

dwelling on their route, to beg a night's shelter. In solitary regions it is easy to imagine that the favour would not be readily granted and that the holy pilgrims met with more than one rebuff. Now, it is this nightly episode that is commemorated in Mexican houses by the "posadas" or the begging of the "posada" (*pedir posada*) the word "posada" meaning shelter, lodging or entertainment.

It is customary for a number of Mexican families to club together to celebrate nine nights among them. At the appointed hour the guests assemble at the house chosen for the particular night. Each guest is provided with a taper and it should be noted that the servants are sent for from the kitchen, and are invited to take part with the people of the house in what is regarded as a religious ceremony.

A procession is formed, at the head of which are carried figures of Mary and Joseph, she riding an ass and he leading it, while overhead hovers a very florid and gaudily dressed angel guiding the pilgrims on their way. The dresses of the holy couple are very incongruous, consisting of green, yellow or other gay-coloured satins. St Joseph is usually represented with a pilgrim's staff and gourd.

The procession marches several times round the corridors of the house, intoning what is known

among Catholics as the Litany of Loreto, which is a series of poetical invocations in honor of the Virgin. When the litany is finished two or three of the party enter one of the rooms of the house, which, according to Mexican custom, open on the corridor, and having once entered they close the door on the rest of the party, at the head of which are the figures of the Virgin and Joseph. A dialogue, in chanted verse then ensues; the scene intended to be represented, being the nightly request of the pilgrims for shelter from the cold and dangers of the road. The people of the house, represented by those inside the rooms, at first refuse the favor, but at last relent, touched by the innocence and distress of the pilgrims. The versicles are very simple and are sung to a tune of immemorial antiquity in Mexico. Here is a specimen, freely translated, of the versification:

JOSEPH:

In heaven's name,  
I beg for shelter,  
My wife to-night  
Can go no further.

ANSWER:

No inn is this,  
Begone from hence,



Ye may be thieves,  
I trust ye not.

And so on in the same strain. When the doors are thrown open, the pilgrims are placed on an improvised altar decked with lighted tapers, with shiny tinsel and toys of small intrinsic value. All the the party kneel and some prayers are recited. After that a tray is passed round containing small jars filled with candy. Each guest is invited to take one, and with this compliment the ceremony, properly speaking, ends. For, in the simple patriarchal days of the viceroys, the "posada" was a strictly religious custom, and, in a few old fashioned families, it is so still.

But in most Mexican houses it must be owned that the "posadas" are only a pretext now for having a "good time." The religious exercises are got through in the quickest and most perfunctory manner possible, and many times without the decorum desirable on serious occasions. A dance or general romp follows, which is kept up until the early hours of the morning. It is for this reason that the archbishop has disapproved of the custom of observing the "posadas," which, he declares, was all very well at one time, when the character of the people was simple and ingenuous, but which is now conducive to irreverence. It is to be hoped, however, that the "posadas" will not die out, for undeniably it is a

pretty sight to see all the members of a family from the grandsires, bent double with age, to the small tot of five, marching round the corridors with their lighted tapers, their voices mingling in the petition "Ora pro nobis."

The ninth night of the 'posadas', that is, Christmas eve, is celebrated in the most extensive and luxurious style of all, and generally the wealthiest of all the families that have clubbed together, agree to give the entertainment for the night in question. As on that night, too, the Saviour was born, the figure of an infant is carried in procession and is placed on a manger between the ox and the ass in a prettily adorned cave which is intended to represent the stable where Mary and Joseph took refuge when they found that there was "no room for them in the inn."

The Christmas tree is not a native institution, though it gives indication of becoming naturalized. In its stead, Mexican children have what they call a 'piñata,' which affords them just as much fun. The 'piñata' is a large earthen jar, which is covered with colored tissue paper, often in such manner as to represent a ship, a balloon, a grotesque human figure or other object. This jar is filled with all sorts of dainties dear to children—oranges, raisins, candies, peanuts, etc., and is hung up in the corridor or patio of



the house. Each of the children and grown-up people is blindfolded in turn, and, after being turned round once or twice, has a stick placed in his or her hand and is invited to break the 'piñata.' The other guests have to be on their guard for the wielder of the stick, after being turned round, is generally quite out of his bearings and often brings down his stick within an ace of the head of one of the party. He is allowed three trials, and if he is not successful, the handkerchief is removed and another takes his turn. At length a crash is heard; someone has made a true hit; the 'piñata' is broken, the good things fall in a shower to the ground and a general scramble ensues among the young ones to obtain possession of as large a share as possible.

*Mexican Herald,*

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### Panama Hats

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The best Panama hats are made in Colombia Ecuador and Guayaquil, which at present produce two-thirds of all on the market. No first-class hats are made in Mexico. The natives of Yucatan have recently engaged in the industry, but they produce an inferior grade, owing to the lack of proper material. The genuine Panama hat is

made either of the stem of palm leaves or of a rare sort of grass that grows only in South America.

A mistaken idea has been abroad for some time that the best hats are made under water. The rumor probably arose from the method of soaking the raw material prior to its being woven. There is nothing extraordinary in this, the only object being to soften the straw so that it will be more pliable and more easily handled.

The most perfect and expensive Panamas are made by the women of Ecuador. The men cannot be induced to work under any consideration; and contractors have ceased trying to arouse their energies, but the women are very industrious and plod along week after week, tearing the palm leaves with certain nicety and weaving in the threads one at a time. They tear the palm into shreds with their teeth until it spreads out fan-shaped. After a long soaking the palm stem is taken from the water and nailed on a rough-looking block at which the weaver sometimes sits for weeks, carefully putting in place thread after thread.

The very finest hats, which in the northern countries sell retail at from \$300 to \$500, and are so soft and pliable that they may be drawn through a finger ring without injury to the texture, require from three to four months to manu-



facture; but of course the native weaver is not in a hurry and the work never progresses with any great degree of rapidity. The genuine hat is made in one piece and has no lining. The weaving is commenced at the crown, and when completed to the rim the whole affair with its dangling circle of straws, presents an appearance somewhat similar to a small hay-stack.

The name leads many people to believe that the hats are manufactured in Panama, but the city of Panama is merely a shipping point to which the product is brought in great quantities. The industry has become so lucrative in those parts of South America adjoining the Isthmus, that many planters have abandoned the raising of coffee and rice and have entered the hat business with good prospects of making a fortune in a few years. The mountain passes of the Andes, from Chimborazo northward, are crowded day and night with long lines of pack trains and ox carts, bearing their precious burdens to Panama, itself lined with establishments of hat brokers, and, in one way or another, at least half the city's population is engaged in the industry. It is the metropolis of the northern part South America.

The name Panama originated in France and was coined by some merchants who bought hats in Ecuador and wore them to Paris, where they

attracted great attention on the boulevards and led to inquiries to which the Frenchmen replied, "Chapeaux de Panama."

The price of good Panamas in Mexico City is \$12 and upward, as high as you care to go.

At first sight it appears that the Panama hat question is an expensive folly taken up because of a simple desire to be in style, but there are other good causes for the hat's popularity. The common straw hat with a stiff brim is a fragile affair and has little to recommend it except its lightness of weight, while a good Panama may be blocked into any shape, and worn for a lifetime. In fact they are a summer luxury, the expense of which alone prevents their being universally worn.

*Mexican Herald.*

#### Historical Coyoacan

Coyoacan under the Aztec nomenclature was Coyo-hua-can for "The Place of owners of wolves." It is a charming town situated about six miles south of the City of Mexico, and is located in the district of Tlalpam.

This delightful suburb of Mexico is a small place, geographically and topographically speaking, but it is interesting from the fact that it is the most ancient town on the American contin-



ents. In all the vast territory reaching from the Arctic Circle to the Strait of Magellan, Coyoacan was the first town built by white men. For many years it had been a market-place for Indians, where they indulged in barter of commodities; for they had no coin. It was but one of the numberless villages scattered through the wilds of the Americas, that twin continent of 14,000,000 square miles, that was, until the coming of Columbus, curtained in mystery.

#### A LITTLE EARLY HISTORY

In the seventh century of the Christian era the Toltecs captured Coyo-hua-can, intrenching themselves with fortifications made of the Pedregal lava close by. During the subsequent wars between the rival kings of Mexico, Coyoacan remained neutral, but was always on the defensive.

The city of Mexico, (Tenochtitlan,) the capital of the vast Aztec empire, was in those days surrounded by the salt waters of Lake Texcoco, salt to this day. The king asked the Cacique of Coyoacan to bring the waters of the Aquequexco springs to the capital. Tzuntzuma, the Cacique informed King Ahuizotl that it would be dangerous to divert the waters to the city, for they would flood it.

As the supply from Chapultepec, "The Grass-

hopper Hill" was insufficient for the city, the king insisted. Tzuntzuma refusing, was executed. A canal ten yards wide was started, and in the year 1499 the work was completed. The priests of Chalchiutlicue, the goddess of water, consecrated the new water supply, waving their copal incense over the singing waters, to the music of sea shells and rude Aztec instruments and the sacrifice of thousands of birds. A minor strain ran through this savage rejoicing, for the waters, true to the prophecy of the murdered Cacique, did overflow the city, and thousands perished. The spectre of the murdered Tzuntzuma haunted the palace of the king, and Ahuizotl was one of the first victims of the flood. The people of Coyoacan did not easily forgive or forget the insult.

#### A DEVOUT MURDERER

Moctezuma was a devout worshipper of the hideous god of war, Huitzilopochtli, and in the year 1511 he asked the Coyacans to furnish a large sacrificial stone, a huge block of basalt, for he had 10,000 prisoners of war whom he wished to immolate. The Coyacans, in common with other tribes under Aztec control, disliked human sacrifices, and for a long time they refused to do what the king had ordered. Finally they sent the block of basalt, but as it was passing



over the causeway it rolled into the lake, dragging with it the high priest and some of his attendants, who were drowned. The great stone was finally recovered and installed in its place in the temple. The incident, however, impressed the superstitious Moctezuma and increased his hatred of the Coyacans.

At the time of the conquest of Mexico by the Spaniards, Indians in greater numbers than is generally supposed overran the forests and climbed the peaks of the continent. They never had dreamed that they would be hunted down and eliminated by a race of white men; on the contrary, in their legends lived the hope that as a race they were to be redeemed by Quetzacoatl, the 'Fair God.' They believed that this immaculate priest of purity, who had so mysteriously disappeared from the Veracruz coast, would as mysteriously re-appear, and deliver them from the subjugation of neighbouring nations, abolish human sacrifices and unify the people. When the Spaniards approached the Veracruz coasts, superstitious Moctezuma II supposed them to be the fair children of the Sun, for like Quetzacoatl, they had yellow beards and fair faces. But the Aztecs were soon undeceived.

After the seventy-five days siege of the city of Mexico it was captured. The Spaniards entered only to find the streets and interlying canals

choked with the dead and dying. The air was pestilential, and, acting on the advice of his royal prisoner Cuauhtemoc, the last Aztec emperor, Cortés decided to make Coyoacan a temporary capital. He occupied the palace on August 17, 1521, and transferred thither his distinguished prisoners, Cuauhtemoc and Tettlepanquetzal, his cousin, also Tecuichpoch, a daughter of Moctezuma II and wife to Cuauhtemoc. Another Aztec princess, her sister, inhabited the sombre place; she was the wife of valiant Cristobal de Olid, the commander of the Spanish garrison at Coyoacan. Thither flocked the entire entourage of Cortés, including Malinche, his frail and fair companion and secretary.

The Spaniards had a perfect mania for building. Their work was solid and has lived after them. For instance, the massive cathedral in Mexico, built by Aztec slaves under Spanish direction, was nearly a century in building (finished in 1667). The church at Coyoacan was another characteristic bit of Spanish architecture, solid, sombre, substantial.

Cortés had in his train some unprincipled monks and friars, but there were also good and stately men among them, such as Olmedo and Gante. Had he listened to their advice, the early history of the conquest of Mexico would have been less shameful. Had he hearkened to the



plea of Las Casas, the philanthropic priest, against the indiscriminate slaughter of the Indians, the latter would have yielded to the new control.

The palace of Cortés is rather an unpretentious affair, and is simply called by courtesy a palace. Though poor in its exterior, it is rich in historical interest, the dead dull patios of hewn rock once resounded to the sandalled footsteps of Gante and Tecro, the eminent Franciscans. The delicate Tabascan Princess Malinche glided among the tiled corridors shadowed by the jealous Doña Catalina, the rightful wife of Hernan Cortés, whom he was said to have murdered on All Saints' Day of 1522. Through the rooms wandered "The Fallen Eagle," Cuauhtemoc, nursing his wounded pride. In this prison palace pined and passed away the general of the Tecpanecas, the royal cousin of Emperor Cuauhtemoc. In one of the fatal chambers the two heroes were tortured by Cortés to make them disclose the hiding place of Moctezuma's treasure. Their feet were slowly charred over a charcoal brazier, Tetelepanquetzal groaned with the pain, but the Emperor reproved him, and asked if he himself were on a bed of roses. The Tecpanecan died under torture, but Cuauhtemoc was afterward "executed." The secret of the hidden treasures died with him.

To this rude palace came the Cazonzi of Michoacan to lay at the feet of Cortés the treasures of his country and the independence of the fierce Tarascans, dominated by the Spanish thought. Rare feather work and gems, gold in dust and thread, and silver in rough bars were brought, products of unwilling labour. Here Cortés feasted his captains, among them the lion-hearted, athletic Alvarado, the chivalrous and skilful Sandoval, the deep diplomat and strategist De Olid, the fearless Ojeda, the bluff outspoken Bernal Diaz, Aguilar the interpreter, and Alderete, the royal treasurer.

## PART SECOND.

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Coyoacan was the seat of Spanish dominion for at least fifteen years until the city of Mexico was rebuilt.

Nearly a hundred years before the Mayflower reached Plymouth Harbour, Cortés had the church of San Juan Bautista built in the heart of Coyoacan. It was commenced in A. D. 1530, and was nearly twenty-five years in erection. It is an edifice of the old Spanish style of the fifteenth century. A portion of the old wall surrounding the churchyard has fallen, and through the gap the ancient church stands out, mute witness to the past.



While the palace of Cortés is so plain, the church of San. Juan Bautista (St. John the Baptist.) is more elaborate. It occupies part of the old cemetery grounds. There are two arched entrances to the grounds. Each is of tezontle stone, from the immense Pedregal fields of lava to the south-west. The carved archway facing the plaza was said to have been part of the Cortés palace and was removed to the plaza in 1892, as a relic of the colonial days. It is an exquisite morceau. It consists of three bands of carving in Byzantine order, all on the same plane. The other archway with its impossible angels, is inferior. The angels' faces are at an obtuse angle with the head.

An inscription on the façade states that it was built in 1583, or rather was finished that year. It was commenced in the year 1530, simultaneously with the Dominican Monastery, by Fray Domingo de Vetanzas. It is located south of the plaza of Coyoacan, and in its immediate vicinity is the house of Cortés, in which he is said to have strangled Doña Catalina Juarez, his lawful wife. She was a very beautiful Cuban, who had come to Mexico with Cortés and was a devout Catholic, but very imperious in her manner. After one of the riotous banquets given by Cortés, he is said to have strangled her with her own necklace of pearls. The case including the history of

the crime, the judicial proceedings against Cortés and his acquittal, occupies many pages in the "Archives of the Indians." In the churchyard is a stone cross surmounting a mound. It was a place of worship, erected on the site of an Aztec temple, and was provided by Cortés for his royal revellers who might want to worship. In this cemetery Gen. Scott bivouacked in 1847, when he made his forced march from Tlalpam to St. Angel across the lava beds of Pedregal. Reaching Contreras, Scott fought the Mexicans under Valencia, a fight that commenced at 2 p. m. on August 17, and was called the battle of Contreras. Under cover of that night, the Americans occupied more advantageous positions, and on the 20th Scott routed Valencia.

Among other old buildings in Coyoacan is the Alvarado house, which is built round a handsome and antique-looking garden. Inside the court are still to be seen the bits of Moorish architecture, the strange horseshoe arches, the delicate pillars and the Arabic traceries so affected by the earliest Spanish occupants of Mexico. The past is easily conjured up when one visits this place. Fancy does not need a very strong wing to see the long street, arched with the giant ash, and soldiers in armour of steel and helmeted in gold, their gleaming costumes a striking relief against the brown-skinned Tlasca-



lans, whose chiefs were clad in gorgeous robes and with headgear of fantastic feather-work.

Nearly five years ago the Mexican government appointed a commissioner of Antiquities, Señor Leopoldo Batres, to superintend the preservation of buildings, ruins and relics of Mexico, some such provision as California is making for some of her old missions. The tree of Popotla, for instance, under which Cortés is said to have wept on the night of his defeat by the Aztecs, was being denuded of bark and branch. Later a stroke of lightning cleft the tree. The government built an iron fence round it, and relic-hunters can no longer strip it.

In 1526 a printing-press arrived in Coyoacan, the provisional capital of New Spain, as Mexico was called. The volume of printing done in the United States last year, of 5,000 books and 25,000 newspapers with a yearly issue of 4,000,000,000 copies, is an interesting and astonishing evidence of the spread of knowledge, but at the same time it should be borne in mind as an historical fact, that the first printing on the American continent was done in Coyoacan.

*Los Angeles Times.*

## Ascent of Popocateptl

### A SUCCESSFUL CLIMB IN SPITE OF A LATE

#### MORNING START.

Two more gentlemen have distinguished themselves as mountain climbers, and by ascending the peak of Popocateptl have been higher in the clouds than the majority of the race can ever hope to rise or climb.

The most recent couple who have gone high enough to look down on the clouds, are E. Ingram Johnson and Emile Lefrancols, both well known in commercial circles. The story of the trip as told by one of the party is as follows:

"Armed with a letter from General Sanchez Ochoa, we left the city of Mexico for Amecameca at 8.10 on Monday morning. On arriving at the station, we found Mr. Perez, General Sanchez Ochoa's agent, who soon arranged every detail for our trip in perfect style, giving us the two best guides he had.

"At 2.30 p. m. we started for the cabin at the hacienda at the foot of the mountain. We arrived about seven p. m. and found the air very keen; indeed it might be called cold. The sky was beautifully clear, and the stars were shining with a lustre that appeared dazzling to eyes accustom-



ed to look upon the "lamps of night" from lower altitudes.

"We made a roaring fire of pine logs in the cabin, which rapidly produced external warmth, and we succeeded in making ourselves warm internally.

"At ten o'clock we went to bed, with the good intention of being up at three a. m., but owing to the temperature which caused protracted sleepiness, we were not wide awake until our watches told us the hour was half-past six.

"But, in spite of the delay, we reached the snow line by half-past seven o'clock, where we changed our shoes for guaraches and other coverings, and then commenced the climb in earnest. Naturally it took but a short time for us to find how difficult it is to breathe at such an altitude and a short halt was called; but as we became accustomed to the light air and cold wind, the need of rests became less frequent, and at each stage they were of shorter duration. Urged on by our guides, we plodded upward as the sun came out, and the snow began to glisten brightly. Then blue glasses, and veils became necessary. After much toil the top was reached, Johnson being the first to arrive, at 10. 45 some ten minutes before his companion.

"Together we looked at the magnificent crater, some 800 feet in diameter and of consider-

able depth, a wonderful sight, with the vent holes puffing out sulphurous fumes, and its pool of deep green water at the bottom; the whole scene and surroundings making a picture to live in the memory for ever.

"The morning was cloudless, and the grand panorama which was spread before us, would take a volume to describe minutely; Ixtaccihuatl, Orizaba, and Toluca peak, looming up in their snowy grandeur.

"The valley of the city of Mexico was hidden by a slight haze, but the range of mountains that encircle the valley, all stood out in glorious magnificence.

"About forty minutes were spent in exploring the surroundings of the crater, and in making short stops to take views.

"The descent of the mountain was most tiring. Owing to the strong wind tobogganing was impossible, and the bright sunshine and wind combined to make the footing very uncertain. Unexpected slides, and heavy falls were most unpleasantly frequent.

"When at last we completed the descent, we were both thoroughly exhausted, for we had eaten nothing since the meal of the previous evening. Hence the sight of the cabin was most welcome, and the bright blazing pine fire, as we entered, most cheering. These, added to the