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CALIFORNIA INDIANS WHO SPEAK THE LANGUAGE OF THE BASQUES

A STRANGE discovery has been made in California — a discovery that links the Stale and one of its native tribes of Indians with an ancient and distinguished people, whose history and origin have been one of the puzzles of scholars. This is the first announcement of the intelligence, which is bound to excite widespread discussion among the scholars of many countries. To a San Francisco attorney, native born son of the Golden State, belongs the distinction of having thus opened a new chapter in ethnological and philological research.

Throughout the world ethnologists are industriously laboring to disentangle the knotted and fast-decaying threads which make up the fabric of human history, and which, severally traced back through the dim labyrinths leading to past epochs, shall enable them to discover the origin and trace the course of racial development.

The Basque provinces of Spain have, for a century or more, offered students a singular and unique problem. The people inhabiting them stand out, distinctive and apart from all others upon the map of civilization. Their language, miraculously preserved in almost primitive purity despite the close proximity to both the French and the Spanish, is allied with no known tongue, and the people themselves preserve ancient rites and customs wholly unlike those of their closest neighbors. Within the past two years a famous Old World archaeologist has, with the Basque language as a key, succeeded in deciphering ancient Etruscan cuneiform inscriptions hitherto the despair of scholars.

The Californian discovery links the Basques with a language still spoken by one of California's native tribes. For this extraordinary revelation the world is indebted to Orel M. Goldaracena, a San Francisco lawyer, son of an officer in the army of old Spain and a native of one of the Basque provinces. The father, Captain Goldaracena, came from Pamplona, capital of the Basque province of Navarre, rendered doubly historical by Napoleon I through the unique means he took to capture the city by securing permission from his allies, the Spanish, to enter the town to view the citadel when the snow was on the ground, and taking in his troops, unarmed. At a signal they all commenced pelting the Pamplonians with snowballs and captured the city. In 1850, Captain Goldaracena, smarting under a slight received from his superiors, resigned his commission and came to the new State of California, burying himself for the rest of his lifetime in a beautiful country place in one of the north central counties. Here his son was born and learned the Basque language together with English, gaining preparation for his recent discovery.

The story of Mr. Goldaracena's investigations is best told in his own words. He says:

"In the early part of 1897, while in the vicinity of the Calaveras Big Trees, enjoying the cool shade of a herculean cedar, a few Indians, who were en route to the fierce, arrived upon the scene and became not soon persuasive to dispose of some luncheon. One of them, a lusty buck, with strong Mongol features, had a flea on his swarthy neck. I idly asked him what a flea was called in his tongue, and to my utter amazement he said 'cumara,' the very word, with the exception of one letter, the final 'h,' used by the Basques to denote the same thing. This aroused my curiosity, and for more than an hour I interrogated him, and as a result found eight words used to this day by the inhabitants of the Basque provinces, which have the same meaning in three of the Calaveras language. These words are as follows:

English.	Basque.	Mewoc.
Brother	Anaya	Aya
Eye	Begui	Bo-ai
Grandfather	Aitona	Aitona
Man	Gizona	Gizona
Red	Gorria	Gorria
Sun	Eguzqui	Ekuko
House	Echea	Uchu
Have	Edeki	Eske

"This certainly was a discovery worth following up, but, owing to limited leisure I was compelled to postpone the work. The strange parallel, however, rankled in my mind during all the years that intervened until May of 1900, when I succeeded in returning to the country to make more extended research into the vocabulary of the native tribe in question. The mere handful of Indians scattered in bunches of from five to twenty through Calaveras and Tuolumne counties belong to what was at one time a powerful tribe, although they rank low in the scale of race development. I employed a full-blood member to answer a series of questions which I had previously prepared. Two hours of work with my linguistic drag-net resulted in obtaining only the following additional words bearing similarity to the Basque:

English.	Basque.	Mewoc.
Sun	Iturria	Ituna
Night	Gaua	Gauia
Rain-level	Sehora	Puiaya
Little, small	Tiki	Yuni-tiki
Man	Gizon	Jaia
Wife	Emaia	Jaia
Run	Ituste	Ituato
Stick	Makila	Chilla
Inside	Barne	Wano

"By reference to Bancroft's 'Native Races of the Pacific States,' I find that these Indians belong to the Mewoc tribe. Their nation formerly extended from the snow line of the Sierra to the San Joaquin river, and from the Coast summits to the Fresno.

"But how did they come to have so many Basque words in their limited vocabulary? Did the two peoples spring from the same stock, or did their language come from the same parent? These are of those mysteries lost in the mists of the past.

"The origin of the Eskualdunac or Basques has ever been a matter of speculation—an unyielding, ethnical barrier—and whence came the Eskuara, their language, has always puzzled savants.

"The Basque people inhabit the provinces of Navarra, Alava, Biscaya and Guipozcoa, in Spain, and some thousands live in the south of France. They number about 600,000, and their language cannot be classified with any Indo-European or Semitic tongue. It presents certain grammatical analogies with the Mongol, North American and certain East African languages. Some authors pretend to trace the Basques to the time of the Deluge, when, it is asserted, certain extraordinary men were saved, among them Aitor, who was the ancestor of the Basques. Count Garat, a Basque, thinks that his compatriots are descendants of the Phoenicians who went into the Pyrenees mountains 500 years ago to work in the mines, which were extensively operated in ancient times. Ignatius Donnelly, in 'Atlantis,' says: 'How can we, without Atlantis (the island), explain the presence of the Basques in Europe, they who have no lingual affinities with any other race on the continent of Europe, but whose language is similar to the languages of America?' Donnelly evidently refers to the fact that, like the languages of America, Basque is polysynthetic. Like them, it forms its compounds by the elimination of certain radicals in the simple words. This is important, and Donnelly's theory that the Basques are the descendants of the people saved from the cataclysm that destroyed and sunk the fabled island of Atlantis beneath the ocean waves is the only explanation yet given as to the presence of that hardy people in the Pyrenees, ethnically and philologically isolated from all races and languages in Europe. Once admit the connecting link between the Old and New World and it does not require a very vivid imagination to understand how easily colonists must have gone from one country to the other. [illegible] yet ages before the birth of Columbus, we know that Europeans went to America. The Normans established colonies on the coast of New England, and maintained communication with them for 200 years.

"Michel, in 'Les Pays Basques,' says the Basques, being adventurous fishermen, were accustomed to visit the northeast coast of America long before the time of Columbus, and probably from time immemorial. The Abbe de Bourbourg says that knowledge of the American continent existed in China in the fifth century of our era. They named it Fu Sang, and their ships used to visit it. The name Mewoc seems to bear similarity to the word Merops. Theopompus related an interview between Midas, King of Phrygia, and Silenus, wherein the latter reported the existence of a great continent beyond the Atlantic, larger than Asia, Europe and Libya combined. It was called Meropa. He also stated that a race of men called 'Meropa' dwelt there and had extensive cities, and that they were persuaded that their country was the only existing continent.

"All this, in connection with the lingual similarity and some customs still extant, naturally suggests that the ancients knew of and had intercourse with [illegible] West Indies and Mexico and also with the origin of the Mewocs and the ancestors of the Egyptians, where the god Osiris reigned supreme over the souls emancipated from the transmigration. If there ever was any similarity the difference in the type and color existing now between the Mewoc and Fyrenean is not easily explained; but if their languages spring from the same source, the dissimilarity of to-day could certainly take place after the lapse of long periods of time. Evolution in language is so rapid that to-day it is somewhat difficult to understand the English, French and Spanish spoken three centuries ago. Even at present among the Basques a native of the province of Biscay finds great trouble in understanding a Basque from St. Jean de Lus, France, when speaking their eskuara. If this be error of language in such a short space of time, what changes may not have occurred during the passage of scons upon scons of time?

"Coming back to this tribe of Californian Indians which has engaged my study, I find that the Mewocos play a ball game which is peculiarly Basque. They also have a singular custom which was at one time practiced by the Pyrenaans. They form opposing sides, each person armed with a stick, the lower end of which is turned upwards [illegible] and then the virgin is thrown from where it is bound, forming a loop, across which strings are tied, a ball, made from a rounded oak knot, is hurled from one side to the other, without allowing it to touch the ground until some one misses, which gives one point to the other side. This is the leading sport of the Mewocs to this day.

"On great feast days, or any festive occasion, ball games are the principal feature among Basques. Like the Californians, they throw the ball from one side to the other, with a sort of scoop, almost one foot and a half long, tied to the hand.

"I think, that it is pretty well accepted that the Basques, or ancient Iberians, are the oldest people of Europe of whom we have any trace. It has been shown by analysis of local names that they formerly occupied the whole of Spain and the southern part of France, and they are traced to Italy, Sicily and Sardinia.

"Baldwin, in 'Prehistoric Nations,' says: 'They are the most remarkable, and, in some respects, the most mysterious communities in Europe, for they represent a people who have disappeared, and of whom no other fragmentary group remains on the face of the earth. These people may be, like the Dravidians of India, the only remaining representatives of a very ancient mixture of the Arabian Ouabites with the aborigines of the country where they are found. Their language, like the Dravidians, seems to have no genetic relationship to any other known language, so far as comparative philology has been able to establish.'

"Now, here in California, we find a tribe of Indians whose language has a genetic relationship to the Basque. It, like Basque, is agglutinative, forming compounds by suffixes. It has, as shown, quite a number of words that are exactly the same, and some that are similar to their equivalents in Basque. Besides, these various customs which can scarcely be said to be accidental coincidences, the manner of playing ball, as related, seems to me sufficient justification for saying that there is strong reason for believing that the Eskuara and Mewoc tongues came from a common source, and that these two peoples, ethnically widely different, inherit habits and customs from the same people, wherever they were.

"If there were only an occasional similarity between the languages it would not be sufficient reason for considering them related, because almost any two languages in the world have a word or two the same; but where there are a comparatively large number, then the languages must necessarily be related. It is also true that Sanscrit, that language dead and buried in the musty [illegible] has kinship with the Eskuara, as will be seen by the following table taken from Blade's 'Estude sur la Langue Basque':

English.	Basque.	Sanscrit.
Name	Izena	Ahna
Father	Aita	Atar
Wind	Aidia	Ahna
Ass	Astua	Ashua
Hearing	Entzuna	Ganah
Hamsit	Eskuta	Kasta
Hand	Esku	Pasha
Accomplish	Eskuratu	Prakash
Manners	Kare	Karman
Mountain	Mendia	Mendra
Food	Jana	Djana
Ear	Belarria	Karna
Hear	Ahaza	Isha
Star	Izarra	Tara
Age	Adina	Ayus
Mare	Asurra	Asurta
Water	Ura	Aura
Rain	Uri	Ourti
Cloud	Ostarra	Ostarra
Sun	Eguzki	Ikon
Water	Ura	Aura
Sea	Itsasoa	Sindhu
Whitened	Zuria	Sveta
Light	Argia	Argha
Dog	Otsaur	Kusirra

"Rhone St. Hilaire, in Les Eusksariens, says: 'I am informed by Edmons Blanc de Ymos that Basque is still spoken in Cochin China, where Mr. Farant, who continued the work interrupted by the death of Francis Garnier, has seen several Basque sailors converse in Basque with the natives, understanding them and being understood. There was a slight difference in the language, but it was practically the same.'

"The Japanese also have words corresponding to the Basque, as will be evident from the following:

English.	Basque.	Japanese.
Alone	Bakharra	Bakari
Room	Leku	Heia
Master	Yaona	Dano
Fragrant	Usaiki	Kusaki
It is	Da	Da
That	Hori	Hori

"Now, what connection has ever existed between the Basque, Sanscrit, Anamese, Japanese and Mewoc languages, that so many similar words, bearing the same meaning, should exist? Who can tell?

"The veil of the past seems so impenetrable that all efforts to force its inky darkness appear futile and speculation useless. Yet I firmly believe that a knowledge of Chinese, and a careful examination of the ancient records of China, would enable one who speaks Basque to brush away the obscuring clouds and decipher enigmas not only regarding the Eskuara, but also the aborigines of America. In this manner only can we hope to determine their origin and the history of their advent in the Western Hemisphere."

With these pertinent suggestions Mr. Goldaracena concludes this brief summary of his investigations. It is interesting to know that he himself, an archaeologist of no mean rank, is pushing his studies along the lines indicated.

FLORA HAINES LOUGHEAD.

A certain doctor, when only a beginner in practice, had occasion to attend a trial as a witness. The opposing counsel, in cross-examining the young doctor, made several sarcastic remarks, doubting the ability of so young a man to understand the profession.

"Do you know the symptoms of concussion of the brain?"

"I do," replied the doctor.

"Well," continued the attorney, "suppose my learned friend, Mr. Baging, and myself were to bang our heads together, should we get concussion of the brain?"

"Your learned friend, Mr. Baging, might," was the reply.—Wave.

OREL M. GOLDARACENA.

Fraulein Fritzi Scheff, the Grau Opera Company's Charming Ingenue.

FRITZI SCHEFF is the ingenue of the Grau company, and never was name more appropriate. Fragile and thistle is she, this charming daughter of German gentility, dainty, delicate, chic—all the things one does not expect a German maidchen to be. She is her sort of woman who will be nicknamed as long as she lives, always petted and beloved. At present she is nothing more than a wisp of a woman—a hundred and thirty pounds at the best—fond of dogs, fond of loved of dogs, dainty of wrist and ankle and full of magnetism. There is just one thing about her which is not pretty —the back of her neck. But every woman thing must have a flaw, and Fraulein Scheff's neck is like Achilles' heel—the one thing that makes her quite human.

Fritzi Scheff has such charm and magnetism that she is a general favorite wherever she goes, and the success which became hers at so early an age in Germany has become hers in London, where, at the royal opera in Covent Garden, she made the hit of last season. She is now conquering America.

Mlle. Scheff declares she inherits all her musical and histrionic ability from her mother, who is a dramatic singer at the opera-house in Frankfort. Her mother, however, was rather averse to her daughter following the same career. "If you have such a fancy for the operatic stage," said her mother, "I will not withhold my consent, but I will not help you; you must win your own way there." To some natures the feeling that one's career depends entirely on one's own exertions is the strongest of all incentives, and so it proved with little Fritzi, who was then studying at the Hoch Conservatorium in Frankfort, where she was trained by Mme. Schroeder-Hanfstaengl.

She was allowed to make her trial debut at the opera in Nuremberg, just to show what she could do, and the immediate result was an engagement at the opera in Munich, where she had been just two and a half years when Mr. Grau induced her to sign a contract with him for three years for the American and Covent Garden seasons.

At a reception recently given by Lady Farquhar, Mlle. Scheff had the honor of being introduced to the Princess of Wales, who, in her own gracious manner, told the young singer how delighted she had been with her impersonation of Nedda in "Pagliacci." "It was so realistic," added the Princess, "that I felt quite afraid you were really going to be killed."

The Prince of Wales was present on the same occasion, and, recognizing the son of the Austrian Ambassador to England, who had just been singing some Viennese popular songs, which the Prince thought very charming.

"And he spoke such beautiful German and was so kind!" she said, when telling about it.

"Well, and what did you say to the Prince?"

"I told him how well I remembered, when I was a little child, seeing him on the racecourse at Frankfort, and that I had always longed to come and see what England was like. Then we talked about racing, and I told him how fond I am of riding."

"I dare say you will admit that Mlle. Scheff, who always chooses her own horses, has excellent taste. She is also fond of dogs, and misses her faithful friends sadly when on her travels.

Jack, her white poodle, was left in Frankfort with her mother. He is quite a celebrity in his way, for Franz Lenbach, the famous German painter, painted his portrait sitting by his mistress, her head resting on his back and his black nose nestling against her cheek. This picture was on exhibition at the Paris Exposition.

Fritzi Scheff made a hit in her San Francisco debut as Musetta in "La Boheme," Siegrun in "Don Giovanni," and one of the Rhein maidens in "Rheingold." She is very young—just at the commencement of her career, in fact, and tremendously enthusiastic.

Indian corn is to be made a specialty by Uncle Sam at the Paris Exposition. It is intended to establish in connection with the American agricultural exhibits a "corn kitchen" in order that the visitors may be furnished with all kinds of maize foods. It is hoped this will increase the demand for American corn.

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