

## MISCELLANEOUS.

*Written for this Paper.*

## THE ZUNI INDIANS.

ZUNI (Indian Village), Valenta Co.,  
N. M., March 9, 1894.

In company with President Wm. H. Gibbons and young David Oveson (our teamster), I left St. Johns on the 6th inst. to visit the distant settlement of Ramah, about eighty miles northeast of St. Johns, and twenty-five miles south of Wingate, on the Atlantic & Pacific Ry. After traveling two days and camping in a fine cedar grove over night, we arrived at Ramah in the evening of the 7th.

The village of Ramah is beautifully situated in the extreme northeast end of a fertile valley which extends in a south-westerly direction from the settlement about five miles; its average width is one mile, and it is surrounded by low cedar and pine covered mountains. The foot of the higher mountains, known as the Zuni range, is about six miles north of Ramah. Small grain and corn are raised; also potatoes, but as the altitude is nearly 7000 feet, only the hardier kinds of fruit are produced. The present strength of the ward is ninety-six souls, or eleven families. James R. McNeil is the Bishop.

The first settlers in that part of the country where Ramah is situated were Indian missionaries, among whom were Lorenzo H. Hatch, Ernest A. Tietjen, John Hunt, Luther C. Burnham, Wm. H. Gibbons and others, who located in a little valley (lying immediately north of the present Ramah) called Cebollo (pronounced Savoia), and at another place lying eastward known as Savoietta. The first of these missionaries arrived in 1877, and from that time till 1880 Cebollo was, like Moan Coppy in Arizona, an important missionary station. The present Ramah was founded in 1882, and it bids fair to become a flourishing settlement, if more Latter-day Saints can be induced to locate there. The natural advantages for quite a large settlement are excellent; all that is needed is proper development of the resources of the country; but the present strength of the settlement is inadequate to make improvements as fast as could be desired. The lower part of the Cebollo valley is already utilized as a reservoir, and by raising the dam (which is only  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile from the townsite) ten feet or so, a very large body of water could be stored and used in the season thereof for irrigation purposes. There is plenty of land. The present inhabitants of Ramah extend a hearty invitation to such of their co-religionists as are in search of homes to come and cast their lot with them.

Yesterday we left our friends at Ramah, and traveled twenty-two and a half miles (on our return trip) to Zuni, the famous Indian village, which in past years has been visited by quite a number of our Indian missionaries and other Elders, among whom was Ammon M. Tenney, who baptized quite a number of the villagers. By means of the Spanish language, which is spoken by quite a number of the Indians and which is also spoken fluently by Prest. Gibbons, we have conversed considerably with our dusky friends, several of whom,

after being told that we were Mormons, replied that they also were Mormons; and while they went through the gestures which were intended to illustrate the ordinance of baptism and the laying on of hands, they would exclaim: "Yes, Ammon Tenney did so and so to us." Their knowledge of the Gospel and the nature of its ordinances beyond this seemed to be extremely limited.

Among the chiefs to whom we were introduced was the noted Reman Luna, the present governor of the village, who treated us very kindly. He was among those baptized by Elder Tenney, and because of his friendship to the Mormon missionaries, he was, through certain influences brought to bear upon the majority of his people by Mormon-haters, deposed from his governorship, and stood thus for several years. But the reaction came; and when he was chosen governor again it was also owing to the fact that he had been a friend to the Mormons, whose consistent course toward their Indian friends had finally gained their utmost confidence; and today these Zuni villagers look upon our people as their best and truest friends. Be it said to the honor of our Indian missionaries that they have made a good record among the natives. While other white men who have associated themselves with the Indians have become notorious for their immoral conduct and betrayal of confidence, our brethren have invariably acted like men and Saints; and the fruits of their example and precepts are now quite apparent among the natives.

The Zuni village is situated on the north bank of the so-called Zuni wash, which in times of high water represents a large stream, but which in the dry season is very small so far as its running water is concerned. The village covers about five acres of ground; some of the largest buildings are five stories high; but most of them only one and two stories. Instead of using inside stairways, the upper stories are reached by means of ladders, which are placed on the outside of the buildings; the inhabitants thus pass from roof to roof, all the roofs being flat. From the top of the tallest buildings a fine view is obtained of the surrounding country.

There are a number of white Indians in the village; we were introduced to two men, one woman and one half-grown girl; all of these were fully as fair as the average white man, and their hair was also quite light. Their features and general physiognomy are, however, pure Indian. Elder Baker, formerly editor of the *Logan Nation*, who is at present teaching school at Ramah, has spent considerable time at this Indian village. He believes that these white Indians are literal descendants of the ancient Nephites; the philosophy of this is certainly no more incredible than the theory that nearly all of those who embrace the fulness of the Gospel in these the last days are literal descendants of the house of Israel, though mixed up with the Gentiles to such an extent that it would perhaps be impossible through the ordinary method of tracing genealogy to prove this. So also with these white Zunis, whose parents in all instances were Indians of the ordinary

hue, and whose children again are like the other Indian children in the village as to the tint of their skins. But this does not destroy the theory advanced by Elder Baker and other Elders in the Church, nor those advocated by many scientific men of the age to the effect that the color of another race, though hid for generations through repeated intermarriage, may occasionally assert itself in a perfect type, when its existence was barely known.

While staying in the village last night we were invited by the governor to attend a dance of the young people; there were in fact three dances; but the governor assured us that the one he took us to represented the "better blood" or the "aristocracy" of the village. After waiting till our patience was almost exhausted a young Indian with a drum at length appeared; and after waiting another half hour or more, he commenced to beat his drum, very gently at first, but as he proceeded he hit it harder and harder; then the older Indians began to sing, keeping time with the drum. At first they sang in an undertone; then in a more audible manner, and at length they introduced their full volume of voice. Next the young men began to dress—or undress—for the ball; I shall not attempt to describe their attire; but suffice it to say that they at last placed themselves to the number of twenty-eight on the flag stone floor in two rows assuming a position somewhat similar to that of our more civilized white dancers when they are preparing to dance Scotch Reel or kindred figures. But as yet there were no women on the floor; the men stood there alone a long time waiting for the other half of the participants of the intended dance to get ready. Nothing is done in a hurry by these Indians. In the mean time the young women were preparing their toilet in the same room and at length marched up in single file and took their position between the men without saying a word. Whether they chose their partners right there and then or whether it was understood beforehand as to who the respective women were going to dance side by side of, our Indian interpreter was unable to tell, or at least we could not make him understand sufficient to give us the desired explanation. It was perhaps fully three hours after the young man first began to beat his drum that the dancing proper commenced; apparently it took them that long to get up sufficient steam or ambition to step forth. And then the whole movement amounted simply to what we would call a plain "balance all" or stepping to music, while turning to the right and then to the left; now facing partners (if such they could be called; for it was impossible to tell who were partners), and then facing the ladies on the other side. But there was no swinging of partners, nor did the men touch the women throughout the whole performance, save for an accidental touch of the elbows in turning around or in moving slowly from one end of the hall to the other which was done several times during the exercises. The men danced in their moccasins, while the women were barefooted. The men danced holding a gourd in the right hand and a feather in the left; the women, while dancing, held a feather in each hand. Though the music consisted of nothing more than the beating