it is a kind of implied duty that, the snake killed, he shall hang it up. To increase the effectiveness of the hanging, I have seen Mexicans make a snare out of horse tail and go to no end of trouble to noose the rattler and hang it up alive. By some border country folk, and by Westerners in general, extreme viciousness in rattlesnakes is interpreted as a sign of change in the weather, of rain. On the other hand, if the snakes are sluggish and dull to bite, a drouth is ominous. On the border, all snake signs seem to apply to rattlesnakes exclusively.

I remember how one rain sign was particularly impressed upon me. It was well along in the summer and there had been no rain all year. I was lamenting the drouth to an old pastor.

“No tiene miedo, maestro,” said he. “Do not fear, master; it is beyond all doubt going to rain soon. The coyotes are howling every morning now after sunrise, and they are howling on the hills. Do not deceive yourself; cuando cantan los coyotes aoina, va hover sin falta.” (When the coyotes sing in this manner, it is going to rain without fail.)

He went on to explain that. if the coyotes howled merely at night, after sunset and before sunrise, their howling was no seña; they must howl after the sun was up and before it went down. Moreover, unless the coyotes howled upon the hills, and not in the valleys and swales, their howling must be taken at a discount. And it did rain not long after the old pastor’s cocksure asservation!

The time of day at which the animal folk express themselves has a great deal to do with what their expressions mean. As we shall see presently, the owl’s hoot in the daytime is, like the coyote’s yell in the daytime, the only hoot that’s worth a hoot. So, contrarywise, the burro’s bray is to be regarded as expressive of weather opinion only after dusk. If right after dusk, not late in the evening though, more than two burros set out a-braying and if they are answered by one or more burros off some distance, then, according to Mexican interpretation, it will rain before morning. Burros, it may be explained, are, excepting coyotes and happy hens, probably the most choral animals on earth; but, then, they have near precedent for being all liars.

Another pastor, who was originally from Mexico, was always divulging to me the signs and mysteries of the seasons. If the lambs frisked about in the morning, he declared that it would rain, though the gamboling of kids he held as of no import. However, he assured me that the nanny goats always knew what kind of season was going to follow their kidding. If they took kindly and quickly to their newborn kids, especially to the twins and triplets, a good season with plenty of pasturage might be expected. If, reversely, they were slow to own their offspring and had to be forced to let them suck, then one had better look out for drouth and barren range. If the goats inclined to be sleepy and spent much time lying down, Santos-for such was the pastor's name observed "a good sign," though goats always lie down a great deal on warm days. Beyond all, he claimed to have algo en su cuerpo (something in his body) that enabled him to read the coming events of the weather.

"It is going to rain about next Wednesday," he might say.

"Why, how do you know?" I would ask.

"Algo en mi cuerpo me dice." (Something in my body tells me so.)

It would not rain, and I got to teasing the fellow so about the algo en su cuerpo that he relinquished all claim to personal divination.

On the spur of the moment one of these Mexican weather prophets is likely to interpret almost anything as a sign of rain. He wants rain; he wants to think that it is going to rain; he wants to please whomsoever he is talking to and give him the pleasure. of thinking that it will rain; his easy nature makes him incline to put up the "purple parasol" of fancy between himself and the dry facts of the case; therefore, if there be no signs of rain, he is ready to invent some. To give an example: one night a much calf refused to suck.

"What is the matter with it?" I asked the ancient Mexican who was milking.

"Quié'n sabe?" he replied; "it is probably going to rain."

Sometimes, merely to hear what this patriarch would invent, I might ask: "Well, do Juan, when do you think it will rain?"

"Pues, quie'n sabe ?" he might reply, "but I notice that the hogs have kept under the shed all morning; they have not gone off rooting anywhere."

"Well, is that a sign of rain?"

"Pues, quie'n sabe?" And this with a chuckle, "It may be."

The weather prophet of the Mexican border is far from being without honor in his own country. Frequently some old man or woman will take a particular sign for his or hers and on it pin a reputation. One vaquero that I know claims as his seña-though I have heard others reckon with the same sign-the bellowing of bulls. The bulls, like the coyotes, must cantar (literally, sing!) upon the hills; if they cantar there, they are foretelling rain. If at the round-up steers and bulls fight and bellow a great deal, some vaquero is likely to remark that slickers will be needed before long.

Likewise, the running and kicking up of their heels by horses foot-free on the range is sometimes said to signify rain. The horses are, I suppose, excessively happy with the vision of grass which their prophetic souls possess; however, if some old cynic among them had the gift of Balaam's ass, he might observe that green grass in their bellies is more conducive to horses' rollicking than a prospect of grass merely psychic.

Men of the range generally, it seems to me, believe that cattle can sense a change in the weather sooner and more surely than all other animals. If toward winter an old cowman or one of his cowboys, "white" or Mexican, sees cattle lying down earlier than their usual bedding time, he will say that they are "resting up" for a norther that is sure to be on its way. If cattle bunch up and get their heads together, or if they low much, cold weather may be expected. There is no doubt that a great deal of credence may be placed in these particular cattle signs. As an indication of rain, the migration of cattle, as well as of quail, deer, and other animals, to the hills away from the waterings is frequently regarded with favor. It is a well known fact that such migrations always follow a rain; hence, it seems to be reasoned, if the migration takes place while it is still dry, the migrating things are simply seeing water ahead and taking time by the forelock. I have seen cattle scatter far back in the hills on a day when the clouds and atmosphere might indicate moisture, and yet return over dry trails. They know that the range is better away from the trodden ways; naturally, then, if the weather is fresh, they graze out farther. In winter, no matter how dry, all stock beat back as far as they can.

The ability of cattle, deer, and other animals to sense a change in the weather so much farther ahead than can man, is sometimes accounted for by men of the open by the theory that animals have a highly sensitized middle ear that feels weather warnings humanly imperceptible. Though the theory may have foundation, it is so far but a folk belief, comparable to that of explaining the extraordinarily keen hearing of deer by assigning them ears between their toes. I have heard pioneer hunters go so far as to assert that they had picked ear wax from that locality of deer’s feet!

Few animals exist, perhaps, in the border country that do not afford at some time a weather sign. Once as a boy I asked a Mexican what the unusual number of bull-bats that we saw flying about in late evening was a sign of, and I remember well my astonishment at his reply: that they were not a sign of anything. In this atmosphere of signs and wonders, I used to sit under a mesquite tree by a certain water tank on hot days and watch the paisano, after he had drunk, run down the road a few paces, stop, look to the right, then to the left, then behind him, stand on one foot, then on the other, pant for a few seconds in his insane way, once more set out at headlong speed, stop again a few paces farther down the road, and repeat all his halting exercises. As I watched, I would wonder what the strange ways of this strange bird were a sign of; no one that I asked could tell me. But I know now that if I had asked enough Mexicans about the bull-bats so thick in the evening and the didos of the paisano in the sun, I should have found one to whom both were altogether accredited signs.

If butterflies are thick; if heel flies pester cattle in a herd much, making them kick out and run stiff-tailed as if locoed; if a steer licks his forefoot; if the little black Third Party’ flies come down on the cattle in unusual numbers; if common flies gather much about the house or camp, then rain is predicted. If red ants are active generally and are particularly at work topping off their hills, a heavy shower may be expected, for they are damming against the water; just so, if winged ants come out and fly about, they have come forth to escape drowning and their unfortunate kinsmen without wings will be drowned by the ensuing waterfall. If prairie dogs dig their holes out and mound the earth up around the openings, they are said to be preparing against a down-pour. If gnats are bothersome, light showers are expected. Even the sluggish land terrapin is quickened by a foreknowledge of rain, and his ambling forth is hailed with hope. If earth worms appear crawling about, or if certain birds call, especially the bob-white, Mexican quail, and water-crow, then one may hear bodings of rain. The hooting of owls in the daytime is an especially good sign of rain. Owls are said to be particularly weather wise in the fall of the year, when they are regarded by some people as almost infallible in prophesying wet northers, even several days ahead. If frogs croak considerably, they are said to be “calling for water”; and it seems to be thought that their croaking prayers are made with such faith that they are veritable prognostications. Especial attention is paid to the croaking of tree-frogs, I have heard, but the habitations of these marsh-loving batrachia are few and far between “along the western bank of the Rio Grande.”

Occasionally, a border Mexican guesses at the degree of severity of the coming winter by the amount of fur found on pelts, by the supposed thickness or thinness of corn shucks or of the bark on trees. These signs, however, which must have originated in the far north, are not much considered; for in all the Southwest, rain, rather than cold, is the weather topic of real interest. Speculation dwells on rain so unremittingly that comparatively few signs have to do with sleet, snow, and such other phenomena as more nearly concern people farther north. Of course, such commonly known harbingers of cold weather as migrating cranes, ducks, and geese are observed. The hog is popularly endowed with a deal of sensibility for the impending elements. Anticipatory of cold weather, hogs are remarked to be very energetic in making their beds-or nidos (nests), as the Mexicans call them. Squirrels industrious in gathering acorns or pecans are said to presage a cold winter; but pecan trees, oaks, and squirrels are all local in the border country, and this sign is hardly known by Mexicans in general. The paucity of squirrels is, numerically at least, overbalanced by millions of wood-rats, which sometimes devastate vast areas of prickly pear and build enormous nests of mesquite and huisache sticks; and I have heard that extra large nests indicate extra cold for the winter. When field larks appear in the fall, some people look to see if their breasts are very yellow; if so, a cold winter is to ensue. A cold spell may be anticipated by the extreme numerosity of field larks or by the presence of flocks of strange birds, such as the cedar waxwing; also by the way doves forsake the limbs of trees and settle on the ground.

A sign rare, and therefore especially significant, is the rising to the surface of hidden water at night. Of this phenomenon I possess a vivid recollection. During a severe drouth, all the water holes in a creek that ran through my father's ranch went dry, and we dug a well in the bed of it, from which we drew up water by hand for the cattle. One early morning when we came to draw the water, the hoof prints of the cattle in the sandy creek bed all contained an impression, infinitesimally thin, of water. During the night the water from the subterranean spring had risen. The Mexicans were exclamatorily sanguine over this sign of rain. Another rather curious expression of nature interpreted as a sign of rain sometimes is that of spider webs. In the mesquite country, at times, the spaces between bushes are all interlaced with them so thick that they appear like stringy clouds.

The more elemental, unsophisticated, and pastoral a folk, the more faith have they in, and the more "influence" attribute to, the moon. With them the signs of the zodiac are something more than rococo architectural decorations; they are signs to sow by and to geld by, to breed stock by and to wean children by. With them, the lunar phases, no matter how other signs read, are the final determinants of the weather. On remote ranches, in isolated camps, Mexican vaqueros, tank builders, pear burners, and fence riders may be in doubt occasionally as to the day of the week; they may argue the date of the month; but the age of the moon or the fixing of the date of the next new moon becomes a subject for long and absorbing discussion. Saving the dream book, the almanac is frequently the sole literary possession of one of these outpost Mexican families or camps; as often as not, even it is wanting. Then distinguished and honored that sage who knows La Epacta--the Epact, of which, in a more "cultivated" and tutored stratum of society, few of us, and those special students in astronomy, have ever heard. But scattered here and there through the Southwest are weather-scarred white men who know it. The old trail drivers, some of them, learned it from the Mexicans and, driving up the long trail, used it. My grandfather was a trail driver; I have heard him compute with La Epacta a hundred times. He taught it to me, and it is with a kind of pride that I give the formula.

La Epacta is simply the number of days old that the December moon is on the first day of January. Only once in every nineteen years do the lunar and calendar years begin simultaneously; hence, every year in the cycle of nineteen has a different Epacta. Now, there is a simple mathematical formula for finding the Epacta for any given year; but the astronomer of the camp and trail is simply told, without explanation, La Epacta for the year in which he is taught to use it. For the next, and for each succeeding, year he adds 11-the difference between the 365 solar days of the year and the 354 lunar days. When the total of his additions exceeds 30, he subtracts the 30 therefrom, and the remainder is La Epacta. For instance, La Epacta for 1922 is 4; for 1923 it will be 15 (4+11) ; for 1924 it will be 26 (15+11) ; and for 1925 it will be 7 (26+11-30).

In the old days when there was constant night herding, a foreknowledge of the dates of the dark of the moon or of a full moon was often very valuable, and many times the trail drivers had no other means for getting this knowledge than La Epacta. Not so many Americans know it now as knew it a generation ago perhaps, but a good many Mexicans still use it. By it pastores calculate months ahead that they may put the billy goats with their herds at the right time to make the period of gestation expire and the kidding begin when the moon is waxing.

The sign of the “wet moon” is in dispute. Some claim that if the new moon comes in tipped up, a wet quarter may be expected; just as many contrary minded natives hold that the tipped moon is “drained” and that unless the new moon is on its back the probability of rain is slight. All during the terrible drouths of 1916 and 1917, according to one observant rancher, every new moon was “dry” on its back, not a single time tipped up. Whatever the argument, though, the most drouth-oppressed pessimist has hope each month that the next new moon will bring forth wetness. These border folk, like the sailors, believe in the weather significance of a ring around the moon, la casa de la luna (the moon’s house) as the Mexicans call it. I have seen them count the stars inside the ring-happily for their faith, without the aid of telescope-to determine how many days off the rain would be.

A cirrus formation of clouds, called by the Mexicans borregas en el suelo (sheep in the sky), is said to denote a rain, as is, likewise, a red sunset, called sometimes Sangre del Cristo (Blood of Christ). This latter sign is contrary to the philosophy of an old rhyme current among the border Americans-indeed, current over all England and America, I suspect:

Red at night, sailors delight;
Red in the morning, sailors take warning.”

However, there is another rhyme, undoubtedly English, that bears out the Mexican theory:

“If the sun in red shall set,
The next surely will be wet.”

It is a question too old ever to be settled, though the Pharisees and Sadducees whom Christ rebuked for not being able to “discern the signs of the times” seem to have made no debate on the matter: “When it is evening, ye say, ‘It will be fair weather, for the sky is red’.

Many old timers, Mexicans as well as Americans, look upon a clear sky at night with an unusual number of stars visible, as a favorable sign of rain; similarly, if the stars appear near, rain is predicted. On the other hand, the singing of locusts, whirlwinds, steady south winds, and foggy mornings are, any or all, omens of drouth. “Smoky” weather indicates a change.

The rainbow is, as elsewhere, taken as a promise of no more rain. If the sun shines while it is showering, it will shower at the same hour the following day. A steady east wind always arouses hope of rain, and there is a saying that if a shower comes from the west it will be followed by “a gully washer and fence lifter.” Clearing off at night indicates further clouding up. Rain at night gives hope for its repetition.

“Ground hog day” is always talked about by the Americans, but I have never heard it alluded to by any Mexican. Another belief wholly American is that a frost will not kill growing things in the “light of the moon”--that is, before the moon is full.

“A late winter, a hard winter,” is a common saying. An early wet norther in the fall is taken as a prologue to a wet winter. On the other hand, early September “blows” from the north are “a mighty bad sign” (“a mighty bad sign” being always a sign of drouth). Another “mighty bad sign,” or “poor sign,” is the appearance of “heat clouds,” clouds that come up in the afternoon from the Gulf.

“Sun dogs,” sometimes called “weather dogs,” are regarded by many old-timers as rain signs, though, so far as I know, not by the Mexicans. The “sun dog” is a rainbow colored splotch on the ground, generally on a hill-side, occuring north or south of the sun. If it appears to the north, then there will be a norther (perhaps wet) in three days; if to the south, then there will be a rain in three days.

I have heard of one ancient Mexican astrologically inclined who predicted rain from a certain way that El Camino de San Pedro (literally, St. Peter’s Path--the Milky Way) seemed to be pointing.

Like people the world over, the borderers have certain physical idiosyncrasies that they interpret as premonitory of wet or cold weather; as, drowsiness, an aching corn, awakened rheumatism, stiff or aching joints. One day a ranch Mexican asked me how I felt. I replied that I felt well enough, but that for two or three days I had been very stiff and lazy.

“Well, then,” he commented with sufficient gratification, “it is likely to rain.”

As regards general seasonal weather, not a few among the older inhabitants declare that great changes have taken place in their lifetimes. Not long ago one man asked me if I had not noticed that the sun was farther in the south now than it was when I was a boy. He firmly holds that the country is on its way toward having a frigid climate. He is not alone in his contention that the winters are more severe than they used to be. It is a common complaint that drouths are more prevalent and the seasons less seasonable than they were in the “free range days.”

The reason generally assigned for this change is that in free range days the grass turf was better, attracting somehow more water from the clouds. As an illustration of the change, creeks and springs that are now dry are pointed out as once running. And there is no doubt as to the truth of this observation. Some old settlers hold, however, that the creeks and springs have gone dry as a result of the ground being cut up by sheep and a general overstocking of the fenced pastures rather than by a diminution of the average rainfall. On the other hand, a numerous element holds that rainfall follows the plow, and argues that certain counties in Central -Texas that are now farming districts abundantly supplied by rain, were in the open range days arid. This element maintains that with the coming of the farmer into the border country, drouths are diminishing in intensity.

A great majority of the weather signs which I have observed as extant on the Texas-Mexican border are no doubt common to other lands and peoples. Some are borrowed from Mexico; some are of Indian origin; some were brought hither by American settlers from distant states; some are a part of the weather lore of the world, as old as sowing and reaping and grazing and hunting among the sons of earth.

A few may be local; such, for example, as the howling of coyotes, the bellowing of bulls, and the crawling of rattlesnakes. Finally, be it remembered, Texans have a saying: “In dry weather all signs fail.” “Even,” said a noble pioneer woman to me, “even the Indian sign, 'Black all around and pouring down in the middle,' may fail." And the most prolific Mexican weather prophet often admits that it will rain only "cuando Dios to quiera" (when God wills).

THE END

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