

PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

Vol. XVIII.]

TORONTO, DECEMBER 31, 1898.

[No. 33.]

AMONG THE ZUNI.

Among the most striking objects of interest in the National Museum at Washington are a number of models of the structures of the Zuni people of Pueblo and elsewhere in New Mexico. Comparatively little was known of their inhabitants till Mr. Frank Cushing, a gentleman on the scientific staff of the Smithsonian Institute at Washington, made a tour of exploration among them. He lived for some months in their houses, gained their confidence, learned their language, and published in *The Century* an interesting account of his adventures among the Zuni. Their villages seem like one vast continuous structure, and are thus described by Mr. Cushing:



AMONG THE ZUNI.

"Imagine," he says, "numerous long, box-shaped adobe (sun-dried brick) ranches connected with one another, in extended rows and squares, with others piled upon them lengthways and crossways, in two, three, even six stories, each receding from the one below it, like the steps of a broken stair-flight—as if it were a gigantic pyramidal mud honeycomb with far outstretching base—and you can gain a fair conception of the architecture of the Zuni. Everywhere this structure bristled with ladder-poles, chimneys and rafters. The ladders were long and heavy, and leaned at all angles against the roofs. The chimneys were made of bottomless earthen pots set one upon the other, and cemented with mud. Wonderfully like the holes of an ant-hill seemed the little windows and doorways which everywhere pierced the walls of this gigantic habitation; and like ant-hills themselves seemed the curious little round-capped ovens

which stood here and there along these walls or on the terraced edges."

The Zuni are an Indian tribe of a considerable degree of civilization. They cultivate the soil with a remarkable success and keep in corrals or stock-yards of cedar posts and sticks a quantity of sheep and cattle, and raise poultry.

The bird's-eye view of the village from the topmost story is thus described: "Spread out below were the blocks of smoothly plastered, flat-roofed adobe houses, red and yellow as the miles of plain from which they rose, pierced by many a black sky-hole, and ladder-poles, and smoke-bannered chimneys were everywhere to be seen. The whole mass was threaded through and through by narrow, often crooked, passage-ways or streets, some like tunnels, leading under the houses from court to court, or street to street. All over the terraces were women, some busy in the alleys

or at the corners below husking great heaps of many-coloured corn, buried to their bushy black bare heads in the golden husks, while children romped in and out, over and under the flaky piles. Others, bringing the grain up the ladders in blankets strapped over their foreheads, spread it out on the terraced roofs to dry. Many in little groups were cutting up peaches, placing them upon squares of white cloth, or slicing pumpkins into long spiral ropes. In one place a woman was gracefully decorating some newly-made jars with heaps of the rude but exquisite bric-a-brac scattered around her—while over, in a convenient shadow, sat an old blind man, busy spinning on his knee with a quaint bobbin-shaped spindle.

whorl." The Zuni are especially skilful in the manufacture of earthenware. The shapes of their pottery are graceful, and the decorative designs with which they are ornamented are particularly elegant. They are well-burned in kilns made for the purpose. The character of some of these will be observed in our engraving.

In order to study their manners, customs, and institutions, Mr. Cushing took up his abode among them for some time, and was on the whole treated with much kindness. They were much averse, however, to have him sketch their portraits, as they conceived that some disastrous effect would result therefrom. When sketching some of their strange dances and religious ceremonies, a good deal of opposition, not without some show of violence, was exhibited. For the feasts accompanying these religious rites great preparations were made. "Oxen," says Mr. Cushing, "were slaughtered by the dozen, and sheep by the hundred." The dancers wore hideous masks in the shape of the heads of hogs and other animals.

The superior intelligence of these people warrants the opinion that they would well repay missionary effort for their conversion to Christian civilization.

Mr. Cushing lived among them long enough to study their strange habits and to win their confidence. Then a few of them accompanied him on his journey home, allowed people to look at them, and carried back some water from the Atlantic Ocean for a strange rite of their own.

The rooms are large, as shown in our engraving; the walls whitewashed and the floor of plastered mud. Their water jars are finely decorated. They show such taste and skill in their pottery that if they lived in the north we should call them "china crazed." The women in the left-hand corner of the cut are grinding corn, and the string of dried fruit upon the wall opposite is probably of peaches, of which they have a great abundance.

In contrast with these comparatively civilized Zuni, we give a cut of the half-naked India of Arizona, and of the scarcely more civilized Mexican, their southern neighbours.

NEW YEAR'S THOUGHT.

It was New Year's morning, and the snow that had been falling fast all night lay thick and white on the streets. Merry sleigh bells rang out their "Happy New Year" bright faces passed and repassed, joyous laughter chimed in with the glad day, and as I gazed out from my window upon the passing crowd, I could not help comparing with the snow that was fresh in the morning, but trodden under foot ere nightfall: I thought "How many of those merry voices will be smothered in drink, and what a heart-burden there will be carried to many a father and mother! It makes one shudder to think of the sin committed at the beginning of the New Year—the time for good re-

solutions, and the day to put them into practice. How freely the wine flows! and how few young men resist the tempter in the form of a handsome lady, who says, "Just one glass in my honour! And fast on to that glass follows many glasses, until the glorious New Year becomes a blank to them.

Oh, why is the woman so often the tempter! She who was made the man's helpmeet, but who, too often, proves his curse. Oh! you tempters, think of the end, think of what you are doing against your God, yourself, and the world, think of the homes you are helping to blight, and henceforth be a blessing to your sex, and never curse your high position of womanhood by using it to help the devil in his work. Rather help every one to keep good resolutions made on the coming of the New Year and let your merry voice and bright eyes and happy encouraging words be the only stimulants offered by you on New Year's Day.



ARIZONA INDIAN.



TYPICAL MEXICAN.