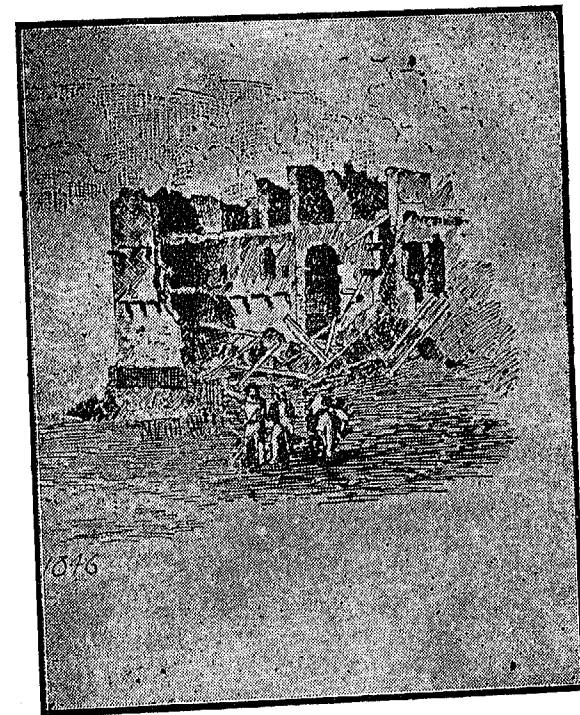


CHAPTER XXV.

Pecos Church.

I will call attention to the Old Pecos Church which was probably owned by the Roman Catholics at one time, but which was in ruins when I first saw it, as I drove by with my stage coach to Santa Fe. It stood twenty miles east of Santa Fe on the old trail. The walls were built of adobe, the doors were round-topped and built of solid hewed timbers, with wooden hinges, wooden latches. When I first saw the old ruins it had a belfry on the top of it with a rounded topped opening in it the same as the doors below. This church was built on the plan of a fort. When it was originally built it was the storage place for all kinds of ammunition, Roman spears, shields, breast plates, guns, powder, ammunition of every kind and character, used by Roman Catholics for war, and was probably built by the Aztec Indians who were under the control of the Spaniards. It was said to be 300 years old when I saw it 53 years ago. It was a two-story structure, built of adobe, or sun-dried brick. The floors of the building were built of some kind of concrete and were hard and glossy. The upper floor was built of eight by ten timbers laid solidly together with a crease in the crack of each timber—dove-tailed—the cracks in the timbers fitted so closely together that the creases did not show. The under part of the floor, that part which was exposed as ceiling for the lower room was lavishly hand carved. This carving was said to have been done by the Indians. There was carved in some places, Indian squaws with their papooses on their backs, heads of big braves, mooses, bow and arrows, fish, deer, antelope, horses, lizards and almost everything imagined was carved in this timber. Those parts not exposed directly to the elements were in a good state of preservation, while those pieces exposed to the weather were brittle and



THE PECOS CHURCH.

would crumble like chalk. In the picture of the Pecos church you will note the pieces of fallen timbers. Kosloski was a Polish ranchman whose ranch was traversed by the Old Trail. This was a very picturesque ranch at the foot of the Glorietta Mountains, half mile from the ruins of the old Pecos Church. He bought the ruins of this once famous temple and built stables for his horses and cattle. Kosloski's ranch had at one time been a famous eating station, noted for its profusion of fine mountain trout caught from the Rio Pecos River which ran near the cabin. On this famous ranch four miles east of the Pecos River, the Texas Rangers fought their fight with the Union soldiers and were whipped. Gone are those old days, gone are the old people, gone are the bones of the soldiers which have bleached upon the ruins of the Old Trail. Silence reigns supremely over the once famous ranch, broken occasionally by the screams of the locomotives as they whiz by on the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad, puffing, screeching and rumbling up the steep grades of the Glorietta Mountains.

W. H. RYUS.

THE END.