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Old America - Tezcucians, Tlascalans, Quiches, Etc.

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without the heel touching the ground), as the lion, tiger, wolf, dog, cat and weasel; "plantigrade" (or those in which the palm of the hind foot touches the ground in walking), as the bear and badger; "pinnigrade" (having pinion-like organs to move by, as fins), such as seals, sea-lions and walrus; "herbivores" (or plant-eating), as the ruminants (animals which chew the cud), such as the cow, sheep, antelope and camel; or "omnivores," such animals as live on animal or vegetable food, as the hog.

By referring to the foregoing, such animals as will first be noticed in these "stories" may be assigned to their proper position among mammals.

The Prairie Wolf represented in the picture on the first page, as will be seen by consulting the brief classification given, belongs to the highest division of the animal kingdom, that of the vertebrates. He is classed among the mammals, and belongs to the carnivores. He is also classed with the digitigrades, that is, walking on the toes without the heel touching the ground.

Although this quadruped is classed among the more noble animals, he is a most ignoble fellow. Not that he is imperfect in the sphere in which he moves, but compared with some other animals he appears to be inferior in those qualities we admire. For instance, he is a great coward, and will slink back into a corner at the mere apprehension of danger. But, be on your guard, he is only watching for an opportunity; he is as "sly as a fox," but not half so daring; let him only get "half a chance," and he will snap at you with as much audacity as a lion; and then he will instantly retreat as if he was ashamed of himself or "scared" at his own daring.

There is a "hang-dog" look about Mr. Coyote, as this animal is called, in which respect he very much resembles some of the Indian dogs, which may almost be taken for him.

As to eating, the Prairie Wolf is by no means particular; all the refuse of other carnivorous animals will be devoured with unmistakable relish. Notice him when eating, how slyly he looks up to see if there is any danger at hand. If he sees you watching him he will be so self-denying that he will not touch a morsel, but will look wistfully at the food, taking a snatch at it if you happen to turn your head. And such teeth! Notice those of a fine dog, and you may get a good idea of them. In fact, *Canis* means dog.

Let us imagine ourselves at the camp fire on the prairie: lucky for us that we have a fire. Look at those glaring eyes, like cats' eyes, staring at you through the intense darkness. Listen to the growling, barking, snapping and snarling, as if they were taking counsel what to do under the very awkward circumstances. They will not pass the fire; you are safe. They are a pack of Prairie Wolves, that could tear you to pieces in an instant. You may see their work in the morning, if any foot-sore animal has come in their way, by the bones they have left to bleach upon the plains.

The appetite of this animal is disgusting; he will eat the most offensive matter; no prairie grave is safe from him. We don't like you, Mr. Coyote, if science has placed you among the nobler animals; your habits are repulsive and sacrilegious. We dare not tell of your dark doings on the wild and desolate prairies.

J. L. BARFOOT.

It is quite easy to perform our duties when they are pleasant, and imply no self-sacrifice; the test of principle is to perform them with equal readiness when they are onerous and disagreeable.

Old America.

BY G. M. O.

(Continued.)

TEZCUCIANS, TLASCALANS, QUICHES, Etc.

THE Acolhuans, or Tezucians, next to the Aztecs, were the most distinguished nation of Mexico after the departure of the Toltecs. They built the great city of Tezcuco on the eastern border of the Mexican lake, which, next to Mexico, was the largest and most beautiful city of Anahuac. It contained three temples, each measuring four hundred feet along the base of its front. Although the Tezucians indulged in the practice of human sacrifice, they at the same time believed in an all-powerful Creator of the universe; and so ardent were they in this belief, that they erected a temple which was dedicated "to the Unknown God, the Cause of Causes."

The Tezucians were in advance of the Aztecs in purely intellectual progress. They had the best histories, the best poems, the purest dialect and the best system of laws. Their laws were founded upon the principles of justice; honesty and fair dealing were required by all functionaries; a judge found guilty of receiving a bribe was punished with death; suitors appeared in person, not by counsel, and each party could be a witness in his own behalf. The clerk of the court made a statement of the case, and an abstract of the testimony and proceedings of the trial in writing (hieroglyphical), which was preserved by the court.

Agriculture, above everything else was encouraged by the rulers. Every available spot of ground was cultivated. Nezhuacoyatl, the sovereign who reigned at Tezcuco about the middle of the fourteenth century, and who has been called the Solomon of the new world, had a fondness for gardening, and within his dominions were a number of gardens, floral and vegetable, described as being incomparably beautiful. These gardens were supplied with aqueducts and filled with fountains, fish-ponds and large aviaries, and protected by a wood containing thousands of cedars, which still flourished long after the conquest. Nor did this king content himself with gardening merely; he erected a magnificent pile of buildings, which might serve both as a royal residence and for the public offices. It measured from east to west three thousand, seven hundred feet, and from north to south two thousand, nine hundred and thirty feet. It was surrounded by a wall of adobies and cement, six feet wide and nine feet high for one half of its circumference, and fifteen feet high for the other half. Within its enclosure were two courts, one used as the great marketplace of the city. The interior court was surrounded by the council chambers and halls of justice; there were also accommodations for foreign ambassadors, and a large saloon with apartments opening into it for men of science and poets, who, in private pursued their studies or met together under the marble porticos to converse. Here also were kept the public archives. Adjoining this court were the apartments of the king and his family, which was quite numerous, he having by his various wives no less than sixty sons and fifty daughters. The walls of the palace were encrusted with alabaster and richly painted stucco, or hung with gorgeous tapestries of cotton and variegated feather work. Accommodations on a princely scale were provided for the sovereigns of Mexico and

Tlacopan when they visited his court. The building contained three hundred apartments, some of them one hundred and fifty feet square. The interior of the building was doubtless constructed of the rich woods found in the country, which, when polished, are remarkable for their brilliancy and variegated colors. The more solid parts of the structure have furnished an inexhaustible quarry for the churches and other edifices since erected by the Spaniards on the site of the ancient city. We are not informed of the time occupied in building this palace, but two hundred thousand workmen were employed upon it. Not only were the beautiful gardens destroyed, but the palace itself was burned by order of Zumaraga, first bishop of Mexico. The Tezucians excelled in poetry. Nezahualcayotl's mind, in his declining years, seemed to be absorbed in the contemplation of the future, and his immortal destiny. The following are some of his thoughts, as translated by Galves from the Othomic language:

"The great, the wise the valiant, the beautiful,
Alas! where are they now?
They are all mingled with the clod;
And that which has befallen them shall happen us.
And to them that come after us.
Yet, let us take courage, illustrious nobles and chieftains,
Let us aspire to Heaven,
Where all is eternal, and corruption cannot come.
The horrors of the tomb are but the cradle of the sun,
And the dark shadows of death are brilliant lights of the stars."

Some of their poems contain sentiments as sublime and eloquent as our most gifted poets. This lament of one of their bards is beautiful:

"Banish care, if there be bounds to pleasure,
The saddest life must have an end,
Then weave the chaplet of flowers, and
Sing the song of praise of the all-powerful God;
For the glory of this world soon fadeth away."

The Tlascalans were a branch of the Aztec family. They occupied at first the western borders of Lake Tezcuco; about the same time the Aztecs settled Mexico. These two nations were very hostile towards each other, and kept up bloody wars. After defeating the Aztecs in two great battles, they emigrated to the valley between the lake and the gulf of Mexico, and there built their capital called Tlascala, one of the most noted cities of Anahuac. They established a republican form of government, and maintained their independence against the whole power of Montezuma. In regard to civilization, they were equal with the Mexicans. To protect the eastern border of the republic, they constructed a wall of stone twenty feet thick and nine feet high, for a distance of six miles across the valley; on the western quarter ditches and entrenchments were constructed with a degree of mathematical skill which showed a high advancement of knowledge in military engineering.

Tlascala meant "the place of bread," and the principal products were maize and cochineal. The Tlascalans were not only farmers, but soldiers, and very courageous and jealous of their honor and their liberty. Going into confederacy with the Spaniards against their ancient rivals, the Mexicans, they were involved in the common ruin after the conquest.

To the north of Mexico dwelt the Huastecas, and the Tarascas dwelt to the north-west. In the arts and civilization they were nearly equal to the Aztecs. They were bold, independent and fearless, and never submitted to the Mexican powers, though repeated efforts were made to bring them into subjection.

At the time of the conquest numerous tribes inhabited Central America; in fact, it was the old kingdom of Guatemala. Yucatan seems to have been a focal point of early civilization. Within its limits are found some of the most splendid ruins of America. At the time of the conquest the Quiches, Mayas and Tobascians occupied the country. Tecum-Umam was the ruling prince, and the chief city of the Quiches was Utallah, hardly surpassed by Mexico in point of splendor and magnitude. It was walled, and had only two ways of entrance, one by a causeway, and the other by a flight of steps. The refinement of these people astonished the Spaniards. They dwelt in well-constructed houses built of stone, and were respectably clothed. Their temples were large and of considerable architectural taste. They cultivated the ground with much care, lived in towns and had a well-regulated system of civil government.

When the Spaniards first invaded the Isthmus of Darien, they found it densely peopled with natives, enjoying a degree of civilization equal to those of Guatemala. They were supposed to be of the same race as the Quiches, though divided into tribes, and differing in appearance as much as the different nations of Mexico from one another.

COMMERCIAL VALUE OF COURTESY.

IN one of our large hotels a young man has a very large salary as room clerk. He has the faculty of stowing people away in all sorts of unmentionable places in his hotel, and making the guests feel happy about it. His politeness and good humor never run empty. Stout, of the Shoe and Leather Bank, is celebrated for his financial success and for his inexhaustible good nature. He is never so busy but he has a kind word for the humblest. When they are rushing things in the bank, Mr. Stout always finds time to say, "Take a seat, I'll be at leisure in a moment." A man came into the bank the other day and opened an account. "I came here," he said, "not simply because I knew my money would be safe with you, but because you are always civil. I have been a depositor in—bank for many years. I went in to-day to see the cashier. I knew him when he had no society to boast of, and hardly money enough to buy a dinner at a cheap restaurant. I laid my hat on the desk, which I suppose I had no business to do. He waved his hand with an imperious air, and said, 'Take this hat off.' I removed my hat, when he said, 'Now I will hear what you have to say.' 'I've nothing to say to you,' I replied. I went to the book-keeper, ordered my account to be made up, took the bank's check for \$42,000, and this I wish to deposit." The president and cashier represent two styles of business men common in New York. Sauciness does not bear a high commercial value among the financial men of the city.—*Chicago Commercial.*

THE most hideous women in the world are said to live in the valley of Spiti, which is a mountain-bound, almost inaccessible place, twelve thousand feet above the level of the sea, among the Himalaya. Their features are large and coarse, the expression of their faces is usually a natural grimace, and they hang rings in their noses. They dress in thick tunics and trousers, and their large, heavy boots, which come high up above the knees, are often filled around their legs with flour for warmth.