

Hugo Reid's "Letters on the Los Angeles County Indians," written in the mid-19th century, were serially published as *Letters* in the *Los Angeles Star* during the year 1852 and republished in 1869 in this same paper. The letters describe indigenous people who lived in the Los Angeles area before and during the mission period. They were known as "Gabrieleño" in reference to the San Gabriel Mission with which this language group was most closely associated. Descendants today refer to themselves by the traditional word "Kizh".

Hugo Reid was born in Scotland, went to sea, took up trade between South and Central American and settled in California in 1832. He became one of the most influential men in the Los Angeles region while California was still part of Mexico. In 1837 he married Victoria Bartolomea Comicrabit, a beautiful and gracious widow from a prestigious Gabrieleño family. He, thus, was able to write about the Gabrieleños from his own experiences and observations.

The letters had a strong impact on Reid's friends and others at the time, resulting in efforts to improve policy and create more humane conditions for the original peoples of this continent. However, by the time these letters were published most Gabrieleños had either died, fled from Los Angeles or had gone 'underground,' i.e. assumed other identities in order to survive. These letters could be of great interest today to surviving descendants of the people who were here before the Europeans came.

A biography of Hugo Reid entitled "A SCOTCH PAISANO: Hugo Reid's Life in California, 1832 - 1852 Derived from His Correspondence," written by Susanna Bryant Dakin and published by University of California Press, Berkeley, California, in 1939, remains an important source of information about the life of Hugo Reid and his wife Dona Victoria.



**“LETTERS ON THE
LOS ANGELES COUNTY
INDIANS”**

Hugo Reid

Letter No. 1
LODGES

Before the Indians belonging to the greater part of this county were known to the whites, they comprised as it were one great family under distinct chiefs. They spoke nearly the same language, with the exception of a few words; and were more to be distinguished by a local intonation of the voice than anything else.

Being related by blood and marriage, war was never carried on between them. When war was consequently waged against neighboring tribes of no affinity, it was a common cause. The following are the principal lodges or *rancherías*. With their corresponding present local names:

<i>Yang-na</i>	Los Angeles
<i>Sibag-na</i>	San Gabriel
<i>Isanthacag-na</i>	Misión Vieja
<i>Sisitcanog-na</i>	Pear Orchard
<i>Sonag-na</i>	Mr. White's Farm
<i>Acurag-na</i>	The Presa
<i>Asucag-na</i>	Azusa
<i>Cucamog-na</i>	Cucamonga Farm
<i>Pasinog-na</i>	Rancho del Chino
<i>Awig-na</i>	La Puente
<i>Chokishg-na</i>	The Jabonería
<i>Nacaug-na</i>	Carpenter's Farm
<i>Pineug-na</i>	Santa Catalina
<i>Pimocag-na</i>	Rancho Ybarras
<i>Togbipet</i>	San José
<i>Hutucg-na</i>	Santa Ana
<i>Aleupkig-na</i>	Santa Anita
<i>Maug-na</i>	Rancho Los Feliz
<i>Hahamog-na</i>	Rancho Verdugos
<i>Cahuug-na</i>	Cahuenga
<i>Pasecg-na</i>	San Fernando
<i>Houtg-na</i>	Ranchito de Lugo
<i>Suang-na</i>	Suanga
<i>Pubug-na</i>	Alamitos
<i>Tibahag-na</i>	Cerritos
<i>Chowig-na</i>	Palos Verdes
<i>Kinkipar</i>	San Clemente
<i>Harasg-na</i>	

There were a great many more villages than the above,

probably some forty; but these are a fair sample of their names, in which it will be observed that, with the exception of two, they all terminate in *gna* or *na*.

Jurupa, San Bernardo, etc., belonged to another distinct tribe possessing a language not at all understood by the above lodges; and, although reduced by the Spanish missionaries to the same religion and labor, they never mixed their blood, they being considered much inferior, and called *Serranos* or *Mountaineers*. They look upon them to this day with great disdain.

That these names formerly had a signification there can be no doubt of. But even the oldest now alive confess themselves ignorant of their meaning.

The chief of each lodge took its name followed by *ie*, with sometimes the alteration of one or more final letters. For instance, the chief of *Asucag-na* was called *Asucagnie*. That of *Sibag-na*, *Sibavie*.

The title of a chief's eldest son was *Tomear*. Of his eldest daughter, *Mamisar*.

Their huts were made of sticks, covered in around with flag mats worked or platted, and each village generally contained from 500 to 1500 huts. Suanga was the largest and most populous village, being of great extent.

It probably may not be out of place here to remark that this tribe had no distinguishing appellation. And it is almost certain that many other tribes are similarly situated; for the so-called *Cahuillas* have been named by Spanish missionaries through the mistake of taking the word to designate the people. Whereas *Cahuilla* signifies nothing more than *master*.

Letter No. 2
LANGUAGE

It is not the intention here, either to compose a vocabulary of their words, nor yet a grammar to their language. Yet probably an insight to a few terms, and their formation, may not be uninteresting to some.

They have a great many liquid sounds, and their gutturals are so softened down as to be quite agreeable to the ear. In the following examples, *i* has the sound of *ee*, *u* of *oo*, *e* of *a* as in *fare*, *a* of *a* as in *father*, *ay* of *i* as in *ire*, and *gn* is sounded as in French.

1	Pucil
2	Wehí
3	Páhe
4	Watzí
5	Mahír
6	Páshé
7	Watzí carid
8	Wehís wítza
9	Mahír carid
10	Wehís mahír
11	Wehís mahír coy pucil
12	Wehís mahír coy wehí
Once	Pucushé
Twice	Wehís
3 times	Páhes
4 times	Watzáhes
5 times	Mahíres
10 times	Wehís mahíres
20	Wehís wehís mahír
30	Páhes wehís mahír
40	Watzáhes wehís mahír
50	Mahíres wehís mahír
100	Wehís wehís mahíres wehís mahír
There is	Weni
There is not	Yahuy
Yes	Ehé
No	Hay
I	Néna
Thou	Ona
He or she	Méne
Man	Woolyí
Woman	Tochí
Boy	Quití
Black	Yupíha
White	Arawatay
Red	Quáha
Blue	Sacosa
Yellow	Payuhani
Green	Tacape
The sun	Tamít
The moon	Mour
The stars	Zoít
Dog	Weze
Coyote	Yar
Bear	Hunar
Deer	Zucat

Two examples of their verbs, in the present, past, and future tenses, will suffice to show their formation.

I hear	Non in nahacua
Thou hearest	O-a nahacua
He hears	Méne nahacua
I hear	Non him nahacua
Thou hearest	O-a him nahacua
He heard	Méne him nahacua
I shall hear	Nop uom nahacua
Thou shalt hear	O-pum nahacua
He shall hear	Méne pum nahacua
I speak	Nou in sírauj
Thou speakest	O-a sírauj
He speaks	Méne sírauj
I spoke	Non him sírauj
Thou spokest	O-a him sírauj
He spoke	Méne him sírauj
I will speak	Nop uom sírauj
Thou wilt speak	O-pum sírauj
He will speak	Méne pum sírauj

It will be perceived that neither the person or tense alter the verb, but the pronoun preceding it.

Their language is simple, rich, and abounding in compound expressive terms. Although they have words denoting to *desire*, to *like*, to *possess*, to *regard*, to *have an affection for*, and to *esteem*; yet they have no word to express *love*. At the same time they have many phrases to which we have no equivalent.

Their innumerable stories are all legends, and more than half believed; being of incredible length and containing more metamorphoses than Ovid could have engendered in his brain had he lived a thousand years. Everything is Oriental, even to the language. — Their fables are few and short. We may perhaps be tempted on some future occasion to give a couple of their traditions, one of their legends and a fable, as an example.

Their language has deteriorated so much since the conquest, that the present generation barely comprehend a part of what one of the "old standards" say, when they speak the original tongue. There is now at San Gabriel an old woman named *Bona*, who takes pride in speaking sometimes the "Court language" to the "young ones," to stultify their intelligence.

Letter No. 3
GOVERNMENT, LAWS AND PUNISHMENTS

The government of the people was invested in the hands of their chiefs; each captain commanding his own lodge. The command was hereditary in a family. If the right line of descent ran out, they elected one of the same kin, nearest in blood. Laws in general were made as required, with some few standing ones. Robbery was never known among them. Murder was of rare occurrence, and punished with death. Incest was likewise punished with death; being held in such abhorrence, that marriages between kinsfolk were not allowed.

The manner of putting to death was by shooting the delinquent with arrows. All prisoners of war, after being tormented in a most cruel manner, were invariably put to death. This was done in the presence of all the chiefs, for as war was declared and conducted by a council of the whole, so they in common had to attend to the execution of their enemies. A war dance on such an occasion was therefore grand, solemn and maddening.

If a quarrel ensued between two parties, the chief of the lodge took cognizance in the case, and decided according to the testimony produced. But, if a quarrel occurred between parties of distinct lodges, each chief heard the witnesses produced by his own people; and then, associated with the chief of the opposite side, they passed sentence. In case they could

not agree, an impartial chief was called in, who heard the statements made by both, and he alone decided. There was no appeal from his decision.

Whipping was never resorted to as a punishment; therefore, all fines and sentences consisted in delivering money, food and skins.

If a woman proved unfaithful to her husband, and he caught her in the act, he had a right to kill or wound her without any intervention of chief or tribe. And anyone hurting him made it a crime for which he stood amenable to the captain. But what was more generally practiced, the injured husband informed the wife's paramour that he was at liberty to keep her. He then went and took possession of the lover's spouse and lived with her. The exchange was considered legal, and no resource was left to the offending party but submission.

Until the age of puberty, they were under the control of their parents; in default of these, of their nearest relatives. But from the age of puberty upwards, they came under the jurisdiction of the chief.

If a seer or wizard (they had no witches) was known or suspected of having made away with anyone, the chief had no jurisdiction over him, because he conversed with the Great Spirit. But other seers could do him the damage they saw fit, in their capacities as such.

Letter No. 4
RELIGION AND CREED

They believed in one God, the maker and creator of all things, whose name was (and is) held so sacred among them, as hardly ever to be used; and when used, only in a low voice. That name is *Qua-o-ar*. When they have to use the name of the Supreme Being on any ordinary occasion, they substitute in its stead, the word *Y-yo-ha-rivg-nain*, or "The Giver of Life." They have only one word to designate life and soul.

The world was at one time in a state of chaos, until God gave it its present formation; fixing it on the shoulders of Seven Giants, made expressly for this end. They have their names, and when they move themselves, an earthquake is the consequence. Animals were then formed; and lastly man and woman were formed separately from earth, and ordered to live together. The man's name was *Tobohar*, the woman's *Pabavit*. God ascended to Heaven immediately afterwards, where he receives the soul of all who die.

They had no bad spirit connected with their creed; and never heard of a "Devil" or a "Hell" until the coming of the Spaniards.

It has been a current belief in this country, that the Indians of it worship the "bald-headed eagle," as a GOD. There is no such thing.

The Indians make "feasts" to the eagle on account of a tradition, which states it formerly to have been a remarkably clever, industrious man, chief of a large tribe, and who, when dying, told his people that he intended becoming an eagle, and that he bequeathed them his feathers, to be employed at their feasts and ceremonies. Feasts are in consequence held in honor of his memory; and great reverence is shown to the bird.

Now, ten to one if an Indian at the present day be asked if they worship the eagle as a god, he will answer, yes! Because he is

accustomed to hear the whites make game of their ceremony, and he does not care about giving an explanation which he knows will be laughed at.

The porpoises were believed to be intelligent beings, created for the purpose of guarding the world, and whose duty consists in going round and round the earth to see that all is safe. The owl was held in deep reverence, and supposed to predict death, by screeching near the residence of the doomed one. It was never killed. The crows advised them when a stranger was coming on a visit.

They believed in no resurrection whatever; either in particular cases, or a general one; but the transmigration of the souls of wizards for a time into the bodies of animals, particularly of the bear, is firmly believed in.

Each lodge had a church, called *Yobagnar*, which was circular and formed of short stakes, with twigs of willow entwined basket fashion, to the height of three feet. This church was sacred, but was consecrated nevertheless every time it was used. This took an entire day, being done by the seers in a succession of different ceremonies. There was also an unconsecrated one used for the purpose of rehearsing in and teaching children, dedicated to this end, to dance and gesticulate. Having nothing to care about their souls, it made them stoical in regard to death. The only services performed in their churches were—asking for vengeance on their enemies; giving thanks for a victory; and commemorating the worth of their dead relatives.

The only ones admitted into the church were the seers and captains, the adult male dancers, the boys training for that purpose, and the female singers. But on funeral occasions the near relatives of the deceased were allowed to enter.

Letter No. 5
FOOD AND RAIMENT

The animal food in use among them was deer meat, young coyotes, squirrels, badgers, rats, gophers, snakes, raccoons, skunks, wildcats, the small crow, the blackbirds, hawks, ground owls, and snakes, with the exception of the rattlesnake. A few eat the bear, but in general it is rejected, on superstitious grounds hereafter to be mentioned. The large locust or grasshopper was a favorite morsel, roasted on a stick at the fire. Fish, whales, seals, sea otters, and shellfish, formed the principal subsistence of the immediate coast range of lodges and islands.

Acorns, after being divested of their shell, were dried and pounded in stone mortars, put into filters of willow twigs worked into a concave form, and raised on little mounds of sand, which were lined inside with a coating of two inches of sand; water added and mixed up, then filled up again and again with more water, at first hot, then cold, until all the tannin and bitter principle was extracted. The residue was then collected and washed free of any sandy particles it might contain. On settling, the water was poured off. After being well boiled, it became a sort of mush, and was eaten when cold. The next favorite food was the kernel of a species of plum which grows in the mountains and islands, called by them, *islay* (pronounced *eesslie*). Some Americans call it the mountain cherry, although it partakes little either of the plum or cherry. It has a large stone, to which numerous fibers are attached, pervading the pulp, of which there is very little. Its color, when perfectly ripe, inclines to black, and very much like that in Mexico is called the *ciruela*. This, cooked, formed a very nutritious, rich, saccharine aliment; and looked much like dry boiled *frijoles*. *Chia*, which is a small, gray, oblong seed, was procured from a plant apparently of the

thistle kind, having a number of seed vessels on a straight stalk, one above the other, like wild sage. This, roasted and ground into meal, was eaten with cold water, being of a glutinous consistency, and very cooling. Pepper-grass seed was also much used, the tender stalks of wild sage, several kinds of berries and a number of roots. All their food was taken either cold or nearly so, which, of course, tended to preserve the teeth. Salt was used very sparingly in their food, from an idea that it had a tendency to turn their hair gray.

The men wore no clothing, but the women in the interior had a deer-skin wrapped round the middle, while those on the coast had sea-otter skins put to the same purpose. Their covering at night consisted of rabbit skins, cut square and sewed together in the form of a bedspread. Rings or ornaments of any kind were never attached to the nose, although all of the Indians of Buenaventura and Santa Barbara used them. The men inserted a reed or a piece of cane through each ear; while the women wore regular earrings, each of which was composed of four long pieces of a whale's tooth, ground down smooth to a cylindrical form of eight inches in length, and half an inch in diameter. These were hung with the feathers of the hawk and turkey buzzard, from a ring made of the oblong shell. Their necklaces were very heavy and large, consisting of innumerable strings, of various lengths, of their money beads, of beads made of black stones, and pieces of whale's teeth, ground round and perforated. They used bracelets on both wrists, of very small shell beads.

During the season of flowers, the females and children decked themselves in splendor; not only entwining them in the hair, but stringing them with the stalks and leaves, making boas of them.

Letter No. 6
MARRIAGES

Chiefs had one, two or three wives, as their inclinations dictated. The subjects only one. When a person wished to marry, and had selected a suitable partner, he advertised the same to all his relations, even to the nineteenth cousin. On a day appointed, the male portion of the lodge, and male relations living at other lodges, brought in a collection of money beads. The amount of each one's contribution was about twenty-five cents. All the relations having come in with their share, they (the males) proceeded in a body to the residence of the bride, to whom timely notice had been given. All of the bride's female relations had been assembled, and the money was equally divided among them; the bride receiving nothing, as it was a sort of purchase. After a few days the bride's female relations returned the compliment by taking to the bridegroom's dwelling baskets of meal made of *chia*, which was distributed among his male relations.

These preliminaries over, a day was fixed for the ceremony, which consisted in decking out the bride in innumerable strings of beads, paint, feathers and skins. On being ready, she was taken up in the arms of one of her strongest connections, who carried her dancing towards her sweetheart's habitation. All of her family, friends and neighbors accompanied, dancing around, and throwing food and edible seeds at her feet every step, which were collected in a scrabble as best they could by the spectators. The relations of the man met them halfway, and taking the bride, carried her themselves, joining the ceremonious walking dance. On arriving at the bridegroom's (who was sitting within his hut), she was inducted into her new residence by being placed alongside of her husband; while

baskets of seeds were liberally emptied on their heads, to denote blessings and plenty. This was likewise scrambled for by the spectators; who on gathering up all of the bride's seed cake, departed, leaving them to enjoy their "honeymoon," according to usage.

A grand dance was of course given on the occasion, where might be seen warriors and hunters in full costume, making their various gestures in character, indicative of their respective callings. The old women took a part in the dance either as if carrying of game, or of dispatching their wounded enemies, as the avocation of their husbands called for. The younger portion of the women and old men sat around as singers.

The wife never visited her relations from that day forth, although they had unbarred leave to visit her.

In case her "lord" ill used her, and continued to beat her in a cruel manner, she gave advice of it to her kin, who in consequence collected together all the money which had been paid in at the marriage, and taking it in deputation to the husband's hut left it with him, leading off the wife. They immediately married her to another.

The last case of bigamy or rather polygamy, was in the one of the chief's from Santa Catalina; who was ordered by the priest to San Gabriel, and there baptized. He had three wives, the first of which was allowed him, and the others discarded. The priest joined him in the holy bands of matrimony according to the form of the Catholic Church; which to him appeared highly ridiculous. He is still alive and now resides at San Fernando; his name, as known at present, is *Canoa*, or Canoe; he is still a captain and accounted a great wizard.

Letter No. 7
BIRTHS AND BURIALS

Immediately on the birth of a child, the mother and infant were baked, or in other words purified. In the center of a hut a large hole was dug; an immense fire was kindled therein, and large stones heated until red hot: when nothing but hot embers and the aforesaid stones remain, bundles of wild tanzy are heaped on, and then the whole is covered with earth, with the exception of a small aperture in the middle.

The mother had to stand over this hole, with her child wrapt up in a mat, funnel fashion, while cold water was gradually introduced into the opening. This generated great quantities of steam, which was so hot at the commencement as to cause the patient to leap and skip not a little, while it produced profuse sweating afterwards.

When no more steam was produced, the mother and child lay down on the heap of earth, and were well covered up until the steaming process was renewed. Three days was the term of purification, and morning and evening the times for sweating. No food was allowed to the mother during that time, and her drink (water) was warmed. She was now allowed to eat of everything at discretion, except animal food, which was debarred her for the period of two moons.

Her diet at length completed, three pills were prepared, of the size of a musket ball, compounded of one part meat and one part wild tobacco. These were administered to her, swallowed, and from henceforth she was declared free to eat meats of any kind. But not until her child could run around was

she privileged to share her husband's bed.

If a child was born to a chief, the old women immediately assembled, and washing it in water, drank the same, with great gusto. They then had a dance around the happy father, chanting all the while the future renown of the little one.

When a person died, all the kin collected to lament and mourn his or her loss. Each one had his own peculiar mode of crying or howling, as easily distinguished, the one from another, as one song is from another. After lamenting awhile, a mourning dirge was sung, in a low whining tone, accompanied by a shrill whistle, produced by blowing into the tube of a deer's leg bone. Dancing can hardly be said to have formed a part of the rites, as it was merely a monotonous action of the foot on the ground.

This was continued alternately until the body showed signs of decay, when it was wrapt up in the covering used in life. The hands were crooked upon the breast, and the body tied from head to foot. A place having been dug in their burial place, the body was deposited, with seeds, etc., according to the means of the family.

If the deceased were the head of a family, or a favorite son, the hut in which he died was burned up, as likewise all of his personal effects, reserving only some article or another, or a lock of hair. This reservation was not as a memento of the deceased, but to make a feast with on some future occasion, generally after the first harvest of seeds and berries.

Letter No. 8
MEDICINES AND DISEASES

Their medical men were esteemed as wizards and seers, and called *A-hub-sa-roi-rot*. They not only cured diseases, but created them; they poisoned people with herbs and ceremonies, made it rain when required, consulted the good spirit and received answers, changed themselves into the form of divers animals, and foretold coming events. All of this was firmly believed by the people, and in consequence their seers were held in dread and deep reverence.

In regard to the diseases then prevalent, inasmuch as syphilis was unknown, brandy and its associates unused, and high living at a low ebb, their nosology was very limited. Toothache seldom or never troubled them, for which reason they carried the teeth perfect to the grave. Rheumatism was cured by applying a string of blisters to the part affected, each about the size of a ten-cent piece.

The blister used was made of the fuzz of dry nettle stalks, rolled up and compressed, put on and made to adhere with spittle. Fire being applied, it burned like spunk, and when one went out another was lit. The blisters formed were immediately opened.

Lumbago was cured by making the patient lay on his back for twenty or thirty hours on hot ashes and giving a bolus of wild tobacco, to insure vomiting, herbs administered and manipulations of the seer, accompanied by a song.

Local inflammation was treated by drawing blood from the surrounding parts by scarifying with sharp pieces of flint. Paralytic affections, stagnation of the blood, and loss of action in the limbs were cured by whipping with bunches of nettles; as likewise by drinking the juice of the thornapple (*Datura stramonium*) which produced an ebriety of three days duration. - Decline (of very rare occurrence) was treated by giving, for a length of time, the meat of mud turtles, cooked.

They were well acquainted with lime in medicine, and made it from shells; but not aware of its presence in rocks. It was pounded up with wild tobacco and used immediately if intended to produce a nauseous intoxicating feeling, but in a more agreeable state it was powdered up well and kneaded into thick cakes, kept, and when required, a piece of the requisite size

broke off and eaten. Lime was supposed not only to clean the stomach, but likewise the bladder.

Strangury was cured by steaming the patient as in the purification of women after parturition; only that marshmallows were used instead of tazy. Immediately after, a very large ball of masticated tobacco was given, which caused great depression and relaxation of the nervous system, often times producing the desired effect. If not, blood was drawn by sucking the abdomen immediately over the region of the bladder. This operation was performed with many prior rites, such as smoking to the Great Spirit, pressure and rubbing of the part with the hands, and a song, every verse of which concluded with

Nom im manoc, im manoc,
Nom im manoc, im manoc,

Yobarse!

I do, what I am doing,

I do, what I am doing.

Oh Church!

Even the name of the Deity was not invoked in this, but in the place of worship.

Bites of snakes were cured by the application of herbs and ashes to the wound; and herbs, ashes, and the fine dust found at the bottom of ants' nests given internally.

The hair was at times plastered all over with red clay, which was allowed to remain twenty-four hours on and was then washed off. This was supposed to impart a gloss and prevent it from splitting. To cure baldness, (chilicothes) were burned to a charcoal, ground to paste and rubbed into the grain of the scalp, morning and evening.

The seers (as medicine men) collected the poison used for dipping the heads of arrows. Fire was supposed to destroy its hurtful properties; consequently the flesh of animals killed with poisoned arrows was eaten without any misgivings. The truth of the matter is that said poison contained nothing virulent, it being only gall boiled down to the consistency of honey. The seers pretended not only to be acquainted with poison which destroyed life, by giving it internally, but also with others whose tact alone produced death, some being instantaneous, and others requiring one, two, or even twelve moons to operate.

Letter No. 9
CUSTOMS

A great number of their young men being hunters, they of course had their peculiar superstitions. During a hunt they never tasted food; nor on their return did they partake of what they themselves killed, from an idea that whoever ate of his own game hurt his hunting abilities. Before going on a hunting expedition they stung themselves all over with nettles, more particularly the eyes, the lids of which were opened to introduce the leaves. This was done to make them watchful, vigilant and clear sighted. The skin of a deer's head and neck was put on their own, and on seeing game they would feign to be grazing - lifting up the head occasionally to stare about. By such means they approached so near as to make the first arrow generally "tell."

To make them hardy and endure pain without wincing (for cowardice as to corporeal suffering was considered, even among the women, as disgraceful) they would lie down on the hill of the large red ant, having handfuls of them placed in the region of the stomach and about the eyes. Lastly, to insure a full dose, they swallowed them in large quantities, alive!

A small string of buckskin was tied around the neck of those who were swift of foot. When a girl came to the age of puberty, it was a joyful occasion for her relations. She underwent a purification in the same manner as women did at childbirth, accompanied by singing and all were informed of her being marriageable.

The children were not without some education, for if an adult asked a boy or girl for a drink of water, they were not allowed to put it to their lips until the other had satisfied his thirst. If two persons were in conversation, a child was not permitted to pass between them, but made to go round them on either side. No male from childhood upward was allowed to call his sister liar even in jest. The word for liar being *yayare*.

The name of God, as before mentioned, was never taken in vain,

and the only exclamation amounting to anything like an oath was *niómare!* which simply means bless me!

Animosity between persons or families was of long duration, particularly between those of different tribes. These feuds descended from father to son until it was impossible to tell how many generations. They were, however, harmless in themselves, being merely a war of songs, composed and sung against the conflicting party, and they were all of the most obscene and indecent language imaginable. There are two families at this day whose bad feelings commenced before Spaniards were even dreamt of and they still continue yearly singing and dancing against each other. The one resides at the Mission of San Gabriel, and the other at San Juan Capistrano; they both lived at San Bernardino when the quarrel commenced. During the singing they keep stamping on the ground to express the pleasure they would derive from tramping on the grave of their foes. Eight days was the duration of the song fight.

They saluted each other on meeting by saying *and aha?* how are you? To which the other, if well, responded by answering *tehésko*; but if unwell, by *chainoc*. On parting they bid no good bye; the one merely said *yamu uimi*, I am going; to which the other answered, *me!* Go!

In regard to painting themselves, they had different grades according to the occasion. Warriors and dancing parties were painted with different colors. Young females in "love" painted sparingly on the cheeks with red ochre. Women to the middle age and a little over, when required to be in the sun, put it on plentifully all over their features, to prevent their getting sunburnt.

Summer was considered to have commenced whenever the croaking of frogs was heard. This, with the sun's declination north and south, served them to reckon long periods by; but short time was reckoned by days and months.

Lesson No. 10
CUSTOMS

Boys were trained to carry messages from one chief to another, and they continued in that service until worn out. It required a retentive memory.

They were not much given to travel, for they only relate of one traveler, who left his people and proceeded north until he came to where the geese breed. And even he appeared to have possessed the organ ascribed to his genus; for on returning, he reported having fallen in with a nation whose ears reached to the hips! With another of diminutive stature; and finally, with a people so perfect, that they would take a rabbit or other animal, and merely with the breath inhale the essence; throwing the rest away, which on examination proved to be excrement!

They had only names for the four cardinal points of the compass, to wit:

North	<i>Fúmi</i>
South	<i>Kítámi</i>
East	<i>Crúmoi</i>
West	<i>Páymi</i>

They were acquainted with the North Star, which was called *rámi*.

When a church feast was held – for instance in commemoration of the dead – they rehearsed with the tyros for eight days previous, in unconsecrated place of worship. All being ready, the seers took an entire day to consecrate the church; this done, the feast commenced on the second day. The singers (women) were seated in a circle around the church, leaving only the doorway free. The men and children, adorned with eagle and hawk's feathers, and a plentiful supply of paint laid on

the face, neck, arms, and upper part of the body, proceeded to dance, being governed in the operation by numerous gestures, both of hands and feet, made by the seers. Each dancer represented some animal in his movements; but the growl given simultaneously at the end of each verse, was for the bear.

At the four quarters of the compass, poles of some ten feet in length were placed upright with a string at the end, on which feathers were filed, forming a sort of banner. Food was furnished the performers in abundance, at short intervals, and this continued six days and nights.

They sung songs in praise of the deceased, and sung others to the destruction of his enemies.

They danced to his memory, and did the same to the destruction of his foes.

On the eighth day the church was more adorned than before. When no more feathers could be stuck around, they placed them on their persons in profusion. The old women were employed to make more food than usual, and when the sun was in its zenith, it was distributed, not only among the actors, but to the spectators likewise. After eating, a deep hole was dug, and a fire kindled in it, when the articles reserved at the death of relatives were committed to the flames; at the same time, baskets, money, and seeds were thrown to the spectators, as in the marriage ceremony. During the burning process, one of the seers, reciting mystical words, kept stirring up the fire to ensure the total destruction of the things. – The hole was then filled up with earth and well trodden down. The feast was over.

Letter No. 11
TRAFFIC AND UTENSILS

Although money in the strict sense of the word did not exist among them, they had an equivalent, consisting of pieces of thick rounded shells, less in diameter than a five-cent piece. These had a hole in the center and were strung on long strings. Eight yards of these beads (for they were also used as such) made about one dollar of our currency. Their mode of measuring consisted in metering from the knuckles of the left hand, to the point of the middle finger, thence round to the wrist, back again to the end of the finger, and thence round to one inch above the wrist. This quantity was called *pucú ponco*, and a real of Spanish currency received the same name. Double that quantity was called *wehé peca*, as also were two reals; three times the quantity was called *páñe ponco*; four times, *sayaco*; five times, *máñe ponco*; six times, *báñe paçp*, and seven times, which was *watzá cavid* or *páñe motke*, finished their count.

On account of their having no "eight times," they now adopt the Spanish economy, and say *puen peso*, one dollar. They had thereby a circulating medium and legal tender to transact business, when barter could not be employed. Considerable barter and trade was carried on between those of the coast and those of the interior, the

latter furnishing deer skins and seeds in exchange for money, fish, sea-otter skins and soapstone pots.

Hemp was made from nettles, and manufactured into nets, fishing lines, thread, etc. Needles, fish hooks, awls and many other articles were made of either bone or shell, although for cutting up meat, a knife made of cane was invariably used. Mortars and pestles were made of granite, about sixteen inches wide at the top, ten at the bottom, ten inches high and two thick. Sharp stones and perseverance were the only things used in their manufacture, and so skillfully did they combine the two, that their work was always remarkably uniform.

Their present clay pots were at that time unknown; the Spaniards taught them their manufacture.

Their pots to cook in were made of soapstone of about an inch in thickness, and procured from the Indians of Santa Catalina; the cover used was of the same material. Their baskets made out of split rushes are too well known to require description; but though waterproof, they were used only for dry purposes. The vessels in use for liquids were roughly made of rushes and plastered outside and in with bitumen or pitch, called by them *sanot*.

Letter No. 12
SPORTS AND GAMES

These were few, and all of a gaming nature. The principal one was *churchírki* or *peón* as it is called by the Spaniards. It consists of guessing in which hand a small piece of stick was held concealed by another. Four persons on a side composed a set, who sat opposite each other. They had their singers, who were paid so much a game, and an umpire who kept count, held the stakes, settled disputes and prevented cheating. He was paid so much a night, and had to provide the firewood. He was provided with fifteen counters, which were of reed and eight or ten inches long. The guessers never spoke, but giving the palm of the left hand a sharp slap, with the right pointed with the finger to the side they guessed contained the *peón*. Those who guessed right, won the *peón*, and the others gained a counter each, and so on, until they possessed all the counters or lost all the *peones*, when the opposite side took the counting part.

The *peón* was white, of an inch or so in length; but they had also a black one, which, to prevent fraud, they had to remove to the other hand on changing, so as always to retain one in each hand, to show when called upon.

This was their favorite game, and they sometimes bet their all on it. It still continues to be their ruling passion to bet at this game in preference to any other; for the bystanders take as much interest and wager as heavily as those principally concerned.

Another game, called *chachaukel*, was played between two. The counters consisted of 50 small pieces of wood, stuck on end in the ground in a row, and two inches apart, with a pointer for each player to show his stage of the game. Eight pieces of split reed, with the under side blackened, were thrown, points down, and as many white sides as came up, counted to the thrower; but where all came up black, they counted also. To throw eight entitled the player to another throw.

The adversaries counted from opposite ends, as if one's count came to that of the other, the rule was for the party caught to commence anew; which prolonged the game sometimes to a great length.

A game called *hararicuar* consisted in rolling a ring, and two persons threw long lances of reed, and if the ring lay on one or the other, so it counted. Three times constituted a game.

The last I shall mention is *wauri*, in which one person placed under a basket eight pieces of reed (painted on one side) as he thought proper; while another made corresponding marks on the ground. They were then compared to see whether the guess was right or not.

Football was unknown until after the conquest, when they learned it of the Indians of San Diego.

Letter No. 13
TRADITION

There were seven brothers married to seven sisters, according to their respective ages, who lived in a large hut together. The men went daily to hunt rabbits and the women to gather roots of flags for food. The husbands invariably returned first and on their wives' arrival invariably reported "bad luck" in their hunt, with the exception of the youngest, who, without fail, handed his wife a rabbit. Consequently the poor women fared badly as far as animal food was concerned. This continued, as a daily occurrence, for a long time, until in a conference held by the females they were convinced that they were cheated by their partners. Considering that it was so very strange that nothing was ever killed except by the youngest, they determined to arrive at the truth. Accordingly they agreed that the youngest sister should remain at home on the morrow, under pretext of having a pain in her jaw, and so watch the return of the party. Next day the men as usual took their bows and arrows and set forth. The six sisters then departed, leaving the other concealed among the flags and rushes at the back of the hut in such a position as to command a view of everything transacted within.

Several hours before sunset the hunting party returned laden with rabbits which they commenced roasting and eating, except one which the youngest put apart. The others called him a fool and bade him eat the remaining one, which he refused to do, saying he still had some affection for his wife and always intended to reserve one for her. More fool you, said the others; we care more for ourselves than for these root-diggers. On the conclusion of the feast, the bones were carefully gathered together and concealed in a suitable place on the outside.

After some time had elapsed, the youngest wife arose and presented herself to the men in the hut, to

their great surprise. On being asked where she came from she answered: I have been asleep at the back of the house, having had to remain behind from a pain in the jaw, but am now better, as the sleep did me good. After a while the women came home, and running up to their sister, inquired after her health.

They soon found an opportunity to leave the hut and inquired the result of the espionage, besides visiting the deposit of bones. They cried a great deal and talked over what they should do. Let us turn into water, said the eldest. That would never do, responded the rest, for in that case our husbands would drink us. The second proposed being turned into stones, which was rejected on the ground of being trodden upon by the fraternity. The third wanted they should turn to trees, which was not acceded to because they would be used for firewood. Everything proposed was put aside on account of some defect until it came to the turn of the youngest. Her proposition to change themselves into stars was objected to on account of being seen, but overruled as they would be out of reach.

They proceeded to the lagoon, where they daily collected flag roots and constructed a machine (impossible to describe) out of reeds, and ascended to heaven and located themselves at the Pleiads. These seven stars still retain the names of the originals.

Only the youngest brother appeared to be vexed at the loss of his spouse, seeking her daily in the woods. One day, on going to the edge of the lagoon, bewailing his hard fate, the sisters had compassion on him. They instructed him how to use the machine they had made, and receiving him on the high, placed him apart, as the constellation Taurus shows. The Indians still retain a song about these seven stars.

Letter No. 14
TRADITION AND FABLE

Among the most curious of their traditions was the following:

The Girl Enamored of the Lightning

Four brothers and a sister lived together in a hut and were very fond of each other. The young men were principally engaged in hunting. The girl, whose name was Chukit, had refused many offers of marriage. After a while she became melancholy and fond of solitude and appeared to be enamored of the lightning, after expressing a desire to possess it. — Her eldest brother in the course of time perceived that she was with child, and taking the others into the woods, spoke as follows:

"Brethren, I perceive with sorrow that our sister has been harmed; she holds no intercourse with the young men of our village, therefore one of you has done this evil. — Which of you is it? Speak!"

The three declared themselves innocent, and each one mentioned his having had his suspicions regarding his fellows. They concluded at last to ask their sister, which was done. — "Who is the father of your child," said the eldest on their return to the hut. Bursting into tears, she denied ever having had any connection with man, but stated that above seven moons previous, having wandered into the woods saying ever and anon to herself "would that the lightning were mine!" that the lightning came out of a cloud and flashed over her, when she perceived a strange sensation of cold pass like a piece of ice through her brain into the abdomen. That she had subsequent intercourse with it, always producing the same effect.

After some time the pains of labor commenced and a man child was born. The midwife having asked for something to cut the navel string, to the astonishment of all, the child said, "No! It will hurt me!" According to the Indian custom all new-born children are given urine to drink for a medicinal purpose, and on a

bystander's recommending the dose to be given, the child said, "No! It is bitter." He was called Mactutu, and every day became more and more wise, arguing with all the old men and seers on divers subjects, always to the discomfiture of their allegations and prostration of their wisdom. After gaining a victory he always told them it was useless to dispute with him, as he was the Son of God.

The chiefs and wise men of the tribe at length determined to put him to death. He was aware of it and bantered them continually by saying, "Put me to death, but in three days I will arise again!"

After many consultations his enemies hit upon a plan which destroyed him completely; for they said among themselves, if we burn his body, how can he rise again, seeing that he is consumed! He was accordingly burned alive, and his body dissipated. He never appeared more.

Some Indians after this said, "There is no God," because they had destroyed him; but the greater part said, "No! we have only destroyed his body, for his soul ascended to Heaven!"

The Coyote and the Water

A coyote, which, like all the rest of his kin, considered himself as the most austere animal on the face of the earth, not even excepting man himself, came one day to the margin of a small river. Looking over the bank, on seeing the water run so slow, he addressed it in a cunning manner, "What say you to a race?" "Agreed to," answered the water, very calmly. The coyote ran at full speed along the bank until he could hardly stand from fatigue, and on looking over the bank, saw the water running smoothly on.

He walked off with his tail between his legs and had something to reflect upon for many a day afterwards.

Letter No. 15
LEGEND

In the lodge of *Muhuvit*, which lay behind the hills of San Fernando, once lived a chief connected with the following legend, who was a great wizard and enchanter. He had a son and daughter. The daughter was good-looking and possessed, as her father and brother did, a most astonishing head of hair, which, when loose, trailed on the ground. She however possessed a niggardly disposition, and moreover was lazy. After a while the chief of *Hahamogna* (Verdugos) asked her in marriage, and was accepted.

In due time she presented her husband with a daughter. Shortly after, she proved herself to be a glutton as well as parsimonious, for the people were commanded every day to bring rabbits, ready roasted, for her to eat, and she devoured the whole, without ever offering the lookers-on a single morsel. This caused universal discontent, so much so that the wise men of the village consulted together and at last urged the chief to send her home.

"Do with her as seemeth best," said the husband.

So, on a second consultation, the old men determined to put her to death instead of putting her away, fearing her father.

"What shall be done with the child?" asked the seers.

"Let it die with the mother!" answered the husband.

Orders were given the next day to have no water brought from the wells to their huts, but that all should go there and drink when so inclined. The rabbit-hunters were likewise instructed to stuff the game, before cooking it, with all kinds of reptiles. A large basket used for bringing water was placed in the last hut of the village and filled with urine. The hour having arrived for her to

eat, the rabbits were presented, according to custom. On this occasion, however, she proceeded differently than in the habit of doing; for pulling out the leg of the toad she enquired what it was. "It is part of a quail," replied someone. "Then eat it," said the victim. "No, eat it yourself," was the response. Pieces of lizards and other disgusting matter came to light, with the same result, until she finished the mess. This repast gave her great thirst, and she asked for water. Not procuring it there she proceeded from one habitation to another in quest of it, with the same success. At last she arrived at the extremity of the lodge, and on receiving the proffered dish with eagerness, and at three draughts she finished it, with the exception of a little which she reserved for the child. For ten days did the same thing occur; at the end of which time, finding all the hair of her head and eyebrows gone, for it fell off by drinking the urine, and moreover that she was wasted in flesh and wrinkled, she determined on leaving and going to her father's. So taking her child in her arms, she left the hut secretly.

After proceeding some distance, she repented having done so, exclaiming, "What a fool I am to carry this burden, as if he liked me so much!" Throwing it away, she went on her road; but after going on a short way, she looked back and saw the infant, with its arms stretched out toward her; her heart relented at the sight, and returning, she again took it up, saying, "Thou hast committed no sin, that I should revenge myself upon thee." She went on and on, until extreme fatigue from her load brought her to stand; when observing a large rock close by, she took the child by the heels and

Letter No. 15 (continued/2)

LEGEND

dashed its brains out. The blood still exists, visible on the stone to this day. Still some Indians maintain that the child did not die, but turned into a squirrel. On she went, alone, sad and slow, until she came to where her mother preserved her seeds in the woods, and she crept into a large basket, called a *chamuca*, capable of containing about sixteen bushels.

Not long after her arrival, came the mother to procure a supply of seeds and acorns, and putting her hand in at the mouth, she touched her daughter, and not being aware what it was, gave a scream. "Yes!" said the daughter, "be afraid of me, after the injury you have done me in marrying me to a man who cared nothing about me!" The mother approached, but could scarcely recognize her own daughter, and heard from the beginning to end the tale of her sorrows. The parent then said, "I will go to thy father and inform him," which she did.

The father being informed by his wife, secretly, he proceeded with her to the place of deposit, taking his daughter food and drink. This they did day after day, and herbs were administered to her, to restore her, and purge her from the filth she had eaten. Her head was also cured by the oil from a black berry growing on the seacoast, called *hamisar*. In four moons the wrinkles had nearly disappeared from her face, and her hair reached to her waist.

At this state of her cure, she was commanded by her father to go daily and bathe in her brother's bathing place. She did so, but the brother soon began to note how turbid the water was when he came to bathe. He became sad in consequence, and more so when he saw a hair in the water, which,

on measuring with those of his own, was not one third their length. He spoke to his mother, but she threw no light on the subject, being anxious to conceal with her husband the daughter's return until her shame and sickness had both passed away. The son, going to his bath one day sooner than usual, caught his sister in the water, but he knew her not. Taking her by the leg, he threw her out, saying, "So it is you who daily disturb my well. Be gone!" In doing so, he beheld her nakedness, which caused her so much shame that she wandered off, and traveling to the seashore, drowned herself.

The brother, well satisfied with himself, returned home and told his mother of having found an unknown woman in his bath, how he had thrown her out and had seen her nakedness. The parents left the hut and went in search of the daughter, but without success. "Shame has driven her away. Where can we find her?" said the wife. The husband answered not, but taking a willow twig, he made a ring of it, covering it with buckskin; this he threw to the north, but the ring returned to him. He then threw it south, and back it came again; then east, with the same result; but when he threw it west, it kept on. The father followed it up in all its crooks and turns until he saw it enter the ocean. "She has drowned herself from shame, but deeply shall she be revenged," said he.

On arriving at home, he informed his wife, who cried bitterly, much to the astonishment of all the lodge, who knew not what had occurred.

He called all of his people and told them to go a-hunting, stop out all night, and take his

Letter No. 16
FIRST ARRIVAL OF SPANIARDS

The Indians were sadly afraid when they saw the Spaniards coming on horseback. Thinking them gods, the women ran to the brush, and hid themselves, while the men put out the fires in their huts. They remained still more impressed with this idea, when they saw one of their guests take a flint, strike a fire and commence smoking, having never seen it produced in this simple manner before.

An occurrence however soon convinced them that their strange visitors were, like themselves, mortals, for one of the Spaniards leveled his musket at a bird and killed it. Although greatly terrified at the report of the piece, yet the effect it produced of taking life, led them to reason, and deduce the impossibility of the "Giver of Life" to murder animals, as they themselves did with bows and arrows.

They consequently put them down as human beings, of a nasty white color, and having ugly blue eyes! This party was a small one, and soon left; having offered no violence, they were in consequence not disliked. They gave them the name of *Chichinabros*, or reasonable beings. It is a fact worthy of notice, that on becoming acquainted with the tools and instruments of steel used by the Spaniards, they were likewise called *Chichinabros*, which shows the estimation in which they held them.

Another event soon convinced them of their visitors' mortality, for shortly afterwards they received another visit from a larger party, who commenced tying the hands of the adult males behind their backs; and making signs of their wish to procure women –

these having again fled to the thicket, at the first appearance of their coming. Harsh measures obtained for them what they sought, but the women were considered contaminated, and put through a long course of sweating, drinking of herbs, etc. They necessarily became accustomed to these things, but their disgust and abhorrence never left them till many years after. In fact every white child born among them for a long period was secretly strangled and buried!

The whites made them a number of presents prior to using any means to convert them; the presents were never refused, but only those consisting of goods were put to any use whatever. All kinds and classes of food and eatables were rejected and held in abhorrence. Instead therefore of partaking of them, they were buried secretly in the woods.

Two old Indians, not long since dead, related to me the circumstance of having once assisted when boys to inter a quantity of *frijol* and Indian corn, just received from the whites. Some length of time afterwards, being out in the woods amusing themselves, they came where the articles were deposited. Their surprise knew no bounds when they beheld an infinity of stalks and plants unknown to them, protruding through the earth which covered the seed. They communicated the fact at home; it was ascertained to be the case, and the wizards pronounced it white witchcraft! Even *panocha*, of which they are now so fond, was declared to be the excrement of their new neighbors.

Letter No. 17
CONVERSION

Having now given a brief sketch of the manners and customs of the Indians, prior to their acquaintance with reasonable (?) people, and having noticed the first impression produced by their appearance on the aboriginals, I shall continue a letter or two more, so as to give an idea of the state they were brought to by the formation of the Missions of San Gabriel and San Fernando. Still the former shall serve as a guide in reference to everything; although on a smaller scale, the same will answer for the latter, or, in fact, any other establishment of the kind in California.

However, I may as well remark that no attention whatever will be paid to dates – and the text is as related by the old Indians, or as noted by the writer himself.

The site occupied by the principal building of the mission, the vineyards and gardens was at the conquest of this country, a complete forest of oaks, with considerable underwood.

The water, which now composes the lagoon of the mill (one mile and a half distant), being free like everything else to wander and meander where it pleased, came down into the hollow nearest to the mission, on the Angeles road. This hollow was a complete thicket, formed by sycamores, cottonwood, larch, ash and willows; besides, brambles, nettles, palma cristi, wild roses and wild grapevines lent a hand to make it impassable, except where footpaths had rendered entrance to its barriers a matter more easy of accomplishment. This hollow, cleared of all encumbrance, served to raise the first crops ever produced at the mission, and although now a washed waste of gravel and sand, nevertheless, at that time it rejoiced in a rich black soil. On the side of this hollow, stood the lodge of Sibagna (San Gabriel). Bears innumerable prowled about their dwellings and large quantities of deer sported in the neighborhood. The present quantities of deer sported in

the neighborhood. The present site, however, was not chosen until some time after a building had been erected at the "Old Mission," which was intended to have been the principal establishment. The now San Gabriel River was named *El Rio de los Temblores* (the River of the Earthquakes), and the building referred to, *La Misión de los Temblores*. Those names were given from the frequency of terrestrial convulsions at that time and for many years after. They were not only monthly and weekly, but oftentimes daily.

The brand for marking animals was a T with an S on the shank, like an anchor and entwined cable, to express temblores. Even after San Gabriel was founded, no other iron was ever adopted.

When the priest came to found the mission, he brought a number of vagabonds, under the name of soldiers, to carry out the proposed plan. Some of these were masons, carpenters, etc. The priest having converted some few by giving them cloth and ribbons and taught them to say *Amar a Dios*, they were baptized and cooperated in the work before them.

Baptism as performed, and the recital of a few words not understood, can hardly be said to be a conversion; nevertheless, it was productive of great advantage to the missionaries, because once baptized, they lost "caste" with their people, and had, *volens volens*, to stop with the oppressor. This, of course, was put down by the padre as a proof of the influence of religion on their minds, and the direct interposition of the Virgin Mary! Poor devils, they were the Pariah of the West! Not one word of Spanish did they understand – not one word of the Indian tongue did the priest know. They had no more idea that they were worshiping God than an unborn child has of astronomy.

Numbers of old men and women have been gathered to the dust of their fathers – and a few still

Letter No. 17 (continued/2)
CONVERSION

remain whose whole stock of Spanish was contained in the never-failing address of "Amar a Dios!" And whose religion, as Catholics, consisted in being able to cross themselves, under an impression it was something connected with hard work and still harder blows. Baptism was called by them *soyma*, "being bathed," and strange to say, was looked upon, although such a simple ceremony, as being ignominious and degrading.

We are, of course, unable to say that the severe measures adopted emanated from the priest; still there can be no doubt he either winked at the means employed by his agents, or else he was credulity personified! Baptism could not be administered by force to adults, it required a free act; so taking an Indian as guide, part of the soldiers or servants proceeded on expeditions after converts. On one occasion they went as far as the present *Rancho del Chino*, where they tied and whipped every man, woman and child in the lodge, and drove part of them back with them. On the road they did the same with those of the lodge at San José. On arriving home the men were instructed to throw their bows and arrows at the feet of the priest, and make due submission. The infants were then baptized, as were also all children under eight years of age; the former were left with their mothers, but the latter kept apart from all communication with their parents. The consequence was, first, the women consented to the rite and received it, for the love they bore their offspring; and finally the males gave way for the purpose of enjoying once more the society of wife and family. Marriage was then performed, and so this contaminated race, in their own sight and that of their kindred, became followers of Christ (?).

The Indians, from the beginning, never offered resistance or flew

to arms, although they had oftentimes distinguished themselves in warfare with other tribes. At first, surprise and astonishment filled their minds; a strange lethargy and inaction predominated afterwards. All they did was to hide themselves as they best could from the oppressor.

From the first misnamed conversion until the arrival of Fray José María Zalvidea, they knew nothing about the various rites and ceremonies daily performed, and in which they took a part. No explanation was, or could be offered, for the Indians only learned a few words of Spanish, and the padres none of their language. The soldiers, it is true, picked up a smattering of the Indian tongue, but such words only as to enable them to gratify with more ease their lust and evil propensities, and not to afford instruction.

But the Padre José María, who was a man of talent, and possessed of a powerful mind, which was as ambitious as it was powerful, and as cruel as it was ambitious – formed a new era in their existence. In a short time he mastered the language and reduced it to grammatical rules. He translated the prayers of the Church, and preached every Sunday a sermon in their own tongue. His translation of the Lord's Prayer, commencing with *Aywinac* (Our Father), is a grand specimen of his eloquence and ability.

He gave them, thereby, an insight of the Catholic religion, but did not in one iota alter their own. His predecessors had done nothing of the kind, and his successors, Padre José Bernardo Sanchez and Padre Tomás Estenaga, contented themselves in having their sermons translated sentence by sentence, to the neophytes, through an Indian interpreter, named Benito. On the death of Padre Tomás, the custom ceased.

Letter No. 18
FIRST MISSIONARY PROCEEDINGS

Having, at length, a sufficiency of neophytes to build with, ground was cleared and laid off; adobes were made and laid up; timber, cut in the neighboring mountains, was hauled; and at last a proper covering being required, *tule* or flags were put on, tied with nettle hemp made by the Indians, which formed a thatched roof suitable for present exigency. The church had a steeple to it, which was afterwards taken down, having sustained damage during an earthquake. The present belfry was substituted instead.

In after years, not only were other buildings erected, but tile manufactured, and placed on all of the edifices, including four rows of new double houses, forming three streets for the married portion of the community. Living in houses, however, did not suit their tastes; they were always vexed and annoyed with them, and debarred the satisfaction of burning them up according to usage, when their observances demanded it.

All this while, the former small stock of animals were carefully herded and were augmenting greatly.

Vine slips, fruit trees, and pulse, etc., were procured from Lower California. The first vineyard planted consisted of 3000 vines. It retains the name of *Vina Madre*, and from it sprang all the present generation of vineyards.

A better class of people than the low vulgar soldiers, both men and women, were induced to emigrate from Sinaloa and Lower California. They were a great acquisition, as were likewise a few Indians from the latter place, who had been well instructed by the "Jesuits" in various arts. The men among the newcomers served as *mayordomos* and overseers in the

different branches of industry carried on. And being likewise well acquainted with agriculture, and some of the required trades, their services were invaluable.

The women were no less useful, for they taught the young female Indians to sew, and they became most expert at the business. Last and not least in the eyes of many besides priests, they instructed the older heads in the art of cooking, making of chocolate paste, preserves, and other edible knickknacks unknown for some time previous to our missionary friends.

Water was brought to irrigate the crops, from numerous little streams, and more produce was raised than necessary for the sustenance of all. The neophytes were supplied with blankets and some few cotton goods, but not to any great amount.

Indians of course deserted. Who would not have deserted? Still, those who did had hard times of it. If they proceeded to other missions, they were picked up immediately, flogged and put in irons until an opportunity presented of returning them to undergo other flagellations. If they stowed themselves away in any of the *rancherías*, the soldiers were monthly in the habit of visiting them; and such was the punishment inflicted on those who attempted to conceal them, that it rarely was essayed. Being so proscribed, the only alternative left them was to take to the mountains, where they lived as they best could, making occasional inroads on the mission property to maintain themselves. They were styled *huidos*, or runaways, and at times were rendered desperate through pursuit, and took the lives of any suspected of being traitors. They

Letter No. 18/ (continued/2)
THE FIRST MISSIONARY PROCEEDINGS

were always well informed of all passing at the mission. They sometimes, when things got too hot, went as far as the Tulares.

A considerable quantity of books, to compose a library, were brought from the College of San Fernando, in Mexico, and a number of additional contributions were received during the time of Zalvidea and Sanchez, from the same source, and also, some by purchase from Lima. I cannot say much for the collection - it being nothing to compare with remnants of the Bibliothekes I have examined in Lower California, in the

missions established there, which are now, I am sorry to say, reduced to ashes.

The more valuable part of the works consisted of those treating on Theology and Law, with a scanty number of rather curious, quaint manuscripts; the balance being antiquated and erroneous productions on natural history, geography, etc., imparting little or no information. The best the library has, long ere this, either been stolen or destroyed, and the refuse at the present time, consisting of some three or four hundred volumes, is mere rubbish.



Letter No. 19
NEW ERA IN MISSION AFFAIRS

On the arrival of Padre Jose Maria Zalvidea, cattle were plenty, as were likewise horses, mares, sheep, and hogs. Cultivation was carried on to considerable extent, but it was to him that the after splendor of San Gabriel was due. He it was who planted the large vineyards intersected with fine walks, shaded by fruit trees of every description, and rendered still more lovely by shrubs interspersed between – who laid out the orange garden, fruit and olive orchard so- built the mill and dam o- made fences of *tunas* (Cactus *opuntia*) round the fields – made hedges of rose buses – planted trees in the mission square, with a flower garden and sun dial in the center – brought water from long distances, etc. .

He likewise remodeled the general system of government, putting everything in order and to its proper use, and placing every person in his proper station. Everything under him was organized, and that organization kept up with the lash!

Thus people were divided into various classes and stations. There were *vaqueros* (cowboys), soap makers, tanners, shoemakers, carpenters, blacksmiths, bakers, cooks, general servants, pages, fishermen, agriculturists, horticulturists, brick and tile makers, musicians, singers, tallow melters, *vinaderos* (vineyard keepers), carters, cart makers, shepherds, poultry keepers, pigeon tenders, weavers, spinners, saddle makers, store and key keepers, deer hunters, deer and sheep skin dressmakers, people of all work, and in fact everything but coopers, who were foreign; all the balance, masons, plasterers, etc., were natives.

Large soap works were erected; tanning yards established; tallow works, bakery, cooper, blacksmith, carpenter, and other shops; large spinning rooms where might be seen 50 or 60 women turning their spindles merrily; and looms for weaving wool, flax and cotton. Then large storerooms were allotted to the various articles which were kept separate. For instance, wheat, barley, peas, beans, lentils, chickpeas, butter and cheese, soap, candles, wool, leather, flour, lime, salt, horsehair, wine and spirits, fruit, stores, etc., etc.

Sugar cane, flax and hemp, were added to the other articles cultivated, but cotton wool was imported.

The *ranchos* belonging to the mission were put on another footing, as were the sheep farms. A house was built at San Bernardino, and other exterior operations carried out. – The principal *ranchos* belonging at that time to San Gabriel were San Pasqual, Santa Anita, Azusa, San Francisquito, Cucumonga, San Antonio, San Bernardino, San Gorgonio, Yucaipa, Jurupa, Guapa, Rincon, Chino, San José, Ybarras, Puente, Misión Vieja, Serranos, Rosa de Castilla, Coyotes, Jabonería, Las Bolsas, Alamitos and Cerritos.

A principal head *mayordomo* commanded and superintended over all. Claudio López was the famed one during Padre Zalvidea's administration, and although only executing the priests' plans, in the minds of the people he is the real hero. Ask anyone who made this, or who did that, and the answer on all sides is the same: *El difunto Claudio!* And great credit is due him for carrying out, without flogging, the numerous works set before him.

Letter No. 19 (continued/2)
NEW ERA IN MISSION AFFAIRS

There were a great many other *mayordomos* under him, for all kinds of works, from tending of horses down to those superintending crops, and in charge of vineyards and gardens.

It is strange no medical man was kept on the establishment, as the number of people was great, and the stock of medicines very large. They were provided not by the pound, but by the quintal! Not in gallons, but in barrels full! Still all the dependence for medical aid (with the exception of midwives) was either on a casual foreigner passing, or on the stupidity of some foreigner employed on the premises. I know not why, but an Anglo-Saxon in those days was synonymous with an M.D. Many an *extranjero* who never before possessed sufficient confidence in himself to administer even a dose of Epsom, after killing, God knows how many, has at length become a tolerable empiric. One thing in favor of the sick was, that after a lapse of years, the greater part of the drugs lost their virtue.

Indian *alcaldes* were appointed annually by the padre, and chosen from among the very laziest of the community; he being of the opinion that they took more pleasure in making the others work, than would industrious ones! From my own observation this is correct. They carried a wand to denote their authority, and what was more terrible, an immense scourge of rawhide, about ten feet in length, plaited to the thickness of an ordinary man's wrist! They did a great deal of chastisement, both by and without orders. One of them always acted as overseer on work done in gangs, and accompanied carts when on service.

The unmarried women and young girls were kept as nuns, under the supervision of an abbess, who slept with them in a large room. Their occupations were various; sometimes they sewed or spun, at others they cleaned weeds out of the gardens with hoes, worked at the ditches or gathered in the crops. In fact, they were jacks or jennies of no trade in particular. The best-looking youths were kept as pages to attend to table and those of most musical talent reserved for church service.

The number of hogs was great and were principally used for making soap. The Indians, with some few exceptions, refused to eat pork, alleging the whole family to be transformed Spaniards! I find this belief current through every nation of Indians in Mexico. Why should they, without being aware of it, have each selected the hog more than any other animal to fix a stigma upon? It probably may be from its filthy habits; or, can something appertaining to the Jews be innate in them?

At San Francisquito, near the mission, were kept the turkeys, of which they had a large quantity. The dovecote was along side of the soap works, and in an upper story, affording plenty of dung to cure leather and skins with.

The padre had an idea that finery led Indians to run away, for which reason he never gave either men or women any other clothing (including shirts and petticoats) than coarse frieze (*xerga*) made by themselves, which kept the poor wretches all the time diseased with the itch. If any handkerchiefs or cotton goods were discovered among them, the same was immediately committed to the flames.

Letter No. 20
BETTER TIMES

The Padre José Bernardo Sánchez had, for some time previous, been a colleague of Zalvidea but attended only to matters connected with the Church. On the translation of Padre José María to San Juan he became his successor. He was of a cheerful disposition, frank and generous in his nature, although at times he lost his temper with the strange, unruly set around him.

He was a great sportsman and capital shot, both with rifle and fowling piece. Although no one could complain of Zalvidea, in regard to his kind treatment, still there was a certain restraint in his presence, arising from his austerity and pensiveness, which even custom did not erase from the mind. Padre Sánchez was different; his temper was governed according to circumstances. In ecclesiastical affairs, his deportment was solemn; in trade he was formal; in the government of the mission, active, lively and strict; in social intercourse he was friendly, full of anecdote, fond of a joke, even to a practical one. Picnic parties were of weekly occurrence and generally held at the mill, when, independent of a yearling heifer baked under ground, many other good things reigned on the table.

I cannot refrain from relating an anecdote connected with those parties of pleasure, as it shows the relish the old man had for anything ludicrous. A few of the actors are still alive, but the greater part have been gathered with the padre, to the dust they sprang from.

Don J. M. M., an old Spaniard, who had large commercial relations with the missions, having a negro cook, called Francisco, who was science itself in all relating to the kitchen, the

priest, and M. made up a plan to carry out a joke at the expense of their guests. So having procured a fine fat little puppy, he was stuffed and roasted in a manner that would have tempted the most fastidious epicure to cut and come again. This was brought on as a last course under the name of lamb, with an excellent salad, as well.

All ate of it and praised it much, with the exception of the two concerned in the joke. After concluding with a glass of wine, the old man enquired of his guests how they relished the dog? No one would believe it, until the negro made his appearance with the head and paws on the place. Then a mixed scene ensued, which brought tears into the old man's eyes, while he nearly killed himself with laughter. All, of course, were squeamish, but while the quiet portion retired to ease themselves, in discharging the detested food, the pugnacious remained to fight M. first, and do the other afterward. The padre eventually procured harmony, but for many a day after roast lamb and salad were viewed with suspicion by the former partakers of his cheer.

The same regulations which had been observed by his predecessor were still in force under him, but more lenity was shown to the failings of the neophytes. Although the lash was ever ready, yet many other modes of chastising were adopted in its stead for minor offenses.

The general condition of the Indians was rendered better, and a more healthy state prevailed. Many Indians who had previously stolen and committed other acts of insubordination now refrained from such deeds, through the love and good will held to their spiritual and temporal ruler.

Letter No. 20 (continued/2)
BETTER TIMES

The purchases made at one time seldom exceeded \$30,000, consisting of domestics, bleached, brown and printed; flannels, cloth, *rebozos*, silk goods, and, in fact, everything; besides supplies of sugar, *panocha*, rice, hosiery, etc. These goods were fitted up in two large stores for the accommodation, not only of the public, but for the necessities of servants and use of the neophytes.

The females had their *frieze* (*xerqa*) converted into sweatcloths, and more suitable garments provided them. This measure effected a great change, for now of a Sunday might be seen coming out of church, women dressed in petticoats of all patterns and colors, with their clean chemise protruding from the bosom, and a kerchief round the neck and *rebozo* round the shoulders; while the men had their pants, jacket, trousers, hat and fancy silk sash. Even the children sported in a white or fancy shirt, with a handkerchief tied around the head.

This was, indeed, a transformation, and one for which they felt grateful. It elevated them to better thoughts and principles, and made them esteem themselves more than probably anything else would have done. Nor did the reformation stop here. The married people had not only sheets provided for their beds, but even curtains. It was the duty of the *mayordomo* to visit each room weekly, and see that every article was kept clean and report accordingly. The priest paid a monthly visit for the same end.

On coming out of Mass, the whole community was assembled and rations given to families for the ensuing week. Besides, each man received half a pint of spirits, and the women a pint of wine. *Panocha*, molasses and honey were distributed, and if required, clothing; as also two or three dollars each on occasions. Although rations were given as stated, yet the mission provided daily food for the laborers.

The mission bell, on being rung, roused the *alcaldes* from their

slumbers, who in loud voice soon set all the world agog. Mass was heard, and again the bell rang to work. At eleven its notes proclaimed dinner, when in they flocked with their baskets to receive *posole* and a piece of beef. *Posole* consisted of boiled beans and corn or wheat. At twelve o'clock they were again warned to their labors, which concluded a little before sundown to afford them time to receive supper, which consisted of *atole* or mush. If a gang were at a distance, a copper kettle and attendant accompanied to provide food on the spot.

After twelve o'clock on Saturdays, soap was distributed, and all the world went a-washing of clothes and persons, to make a decent appearance at Church on Sunday. Saturday night was devoted to playing *peón*, and with few exceptions, none slept, for whites and Indians, men, women and children, were generally present.

After service, on Sunday, football and races were on the carpet until the afternoon, when a game called by the Scotch "shinty," and I believe by the English, "bandy," took place. One set being composed of all men and one of all women. People flocked in from all parts to see the sport, and heavy bets were made. The priest took a great interest in the game, and as the women seldom had less than half a dozen quarrels, in which hair flew by the handful, it pleased him very much. The game being concluded, all went to prayers, and so ended the sabbath.

He died in 1833, regretted by all the community, and leaving everyone who knew him sad at his loss.

His course was a good one, yet probably Padre Zalvidea's was equally so. It was required in his time, no doubt, and the step from the one to the other had a more beneficial tendency than had he from the first carried out measures such as those of Sánchez. He was succeeded by Padre Tomás Estanaga.

Letter No. 21
DECAY OF THE MISSION

The Mission, as received by the Padre Tomás, was in a flourishing condition, but in 1834 (I think it was) the Mexican Congress passed a law secularizing all of the missions, by which each Indian was to receive his share of land, gardens, and stock; but immediately on the top of it a change was effected in the general government, and instead of carrying out the law, they abolished it. They, however, secularized them and ordered administrators to have charge instead of the clergy. These facts being known to the Padre Tomás, he (in all probability by order of his superior) commenced a work of destruction. The back buildings were unroofed and the timber converted into firewood. Cattle were killed on halves with people who took a lion's share. Utensils were disposed of, and goods and other articles distributed in profusion among the neophytes. The vineyards were ordered to be cut down, which, however, the Indians refused to do.

It did not require long to destroy what years took to establish. Destruction came as a thief in the night. The whites rejoiced at it. They required no encouragement, and seemed to think it would last forever. Even the mere spectators were gladdened at the sight, and many of them helped themselves to a sufficiency of calves to stock farms.

It is not the intention here to give a detail of all that occurred, as our line, as marked out from the first, relates merely to the Indians, and to others persons and things only so far as they are connected with them.

General Figueroa, having been appointed political chief and commandant general of the

territory, arrived, and his adjutant, Col. Nicolás Gutiérrez, received the mission from the Padre Tomás, who remained as minister of the church with a stipend of \$1,500 per annum from the establishment, independent of his synod from the Pious Fund in Mexico.

As a wrong impression of his character may be produced from the preceding remarks, in justice to his memory, be it stated that he was a truly good man, a sincere Christian and dispenser of hypocrisy. He had a kind, unsophisticated heart, so that he believed every word told him. There has never been a purer priest in California. Reduced in circumstances, annoyed on many occasions by the petulance of administrators, he fulfilled his duties according to his conscience, with benevolence and good humor. The nuns, who when the secular movement came into operation had been set free, were again gathered together under his supervision and maintained at his expense, as were all a number of the old men and women. Everything he got was spent in charity upon those of the *rancheria* whom he considered as worthy of it and they remember him with gratitude and affection.

The Indians were made happy at this time in being permitted to enjoy once more the luxury of a *tule* dwelling, from which the greater part had been debarred for so long; they could now breathe freely again.

Administrator followed administrator, until the mission could support no more, when the system was broken up. I shall make no remarks here on their administration; it is to be presumed they complied either with their instructions or their own ideas.

Letter No. 22

FINIS

Having given a sketch of the Angeles County Indians from the time they were free, natal possessors of the soil, living contented in a state of nature, until these civilized times of squatting and legislative oppression, in which not only they but those bearing their blood in a fourth degree are included, to the share of this our country, and disgrace of the framers of such laws, I shall now conclude them, with a very short review of how far their ancient manners and customs remain in force among the handful left of a once happy people.

Their former lodges are not now in existence, and most of the Indians remaining in the country are from other parts – from Santa Ynez to San Diego. A few are to be found at San Fernando, San Gabriel and the Angeles. Those in service on *ranchos* are a mere handful. You will find at present more of them in the county of Monterey than in this, excluding the three places named above. Death has been busy among them for years past, and very few more are wanting to extinguish the lamp that God lighted!

The Indians from the northwest coast killed great numbers years ago on the Islands. Those of San Clemente, the remains of which some eighteen years since were collected in caves on the Island, showed the whole of them to have been possessed of double teeth all round, both in the upper and under jaw.

I have previously mentioned that their language has deteriorated much since the conquest. Numerous causes affect all language, and one of the many which did so to theirs was the want of their former councils held so frequently, in which their wise men

spoke with eloquence suited to the occasion, using more dignity and expression, which naturally elevated the minds of all and gave a tinge of better utterance even in ordinary conversation.

They have at present two religions – one of custom and another of faith. Naturally fond of novelty, the Catholic one serves as a great treat – the forms and ceremonies an inexhaustible source of amusement. They don't quarrel with their neighbor's mode of worship, but consider their own the best. The life and death of our Savior is only, in their opinion, a distorted version of their own life. Hell, as taught them, has no terrors. It is for whites, not Indians, or else their fathers would have known it. The Devil, however, has become a great personage in their sight; he is called *Zizu*, and makes his appearance on all occasions. Nevertheless, he is only a bugbear and connected with the Christian faith; he makes no part of their own. The resurrection they cannot understand, but a future state of spiritual existence is in accordance with their creed.

Their chiefs still exist. In San Gabriel remain only four, and those young. There are more, but of tribes formerly from the direction of San Bernardino. They have no jurisdiction more than to appoint times for the holding of feasts and regulating affairs connected with the church. No standing church remains nowadays; it is made yearly and consecrated when required, on any spot they choose to select.

Their food continues the same, with the addition made to the list of what the Spaniards introduced.

Their clothing is of course distinct, and a cloak made of rabbit

Letter No. 22 (continued/2)

FINIS

skins has within this year or two become a novelty

For a long time back, marriage has been performed in the Catholic church; and only one instance of its fulfillment in their own alone, exists in the case of a young girl who contracted matrimony about three years ago.

Marriage vows are not very binding, although many examples of strict fidelity exist.

Women undergo the same purification after childbirth as formerly, with the exception of such as were in the service of whites at their first parturition.

The seers have declined very much in their ability both of predicting events and doing harm; although instances of sickness occasionally occur of which they stand the blame. In performing cures, however, they still take precedence of the other members of the faculty known as M.D.'s.

Ten years ago shell-bead money was current in the mission, not only between Indians, but between them and the whites. It is now extremely scarce, and hoarded from one year to another to use at their church ceremonies, and repurchased again for double its value.

I have refrained from touching on politics. The administrators I have left to work out their own salvation – and dates, with statistics, I leave to those possessed of abler pens to furnish an account of, and of which there is a fine field open to write about – confining myself entirely to the title of these letters.

If these sketches of Indian character have been at all interesting to the readers of the "Star," I shall consider myself amply paid for the time occupied in writing them.