

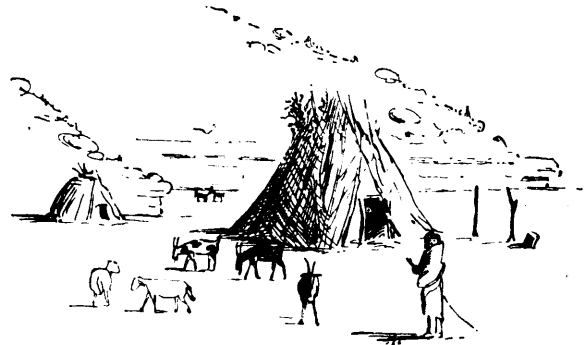
work if a white person will teach them his names for familiar objects, and are delighted if their tutor will ask for similar instruction in their own tongue. The Navajoes are a robust, hardy set of people; they pride themselves in their utter disregard of cold; the young men delight to run foot races over the snow in winter time in a perfectly nude state. It is a universal custom among Navajo mothers to plunge their new born infant into the nearest stream on the very day of its birth and to repeat the operation daily for many months. It is done simply to inure the infant to hardships which cold might inflict in after life. The presence of ice on the water does not by any means cause a postponement of this ceremony, unless it may be for such time only as is required to make an opening sufficiently large to permit of the immersion.

It is sad to think that these people, so many thousands in number, are still allowed to remain comparatively untaught and uncared for as regards their spiritual interests. In a list of "Sixty-six Indian Tribes still without Missionaries," published by "The Women's National Indian Association," in November, 1886, appears the tribe of Navajoes, 18,000 in number. They have at present a Government Indian School with an average attendance of from 30 to 40, but beyond this, little seems to be done.

As regards their own creed, they say that they came originally out of the earth. The place where they came out they call Hadji'nai. Some of their traditions say it was in the mountains of Southern Utah, others, in the North-west. Men and women they say, were made together, but afterwards separated—the women crossing to the further bank of a broad river. After many years they besought the men to take them back. In the underworld were floods forcing the people to escape through the roof, which was effected by means of a reed called *tlo'-ka*. The six sacred mountains of the region in which they now live, they say, were produced by earth brought up by the first man from the underworld. The beaver, badger, mole and swan are looked upon as sacred creatures, and figure largely in their myths. The earth is not a solid, but a cubical shell, inclosing four others, and perhaps many more successive shells. The persons who existed on one of these spheres in earlier times were all genii or deities; animals had, however, been created; they were made from clay. The deities came together and built the first hut; it was made in the form of a cone, and its shape is still preserved in the Navajo "hogan." The sun they say, is the reflection from an immense shield on the arm of a man

who is continually riding a white horse in the heavens. Night comes on when the rider returns to his starting point after having reached the end of the earth. When the reverse side of the shield is seen it is the moon. Anything that they hold in superstitious dread, they call "chindy." A tree struck by lightning is "chindy," and they will freeze rather than use the wood to light a fire. A bear's dead body is "chindy" and must not be touched.

The Navajo native dwelling is of very rough construction, and bears the name of "*hogan*" (pronounced *hohran*). It is a beehive-shaped or conical structure, of sticks, turf and earth. At a distance it looks like a mere heap of rubbish; but on nearer approach one sees that there is some method in its construction. The author en-



NAVAJO "HOGAN."

tered one of them on his recent visit to New Mexico, and made the following notes: The interior was about 5 feet 6 inches in height, and about 10 feet in diameter; two upright cedar posts, each with a crook at the top and a cross piece between them resting on the crooks, formed the main support of the building; two other pairs of posts with cross-beams resting on them, but rather lower, were on either side of the first pair. "These six posts with their three cross pieces formed the skeleton or frame work over which the hogan was built; sticks and brush laid flat on the top of the frame formed the roof, split cedar and piñon logs placed upright and leaning inward against the central frame work, formed the sides; then the whole was covered up with brush, corn stalks, stones and dirt. The floor was of mud; a fire was made in the centre, and the smoke escaped through a square hole in the roof. It seemed strange that such a clean intelligent people as the Navajoes should live in such hovels, and especially so when their persons, and even the bridles and trappings of their horses, are literally loaded with costly silver ornaments.