

Anonymous

Philip M. Gaffey, special agent of the Forestry Commission, who has been on a tour of inspection in San Diego county, has returned home. During Mr. Gaffey's stay in San Diego county he had an opportunity of learning a good deal about the San Luis Rey Indians and their various customs.

"The Indians," said Mr. Gaffey in an interview with an Express reporter, "as a rule are good, hard working people. Since the government has established schools for them, which have been conducted for about six years, there has been a marked improvement in this tribe. They are divided up into rancherías, or small villages, in numbers ranging from two hundred to five hundred each. The names of the rancherías are San Ysabelle, Conquilla, San Asigro, Pala, San Phillippi, Mesa Grande, Port La Cruz, San Luis Rey and Agua Caliente. The last named place, which means hot water, has a regular form of city government. The officers are designated as the Captain, or Mayor, Sheriff, two Judges and Zanjero.

"They have a calaboose, or jail, which is constructed of adobe. The prisoner is first tried by the justice and, if found guilty, his case is referred to the Indian agent, who is stationed at Colton. All the proceedings are conducted in the Indian language. With this form of government the Indians are satisfied and rarely, if ever, occasion any disturbance. There are a number of white men married to squaws who are in good circumstances. The children, as a rule, are polite, and very apt scholars. One peculiarity is that they will not converse in English with an American. They will talk Spanish, and only speak English amongst themselves. I do not know of any reason for this. It is due, probably, to the fear of making mistakes, or they do not like to subject themselves to criticism.

Fiesta de Los Monos

"The disposition of their dead is singular, and excites a great deal of interest among strangers. The funeral does not take place until three years after death. The corpse shortly after death is buried (with the exception of the hair) in a rude box, without any ceremony. At the expiration of three years the funeral, or fiesta de los monos, takes place. A dummy to represent the deceased is made, and dressed according to the social or financial standing of the person whom is represented. The hair is then placed on the monos, or dummy, and the ceremony follows. A remada, or big corral, with a roof of brush, is constructed, and in this place the ceremony is performed. A fire is built, around which the Indians chant and dance. The Indians believe that the chanting drives off the devil or

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evil spirits that may be present. After the chanting, which is carried on until morning, the Indians end their clamor by looking heavenward and giving voice to unearthly yells. A procession is then formed and the dancing is carried on by squaws, while the bucks stand about throwing away coins of different denominations and various kinds of cereals upon the passers by. The procession leaves the remada and returns after progressing some 500 yards.

"Upon the return of the procession the dummy is thrown into the fire and then consumed. During the burning of the Monos, chanting and dancing is indulged in by the squaws, while the bucks fire salutes.

"I saw a ceremony of this kind at Agua Caliente. Before the services began an old Indian, who is considered the sage of the village, was chosen master of ceremonies. The old fellow was over 'one hundred years old', and before the proceedings commenced he addressed the assemblage in Spanish. He asked those present who did not believe in the religion of the Indians to respect what was about to take place and keep their peace. He requested that those bearing weapons to leave the scene or take them off, and especially demanded that no liquor should be brought to the grounds. All his requests were religiously complied with.

"After the dummy was consumed the dance was kept up for several hours. While the dancing was carried on an old buck, in way of accompaniment, shook violently an old oyster can filled with pebbles. The dummy which I saw used represented an old squaw who was quite wealthy. It was richly dressed, and about \$40 and several sacks of wheat and barley were thrown away by the bucks.

"The scattering of the coin creates much commotion. As each coin is thrown a general scramble follows. Whoever gets the money is entitled to keep it.

Buried To The Chin.

"At the conclusion of the funeral services a distressing and unnatural ceremony takes place. The Indians believe that to insure a girl becoming a good and virtuous woman, she must withstand a terrible ordeal, which can only be administered after the conclusion of a fiesta de los monos. But this is only administered by the consent of the parents of the girl. The victim I saw accept this religious obligation was a rather pretty girl about 15 years old. A deep pit was made and in it a fire started. The coals were taken out and the girl placed in the excavation up to her neck. She was buried in that position, and about her head and face was constructed a small wall of brush which excluded all view. In this hole the poor child was compelled to remain from Friday evening at 8 o'clock until 10 o'clock the following Sunday night. She was only allowed to eat once a day and her food consisted of some acorn bread and a cup of water. I saw the girl extricated, and when she was taken out she was too weak to stand. The poor creature wore an awful expression on her face, which plainly denoted that she must have suffered awful and excruciating pain. She was always attended by a score of people.

"It is customary for a number of people belonging to a neighboring village to come to where the ceremony takes place and relieve those who watch the buried girl. When the neighbors leave they are given grain and clothing, besides many presents. The home people do not leave the corral, but sleep on the other side of the yard, rolled up in their blankets. How long the girl would have been compelled to remain in the hole before being voluntarily liberated, I did not learn. Her release, however, was occasioned by a dog fight. The canine squabble caused those who watched the girl to abandon their posts and the sleeping Indians picked up their traps and left the grounds. This caused the mother of the girl to become angry. The girl was taken from the 'fiery furnace'."