

A NARRATIVE OF THE TRADITIONS, MANNERS AND CUSTOMS OF THE MOQUIS INDIANS.

Written from the verbal narrative of Elder Ira Hatch, by James A. Little.

INTRODUCTION.

The Moquis occupy six villages, located some distance south of the Colorado River. Elder Hatch estimates the number of inhabitants at about 3,000. Walpie is the name of the principal village.

In accordance with the wisdom and philanthropy which have ever characterized the Indian policy of President Brigham Young, several expeditions have been sent to those villages, their design being to improve the condition of that people by supplying them with useful articles, to teach them the principles of the gospel, and to prepare the way, if possible, for their deliverance from bondage to the surrounding tribes; for they appear to have been subject to forced tribute to the more warlike peoples around them, since a forlorn remnant of their ancestors sought safety from entire destruction in their present places of refuge.

During the visit of a company to them in 1862, commanded by Capt. Jacob Hamblin, they decided to send a deputation of three of their number to Salt Lake City. As hostages for the safe return of this deputation, and to improve their acquaintance with the Moquis and their language, Elders Ira Hatch, Thales Haskell and Johiel McConnell remained until the return of the deputation, in March, 1863, a period of about three months. It is from the verbal narration of the traditions, manners and customs of this people, the knowledge of which was principally obtained during this sojourn among them, from which this narrative is written.

THE MOQUIS.

The present Moquis people are traditionated that their forefathers came from the sea coast in the Southwest. They appear to have no idea of the time that has elapsed since their migration hither. They were rich in cattle and the necessities of life, and understood the manufacture and the use of edge tools, but their children have lost the art of making them. They think that but a few generations have passed away since their ancestors occupied an extensive portion of the country in which they now reside, both north and south of the Colorado; but they were slaughtered and driven by their enemies, until a remnant were compelled to locate in their present places, which are capable of easy defence, compared with the open country. At the time the Piedes nation drove them across the Colorado, a mutual compact was entered into by the contending parties, that neither of them should ever cross that river. Although the Piedes have broken this treaty long since, when the deputation of the Moquis crossed the Colorado on their way to Salt Lake City, they said they were the first of their people who had broken that treaty.

About four generations ago, the principal chief of the Oriba village and his family are said to have been white. A young man and woman, seen by Elder Hatch, said to be descendants of this chief, were Albino in complexion.

It is seldom that very large or small men are seen among the Moquis. They are generally from five feet four inches to five feet ten inches in height, with a fine muscular development, capable of carrying heavy burdens and enduring great fatigue.

They differ from Indians generally in complexion, having dark brown hair and eyes instead of black, and dark skin, but not copper colored.

THEIR RELIGION.

Their religion cannot be strictly called idolatrous, as they do not worship images, but consider them the representations of ideas. Their religious rites and ceremonies appeared to be simple, and at least harmless in their tendencies. They call their deity "Tow-wan-e-na," or Sun Father. They believe that he governs that orb and has the dispensing of his blessings of light and heat. This god is represented by an image, made of wood and stone, of a favorite chief who died more than three generations ago. This personage now resides in the heavens, from which he dispenses the blessings of life, and especially those of rain and fruitful seasons upon the faithful. If his children are not humble and obedient, he punishes them by withdrawing his blessings.

The How-we-ona, or sacred temple, is the head workshop of the village, but at the time of religious ceremonies it is

vacated by the laborers and used exclusively for sacred performances. The representative of their deity sits enthroned on a rude pedestal in the north end of the building. Its head and breast are decorated with costly beads and feathers and strings of sacred sea-shells, which were worn by their fathers who came from the sea shore. The eyes of the image are directed to the middle of the floor, where are placed wooden images of all kinds of domestic fowls, such as doves, chickens, &c. These images are painted and decorated with feathers in imitation of nature. By the side of these images of fowls are placed the skins of wild beasts, hung on a pole of the musical plant; among these, that of the fox predominates, as that animal is considered more sacred than others. Corn and water are placed before the fowls.

In worshipping their deity, the men form in rows in front of the image, and speak and sing in his praise, accompanied by the music of rude instruments, among which was a curiously constructed flute, which had descended to them from their forefathers. There was but one religious ceremony in which the women joined with the men. The head workshop is the great central place of worship in a village, but there are other minor ones. The principal religious ceremonies take place in the month of February.

In the centre of the village is a public square, where there is a wide stone altar about two feet high and three feet square. On this, sacrifices of food are laid on sacred days. Among these offerings is a small buckskin sack containing holy meal. Around this altar the men dance in rotation. During this ceremony, the aged men and women of the village take a pinch of the holy meal, breathe on it, sprinkle a little on the backs of the dancers, and throw a little to the West, East, North and South. This is the signal for the dance to break up.

The ideas and principles of their religion are eminently utilitarian. They dictate all the relations of life. They religiously abhor an indolent man, and order is the first law of every household, and of every public institution and ceremony. They enforce habits of industry by precept, example and exhortation, as is well illustrated by the following anecdote: When Elder Hatch and his companions first visited the Moquis, Ti-lam-ma was the principal chief of the Oriba village. To obtain that position, a man must be noted for his industry, energy and perseverance. From some cause, he became indolent and unthrifty. The people withdrew their confidence from him; he lost his place, and died of starvation and chagrin. Charity is one of the leading principles of their religion. The industrious poor, or the sick and helpless must be amply provided for by the contributions of the more fortunate.

ASTRONOMICAL NOTIONS.

They have no correct ideas of the shape and motion of the earth or of the planets which surround it in the heavens. They believe that the sun rises over by the little Spanish town of Placena, and sets by going down a hole by New-at-ki-be, which signifies Snow Mountain—evidently the San Francisco mountain of the whites. They say they enjoy a monopoly of the sun, which shines on them; the rest of the world not enjoying its beneficent gifts of light and heat; hence the prominence the sun holds in their religious faith.

AGRICULTURE, &C.

They carefully cultivate the earth, and raise grain and a good assortment of vegetables. The soil and climate are adapted to the growth of fine peaches, of which they produce large quantities. Their domestic animals and fowls consist of sheep, goats, chickens, doves, asses and a very few horses. They grow cotton for home consumption, and with it and wool they manufacture their clothing, which is generally of a very serviceable quality. With them, cattle and horses are very insecure property on account of the raids of the Navajos and Apaches.

Their villages are located on high mountains, usually with a gradual descent to the north, but surrounded on the other sides by precipitous rocks, which are only surmounted by steps cut in their surface.

They obtain water in the winter season from natural or artificial cisterns in the rocks, from which they draw it with a large gourd with a hole in the side. When this supply fails, in the dry season, they obtain it from a public well, dug in the plain below the village. To fetch this water constitutes quite an item of the women's labor each day.

PUBLIC WORK.

A description of the way this well is cleaned out in the spring, illustrates the manner in which their public work is usually conducted. The well at the Oriba village was forty or fifty feet deep and about the same in diameter at the top, but in descending it gradually lessens in diameter to five or six feet across at the bottom. In the winter the well is partially filled with the wash and dust from the surface. When water is no longer obtainable from the cisterns in the Spring, the well has to be cleaned out. The bottom of the well is reached by spiral stairs cut in its sides. Two or three men throw the dirt a little up from the bottom, from which it is carried on a slightly concave dish, resembling a large plate, which is made of wood splinters and painted with a variety of colors. It is carried on the open palm of the hand, with the forearm perpendicular. The striking feature of this busy scene is the appearance of two men, dressed like clowns and in complete disguise; they are called, in native parlance, co-che-nas. Both carry a whip made of the leaves of the soap root, which they can use with telling severity. In addition to the whip, one carries a lasso, which he is constantly whirling over his head ready to throw at a delinquent. The other carries a thin piece of board, shaped like a dart and attached to a string; this is kept whizzing through the air as a warning that the co-che-na is approaching.

These co-che-nas commence their labors, in the morning of public days, by going through the village at the proper time to see if there are any loitering behind, if so they are sharply stirred up to duty in a way from which there is no appeal. The food for dinner is taken to the well by the women, who labor with the men. Just before it is partaken of, the co-che-nas suddenly disappear and leave the laborers to partake of the repast in peace.

It is usual for the chief, in the morning of the day set apart for public labor, to preach to the people from the housetop, on the usefulness and necessity of the labor required of them.

The labor of furnishing wood for domestic purposes devolves upon the men. It has to be brought from eight to twelve miles. Some keep a donkey for this service, but the backs of those who are too poor to do this must carry the burden. It seems almost superfluous to add, that the wood is used with the strictest economy.

THEIR BUILDINGS.

Their houses are built of flat lime and sandstone, laid in a kind of clay mortar, which makes a very good cement. Well hewn timbers, some of them two feet in diameter, were used in their construction. We could not learn of any timber within a less distance than 25 or 30 miles from which these beams could have been obtained. The people say their ancestors hauled these timbers with oxen yoked by the horns, similar to the Spanish custom of working cattle at the present time.

While the elders were at the Oriba village, some of their men came in with cottonwood poles, which they said had cost them a three days' journey to the Pah-u, or little Colorado river. They bring red pine poles, for their long ladders, where strength and elasticity are required, from the San Francisco mountain, a journey of six days. They exhibit wonderful strength and endurance in carrying burdens. When loaded, they seldom walk, but take a light elastic trot, similar to that of Chinamen under the same circumstances.

Their houses have terraced roofs, and are always two stories high and often three. The upper stories are set back a few feet from the front of the one immediately under it, leaving a portion of the roof for outdoor purposes. There are no side doors in the lower stories, but they are entered by ascending the ladder to the roof and then descending through a hole to the floor. The second and third stories are entered by side doors opening on to the roofs of the stories below.

STREETS, ETC.

The principal streets of the villages usually run east and west, and with few exceptions the houses front to the south. Every village has its public square, and the houses are so arranged that this square answers for the stage of a large amphitheatre, in which the audience can occupy the roof of the houses. Everything about their villages has been constructed for defense against a common enemy.

Near the Oriba village is a large cave in the rocks, which the natives call Shu-mi-co-le, a place of evil spirits. There are many traditions and super-

stitious ideas connected with this place. It is generally shunned by the people, and visited only on occasion of some special ceremony connected with it. The elders, while there, found it an excellent place of retirement, where they could enjoy undisturbed quiet.

Their incarnation of evil is a very bad man, who lived several generations ago. To their minds, he controls the evil powers the same as the Sun Father does the good. They are traditionated that this impersonification of evil will return some time in the future to afflict them, and that on his departure, he will take with him all who do not do right.

MARRIAGE CEREMONIES.

Their marriage ceremonies are simple and without ostentation. The one witnessed at the Oriba village was conducted as follows: In the morning the interested parties breakfasted in the workshop to which the bridegroom belonged, after which the manufacture of a new pair of blankets was commenced out of the purest white material obtainable. The parties ate their dinner in the second, and then supper in the third, story of the bride's father's house. The pair of blankets were not completed until the second day. During this time the bridegroom and bride were put into a private room, where they were required to bathe each other in pure cold water, as a witness that they were pure and healthy and fitted for the cares and responsibilities of the married state. The happy pair occupy the new blankets on the second night.

FUNERAL CEREMONIES.

When a person is given up to die, their under jaw, the backs of their hands and the upper part of the feet are colored black, and friends begin to mourn as though they were already dead. A corpse is prepared for burial by being dressed like the living, with the addition of a blanket wrapped around the head and upper part of the body, and tied around the neck with a string. A hole, several feet deep, is dug in the earth and walled up with stone; in this the dead are placed in a sitting posture. The arms are folded across the breast, and a pole is passed down between the arms and breast and between the legs, long enough to extend about two feet above the surface of the ground. In the bosom of the dead, and wrapt up in the blanket, is a loaf of bread and a small bowl of water—the bowl made especially for this purpose. They believe that the spirit of a good person, after death, first goes to the Sun Father and then returns to the body by going down the pole. The grave is finished by being securely covered with earth and stone, and the surface around the pole neatly ornamented with pebbles.

AMUSEMENTS.

Their public races are an important feature in their amusements. They are for the trial of the speed and bottom of men instead of horses. No betting or anything immoral is connected with them. They are kept up about a month, every alternate day. They take place during the principal season of religious ceremonies, in the winter.

On these occasions, the men are naked except a small blanket about the loins. The bodies of the racers are painted with curious devices, in the colors of the shop to which they individually belong. They also wear a head dress of the same color, and other distinguishing marks, that their progress during the race may be noted by their friends.

The race course is a foot trail, some ten or twelve miles in length. It usually extends in a circuit from the southwest side of the village around to the east side, where the race always ends. They run only two or three miles at first, and increase the distance each succeeding race, until the whole length of the course is run at one heat. The men of each shop have a several sided piece of a hard substance made of cement and finely cut hair. This they are required to throw before them with the foot. The runners rise the bluffs, on which the village is situated, at the end of the race, by steps, and the man who first throws the piece of his shop on top and follows it is the winner of the race. These steps are very small, steep and difficult, being constructed on purpose to try the agility and endurance of the runners at the end of the course.

SELF SUSTAINING; MANUFACTURES, ETC.

The Moquis depend entirely on their own resources for the supply of their wants. They have had but little intercourse with the rest of the world, and