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Miscellaneous Brief Reviews

and stories and anecdotes and traditions in surprising quantity. To collect such number and variety of them, mostly from original sources, has meant long and painstaking research. But one feels sure that for her it has all been a labor of love and that the writing of the book has given her keen satisfaction. For her home is in Taos and she has written a previous book about its Indians and she has also edited the manuscript material of "Kit Carson's Own Story of his Life," so much of which centres around the town whose most famous citizen he was.

Taos, Miss Grant tells us, is nearing its three hundred and fiftieth birthday and so is one of the oldest, if not the oldest town in the United States to have been continuously inhabited. Her story shows that its long history has held excitements, tragedies, romances, that it has touched the life of the country importantly sometimes and again has lived through somnolent decades of no apparent consequence outside itself. She begins her narrative with the first coming of the Spaniards, in 1598, when the Indian village was discovered by that bold adventurer and colonizer, Don Juan de Onate. Some of his soldiers may have settled there even then, as Indian tradition says, but it is fairly sure that there were Spanish settlers in Taos Valley twenty years later, when, probably, the present town of Taos had its beginning. Nobody can even guess the age of the Taos Pueblo.

The author tells with many an illuminating anecdote the story of the early years of the settlement, the revolt of the Pueblos in 1680, the shocking massacre of 1760, describes some of the picturesque customs which held for a long time, hurries on down the years to the Purchase by President Jefferson

(Continued on Page 15)

The Story of Taos

WHEN OLD TRAILS WERE
NEW. *The Story of Taos.* By
Blanche C. Grant. Illustrated.
344 pp. New York: The Press of
the Pioneers, Inc. \$3.

TO write the complete story of the New Mexico town of Taos probably would not be possible now, for lack of necessary documents. But Blanche C. Grant has gone as near to full achievement of that task as can be done and has written a narrative that captures its picturesqueness and its charm and gathers together in its long, rambling, humanly and historically interesting tale facts and incidents

which made Taos a village of the United States, tells of the visit of Zebulon Pike and of the coming of the traders of the Sante Fe Trail, and what this new life meant for the region.

The author pauses to bring together some facts and incidents and description that enliven the subject of the trails that traversed the region and devotes a good deal of space to that important figure in Southwestern history, Charles Bent, his brother William Bent, their partner St. Vrain and the famous Bent's Fort. There are stories of trappers and traders, of mines and mining and miners, of picturesque courts and cases, of men who wandered through the region and left accounts of what they saw and did. Marcus Whitman stopped for a few days of rest and recuperation during his momentous and amazing ride from Walla Walla to Washington in the Winter of 1842. The fell story of the conspiracy of 1847 and the murder of Governor Bent has vivid telling from the memories of some who witnessed it and there are extracts from diaries of several wanderers who visited the region at various times. Coming down to the present, Miss Grant writes of many quaint and colorful survivals of old customs still observed in Taos, the weird dances and fiestas of the Pueblos, the Christmas Day celebration, the sect of the Penitentes. Several chapters devoted to the art colony that gives Taos its modern fame narrate the full story of the growth of the colony and tell of the life and work of its members. One wonders at the end if any other town of equal size in this whole United States could be found having such a long, varied, intriguing and colorful history as this which Miss Grant has told of the little town of Taos.