DESERET EVENING NEWS.

Friday, - - - August 20, 1897.

ORIGIN OF THE SAMOANS.

Relics of Observance of the Mosaic Law Still Among Them.

Also, a Similarity With Customs that Prevail Among American Indians.

Samoa, June 22, 1897.

To the Editor:

Among the conflicting opinions as to the origin of the inhabitants of Samoa as well as their congeners on several groups of the Pacific islands, I will offer for the following as evidence that they belong to the house of Israel and came from America.

First—According to the tradition of Samoans: They first landed on and inhabited "Manua," the most eastern island of the group. This is an evidence that they did not come from the west. Following in this line of evidence we read in the book of Mormon (Alma 63:5-8) that at least two large ships were "launched into the west sea near the narrow neck which leads to the land northward and were never heard of more." The question is: Were those two ships destroyed? Or were they drifted away to some of the Pacific islands? The probability is in favor of the latter, which is the more credible and the most and ocean current of that part of the pacific tend westerly. It must be left to conjecture, however, how the scattered from island to island. But that the natives had boats large enough to navigate from island to island from one island to another is evident from the well known fact that not many years since the Tongan people came to Samoa (a distance of nearly five hundred miles) in sufficient numbers to conquer them.

Second—The Samoans rapidly adhere to the old Mosaic law of circumcision, which was in force among the Israelites and Lamanites till the coming of Christ. (It will be noted that the two mentioned bands left Jerusalem B. C., the laws of Moses being in full force at that time.)

Third—The Samoans show a custom of embalming their dead—an old Israelite custom (Gen. 50: 26).

Fourth—Both among the American Indians and the Samoans is the custom represented in the law of Moses by "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth," v. 6. If John Doe should kill Richard Roe, the law would not seek revenge until they had got a man from the Doe family (that is said for a man, or, An eye for an eye," etc.

Fifth—There is a custom among the Samoans of cutting off a woman's nose for the crime of stealing another woman's husband by marrying him. The same custom is prevalent among some of the tribes of American Indians. The writer is familiar with this custom among the Apache Indians of Arizona.

Sixth—The girls of Samoa often gather themselves together to sing and to dance, and to make themselves merry (reference of the pleasing manner mentioned among the ancient inhabitants of America (book of Mormon, Mosiah 20: 5).

Seventh—The syntax of the Samoan language in many points resemble the Hebrew.

The above are a few indirect evidences I have gleaned personally from my own observations, and not having access to any writings of the ethnology of the race, it is possible that I have omitted much very valuable evidence. While it is almost impossible for any sufficient data to be established definitely the origin of the Samoans, the fact that they observe some of the laws of Moses, and that a number of the customs of both the Samoans and the American Indians are identical, taken in connection with the other evidences, seems, when looked upon in the light of reason to render the argument strongly in favor of them belonging to the house of Israel and most likely drifted from American shores.

WILLIAM A. MOODY.

B. Y. Academy Items.

Provo City, Utah, August 18, 1897.

To the Editor:

Dr. G. Stanley Hall, president of Clark university, who is at present touring in the Brigham Young Academy automobile, will arrive at Provo, will deliver a free lecture in the Tabernacle Sunday evening, beginning at 8:15, under the auspices of the Brigham Young Academy. All are cordially invited to attend.

On Saturday an excursion will be run to Salem, when the distinguished visitor will deliver a brief address to the teachers and visitors. Dr. Hall is a most interesting and entertaining lecturer on all subjects pertaining to education and child study, and his lectures in the Tabernacle will be a rare opportunity for the citizens of Salt Lake to hear America's greatest educator.

FROM TURNER'S TO HILL'S.

Order Changing the Site of the National Guard Encampment.

It was decided today to change the place of the annual encampment of the National Guard of Utah, and an order will be issued from the adjutant general's office accordingly.

Under the first order which was made several days ago Turner's farm at South Cottonwood was chosen but that has been abandoned for the Hill farm on Third East, just south of Col. John M. Winder's county home. The new encampment place has been chosen on account of having a much larger area of land ground upon which peculiar drills may be held