

September 18, 1961

Tribute To The Ladies

It was in May 1848 that Alcalde Walter Colton directed his constable to get a pair of iron hinges made for the prison door. The constable gave the order to a blacksmith, who on completion of his work, charged the sum of \$8. Thinking the charge unreasonable, Colton told the constable not to accept the hinges. The blacksmith came to the alcalde's office, and in a rage threw the hinges at his feet and left.

Colton then handed the constable \$8, told him to call at the shop of the blacksmith, pay him, take his receipt for the money, then bring him into court, all of which was done. Colton told the blacksmith that his violence and indignity could not be passed over; that he would fine him \$10 for the good of the town, which he might pay or go to jail.

After a few moments' hesitation, the smithy laid the amount of the fine on the alcalde's table and took his departure, this time without uttering a word. When clear of the office, he said to the constable:

"For once in my life I have been outwitted; that Yankee alcalde not only got the hinges for nothing, but \$2 besides. I would have tried the calaboose but for the infernal fleas."

In closing the "Three Years in California" Walter Colton, the builder of Colton Hall, pays tribute to his fireside friends in Old Monterey: "David Spence from the hills of Scotland; W. E. P. Hartnett from England, the best linguist in the country; Don Manuel Diaz, a native of Mexico; James McKinley from the Grampian Hills; Don Manuel Jimeno, once secretary of state; Milton Little, a rancher; Don Jose Abrego, a merchant; J. P. Leese, from Missouri, whose wife was a sister of Gen. M. G. Vallejo; James Watson, born on the Thames; Charles Wolter of German origin; Governor Pulacio of Lower California; J. P. Dye (a partner of Thomas Oliver Larkin); James Stokes from England; Senor Soveranez, whose saloon is lit by eyes bright as nuptial tapers, and where the Castilian flows soft as if warbled, by a bird; Padre Ramirez, and the Rev. S. H. Willey (chaplain of the constitutional convention).

"Monterey lost one of its most cherished ladies, when Mrs. Thomas O. Larkin took her departure. Here for 18 years, she had lent her charm to its society. She was the

first lady from the United States that settled in California."

Another compliment paid to the ladies by Walter Colton is written in his "Three Years in California":

"A young friend of mine had been several months in Monterey, confined to his room, and nearly helpless, from an ugly sore on one of his limbs. The skill of the whole medical profession here, in the Army and Navy and out of them, had been exerted in this case, and baffled. At last, the discouraged patient sent for an old Indian woman, who had some reputation among the natives for medical sagacity in roots and herbs. She examined the sore, and the next day brought to the patient a poultice and a pot of tea. The application was made, and the beverage drank as directed. These were renewed two or three times, and the young man is now running about the streets, or hunting his game, sound as a nut."

"I had been attacked with the disease which carried off Lieut. Miner and several others attached to the public service," Colton continues.

"In half-delirious state, which followed close upon the attack, I looked up and saw bending over me the kind Mrs. Hartnell - one of the noblest among the native ladies of California and at her side stood this Indian woman, feeling my pulse. Mrs. H. remained while her medical attendant went away, but soon returned with the Indian medicaments which were to arrest or remedy this rapid and critical disease. I resigned myself to all her drinks and baths; she did with me just what she pleased. She broke the fever without breaking me; restored my strength, and in a week, I was in my office, attending to my duties. What she gave me I know not, but I believe her roots and herbs saved my life, as well as the leg of my friend."