

part of this nation, and nothing can happen to the nation that will not affect us), there is among us an absence of fear, a feeling of rest, an absence of trepidation concerning the movements of the nation, and a sense of security that I believe no other people on the earth have. The reason of it is that we know that God doeth nothing, except He revealeth it unto His servants the Prophets. We know the spirit of prophecy is in our midst, and that if there is any danger threatening us we shall be prepared for it. The Lord will inspire His servants and His people so that they will not be found unprepared.

God bless you, my brethren and sisters. God bless us all during this Conference; bless every man that shall speak, and inspire him with the Spirit and power of God; bless every one that shall listen that all may rejoice together and be mutually edified; which I humbly ask in the name of Jesus. Amen.

AMONG THE AYMARAS.

La Paz, Bolivia, May 30, 1898.—Three-fourths of all the people of Bolivia are Indians. The country is more than one-sixth the size of the United States without Alaska, and these Indians are scattered all over it. Some of them are savage, but the bulk, comprising a population approximating a million, belong to two civilized tribes known as the Quichua (Keech-wah) and Aymara. The Quichua claim to be the descendants of the old Incas. They are found about the northeastern shores of Lake Titicaca and in the states to the south of La Paz. The Aymaras inhabit this high plateau, and their villages of mud huts may be counted by the thousands in this part of Bolivia. They are a people of themselves, with curious habits, queer customs and a life and character peculiarly their own. If I should say that slavery still prevails in Bolivia, I suppose the statement would be disputed. It is true nevertheless. These Indians are to a great extent slaves. This is a feudal country and the men and women are bought and sold with the farms on which they live. The fact that they could perhaps leave upon paying their debts does not alter the matter. It is known that their attachment to their homes is such that they will not leave and the proprietor does not hesitate to agree to deliver his human goods with the property. The most of the lands here are owned by the Cholos or half breeds, who have Spanish and Indian blood in them, and by the whites, who are the descendants of the Spaniards who conquered the country. Upon each farm there is a community of these Indians, who throughout the whole year give three days of each week to their master and are allowed the remaining days for themselves. They receive no wages for working for the owner of the plantation and are supposed to do the work in lieu of the ground rent for the spot on which they have built their mud huts and for the little patches which they are allowed to farm for themselves. If their master has use for only a part of the time he has the right to hire them out to others, and if they do not obey him he can, within certain limits, inflict punishment upon them. They expect to be whipped, and I have heard it said here that Indian servantsumble when they are not punished for a long time, because they consider it a sign that their master has ceased to like them. An Indian here has in few things any right that anyone else is bound to respect, and it is indeed not an uncommon thing to see one struck to make him move faster or understand more quickly.

Notwithstanding their ill-treatment the Indians seem to stick to their masters. They are absolutely without ambition and seem to be content with their lot. They will work for their masters for nothing rather than receive pay from a foreigner, and they will fight to the death the Indians of a neighboring plantation with whom they are angry or of whom they are jealous. Feuds often exist between the Indians of the farms of a neighborhood, and gun fights and sling fights are common. The sling is the natural weapon of the Aymara. He has the skill of David, and is never afraid to attack his Goliath at such times. He uses the sling to stone his sheep from straying from the flock, and from behind his hut often watches for his enemy and sends a rock crashing through his brain. He considers his master's grievances his own, and will engage in any battle to which he may be instigated by him. I heard of a case of this kind last night. A foreign merchant of La Paz had bought a small plantation with a certain number of Indians, adjoining the estate of a rich Bolivian. The Bolivian coveted the foreigner's property and wanted to force him to sell it cheap. He fomented a feud between his Indians and those of the foreigner. The crops of the foreigner's Indians were pulled from the ground, his men were stoned, and at last they came to him and told their situation. He asked them what they were going to do about it. They replied that if he would allow them the key of the house and church and give them forty pounds of cocoa leaves and six gallons of alcohol they would soon settle the difficulty. They told him that the Bolivian was trying to make him sick of the bargain, and that he was doing this so that he would gladly sell out the property for little or nothing. "But," said the foreigner to the chief of the Indians, "what can you do? You have only forty men and the Bolivian has 250." The chief said he would get the Indians of other small farms near by to unite with them. This they did. They concealed these Indians in the church on the estate, and when the marauding Indians came again and began to pull up the crops all sallied forth. There was a pitched battle, and about thirty of the Bolivian's Indians were killed. The result was that the Bolivian came a day or so later to the foreigner and asked him to sell him his place. Said the foreigner: "Yes, I will sell to you, but my price is now \$20,000. I offered you the farm a month ago for \$15,000, but after what you have done you cannot have it for less than \$20,000."

"I will take it," was the reply. "I have had enough of you, and as I want the farm I will pay what you ask." And he did.

All the dishwashing, fire making and water carrying as well as the dirty work of the household generally in La Paz is done by men called Pongos. The Pongo of most houses is changed every week and many families have fifty-two different Pongos in a year. This is due to one of the customs which prevails here between the Indians and their masters. In addition to the three days a week without pay, which the Indians must give they have to furnish also without pay so many men a week to do the dirty work about the house. On a large farm five or six more such men are furnished than are needed by the family of the planter and they are then hired out to others. As the Pongo works only for a week at a time, the contract is made to furnish one a year for from \$80 to \$100 Bolivian or from \$28 to \$35 American. The Pongo when he comes at the first of the week brings with his five bags of llama manure for the fuel of the household and also two or three native brooms. He gets nothing for these and receives in short no pay whatever. At night he sleeps on

the cold stones inside the door leading to the street and must get up and open to anyone who knocks. The work done by him will not be done by any of the other servants, so that if you should have twenty other servants you must still have your Pongo. The Pongo alone will go to the public fountain for the water, the Pongo carries the vegetables and meats which the cook buys home from market and the Pongo alone empties the slops and cleans the pots and pans.

These Indians often give their children over to the whites to be brought up by them as servants. There is a money consideration, and though the Bolivian law provides for the education of a child so bought, this is practically limited by the caprice of the buyer. The contract usually provides that the parents may have the child back if they pay twenty cents a day for the time he has been in the hands of the buyer, but as the Indians never have any money ahead such sales are usually absolute, and they are in force until the child is of age. If the master don't like the child, however, he can send it back, claiming it has some fault. Many of the house servants of La Paz are gotten in this way, especially in the case of the girls. As a rule, a large number of servants are needed, one usually being allotted to each child of a well-to-do family. The servants are lazy and inefficient, it requiring about four Indians to do the work of one good American hired girl. The wages are from \$1.20 to \$10 a month in this money, which is equal to from forty-two cents to \$3.50 American money.

I wish I could take you into one of these Indian huts and show you just how hundreds of thousands of people live here in Bolivia. It is by no means easy to get into the Indian's house, for he hates strangers and will not admit anyone if he can help it. I had one or two rather serious experiences while making my investigations of this kind on the Titicaca plateau, and in one case the Indian householder showed fight and threatened to have me arrested. The outside of the huts are to be seen everywhere in the country about here. I have ridden along tens of thousands of them and they are practically the same everywhere. They would hardly rank as respectable pig pens in America. Imagine a mud hut from six, eight to twelve feet square. Let it have walls so low that you can reach up to the thatched roof without effort. Let it have no windows and let the door be an opening two feet from the ground, so small that you have to stoop to get into it. The floor of the hut is the ground and you step over the high door sill to get in. Once inside there is little more than room to turn about, for often the farming utensils belonging to the owner are kept there and it may be that in the hut the donkey, the chickens and the llamas also quarter. There is little furniture. The people sit on the floor and men, women and children back themselves up against the wall at night, keeping as close together as possible for warmth, and sleep sitting. In one corner of the hut there is a little hearth or clay stove with a pile of llama manure for fuel beside it. There is no chimney to the hut and the dense smoke finds its way out as it can. No one thinks of using fire for warmth. Fuel is too expensive for anything except cooking. The family does not change its clothes at night. Everyone sleeps in the clothes which he wears during the day. The men and boys wrap their ponchos about them and the women their blankets and all draw themselves as closely as possible together that no part of their bodies may remain uncovered. The cooking is very simple, one of the favorite dishes