

MY WIFE AND I.

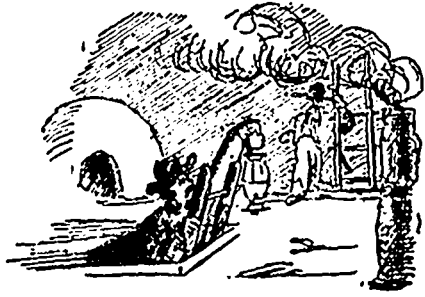
(Continued from Feb. No.)

THE following are some further extracts from Mr. Wilson's manuscript, describing his visit to the Zuni Indians in New Mexico:—

Along the side of the room opposite to the fire was a long string of sixteen men and youths all stark naked except for a covering over the loins, their hair tied up in knots behind, and shell and coral necklaces on their necks, silver bracelets on their wrists, their skins all glistening wet with the excessive exercise in which they were engaged. They were placed in single file one after the other, and all kept time with their hands and feet: they had turtle-shell rattles attached to the backs of their legs and gourd rattles in their right hands, and they stamped the adobe floor in a quick, impatient manner, first with one foot then with the other, and swung their arms first one up then the other, keeping time with the wild Indian song which both they and the men in the corner were excitedly chanting. . . . People have said that the Zuni Indians are not Indians at all, that they are a distinct and superior race; but after witnessing this scene and hearing their wild music, so wonderfully similar in its notes and rhythm to that which I have heard repeatedly among the wild tribes of the North-west, I could have no doubt at all but that the Zuni people are North American Indians just as much as the Ojibways or Blackfeet. We stayed only a short time in this house and then climbed the ladder and went to another. Seven new houses have been built in Zuni during the year, and these dances are held for the purpose of consecrating them. There is no fun or nonsense about these performances and no laughing—they are religious dances performed for a religious purpose.

These Zuni Indians certainly seemed very friendly and hospitable. What more beautiful and graceful way of receiving a stranger could be conceived than to take his hand, shake it kindly and smilingly, then lift the hand that has held the strangers' to the lips and draw in the breath? I noticed my new found friends of Zuni doing this, so of course I did the same. I was struck too, by the reverent way they approached, one by one, a heathen shrine which had been erected at the end of the room, muttered some words of prayer or address to their unseen God, then put out their hands, grasped the air in front of the shrine, raised their hands to their lips, and drew in the breath. These people certainly seemed to be in earnest about their religion, worthless though it may be, —far more in earnest than are the great majority of professed Christians.

I wondered why people all had their houses flat-roofed in New Mexico. At first I did not like to display my ignorance by asking. (I was sitting at breakfast in a flat-roofed adobe house belonging



to the "Hemenway archaeological expedition," near Zuni.) Of course there was some good scientific reason which I ought to know, which probably every educated person who had read books did know, except myself. I pondered and I thought, but I thought in vain. At length I blurted out, "Why do you have flat roofs?" I expected every one would look at me in disdain, and that the youngest of the party would reply in lofty manner and set me down as an utter ignoramus. I was genuinely surprised that none of the party could give me any reason whatever for the roofs being flat except that 'it was cheap.'

After breakfast I went with Mr. G. (one of the expedition) over to Zuni. It was day light now, and I could see what the place was like. There was the muddy little stream about ten inches deep which they call the Zuni river flowing or rather muddling along just below our camp ground; there was the string of waggons by which we had crossed in the dark the night before; and there upon the opposite bank were the adobe walls of Zuni, with its 1,600 inhabitants,—five tiers of reddish grey terraces rising in irregular order one above another, and bristling up towards the sky, were the upper ends of ladders, some short, some long, by which the Zunians mount from their squares and courts to their dwellings up above. I imagined the tower of Babel must have been built something after this plan. Mr. G. and myself plodded through the snow and slush, crossed the wagon bridge, mounted the muddy bank, entered the muddy town; the streets through which we wended our way were narrow and intricate, and each one had its complement of children, "burros" (donkeys) and dogs. The first person I was introduced to was the ex-governor, Politawa, who sheltered and befriended Mr. Frank Cushing at the time of his visit to Zuni six or seven years ago, described by him so graphically in the pages of the *Century*. Politawa had a kind, pleasant face, he shook my hand warmly, then lifted his own to his lips and drew in his breath and I did the same. Then we went to Mr. Graham's store. Mr. Graham is a white man and has a store in Zuni,—one of the low, small windowed, adobe houses, for which he pays rent. At Graham's store I made a purchase. It was a raw goat's skin—from a goat just killed. The skin was cut in two pieces and given to an Indian, and the Indian was instructed