

### The Spanish Tongue in California.

California, since the time of the American occupation, furnishes a notable example of the manner in which the spoken language of a people may grow and wane through the commingling of races speaking different tongues. Prior to the inauguration of the gold-mining are most of the Americans who had arrived in California found it convenient to gain some knowledge of the Spanish, not a few of them mastering it completely. Among the earlier immigrants nearly all the younger members learned to speak the Spanish fluently, the elder picking up such words and phrases as were used in the transaction of business, and in conducting the more ordinary affairs of life. The two races saluted each other in either language, the Americans generally conforming to the Spanish mode, as, indeed, the latter people do not, nor have they ever taken readily to the English.

With the influx of immigration consequent on the discovery of gold, the English speedily became the predominating tongue, few of the newcomers trying to learn, or even paying any attention to the Spanish, as in fact there was no longer much need for their doing so. But while this language was suddenly and almost wholly ignored, there had already been a great many Spanish words added to our vocabulary, some of them having been engrafted on it through sheer necessity, there being in the English no word for expressing the idea intended to be conveyed; and this for the reason that the thing itself had among the Americans no existence. They were obliged to adopt the terms corral, vaquero, rodeo, and the like, simply because there were no such things in the United States, nor had our people ever seen or heard of them. In like manner we had to adhere to the names given the trappings and implements of the vaquero, and to the experience of the caballero or horseman, such as tapajo, mochila, tapabero, cincho, lasso, etc. We had to continue calling a certain style of vicious animal a bronco, because the bucking horse was a brute unknown to our people and with which they had happily had no experience.

Some names at first adopted by the Americana have since been wholly or partially dropped and English ones substituted in their stead: embarcadero has, with few exceptions, given place to the English term landing; punta has in most cases yielded to point; pueblo to city; presidio, to garrison or fort; rio, to river—and so in many other instances. In designating natural objects, we have sometimes shared the names with the Spanish; thus we have in California ravines and canyons, arroyos and creeks, etc. In this State we retain the Spanish name salina but in Arizona they call a stream marked by the same peculiarities sali river. The Spanish los has generally had to succumb to the English definite article the. Where retained, as in the case of Los Angeles, our people, yielding to the national inattent, manage to give to the o the short sound instead of preserving the long sound which that letter has in Spanish. When it came to gold mining, this being an entirely new industry with the Americans, our language was without the terms and the phraseology pertaining to that business, hence the Spanish names such as placer, batea, arastra, etc., were by us accepted and have since been retained. The practice common among miners in early times of rushing off hastily to new diggings having made necessary a term for expressing this peculiar phrase of mining life, the word stampede, a corruption of the Spanish estampada, was adopted and is still in use. As the practice itself is going out of date, so very

likely will the word after a time become obsolete. Formerly the word Ranch, a contraction of the Spanish Rancho, was here in common use, Coal shows no change in prices. The week's being applied to every kind of landed estate. Since the large Mexican grants have been subdivided and the smaller holdings have come to be cultivated after the American fashion, the English term farm has in great measure superseded the Spanish Rancho, though chicken ranches, hog ranches, etc., still continue to be spoken of, and for designating these, the phrase is very convenient. Indeed we might well have retained much more from which, in primitive times, we had the good sense to accept from that beautiful and expressive language, which, in so far as we have made appropriations from it, has greatly enriched without at all enfeebling our mother tongue.

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