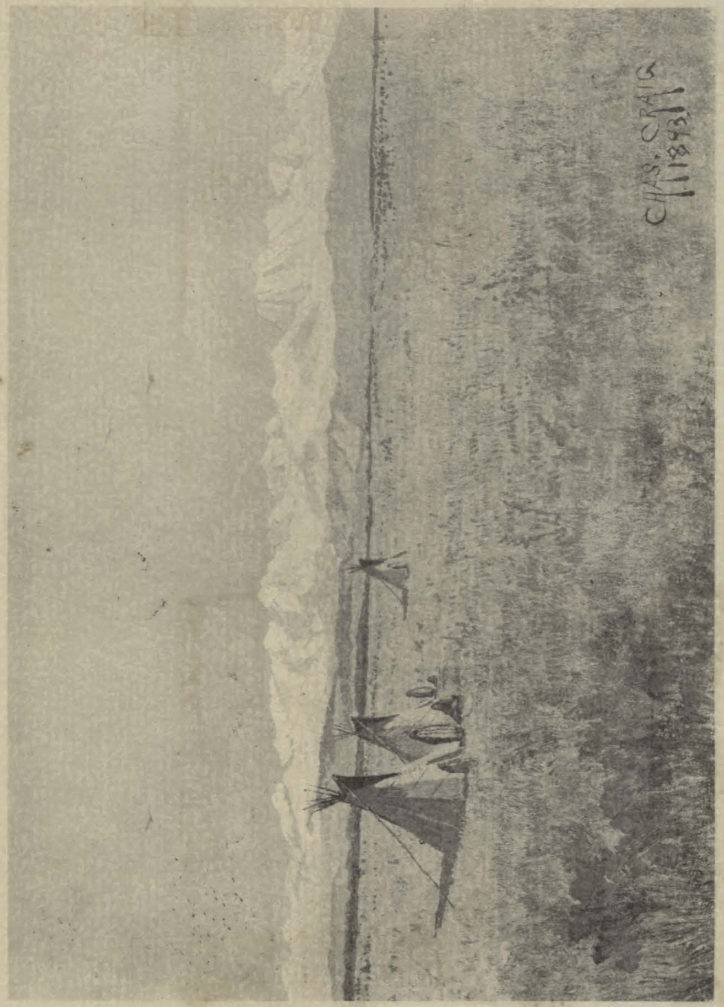

A PORTION OF THE SOUTHERN UTE RESERVATION

ISBN 0-89646-067-3

THE SOUTHERN UTE INDIANS OF EARLY COLORADO Reed: OUTBOOKS

THE SOUTHERN UTE INDIANS OF EARLY COLORADO

BY VERNER Z. REED.

An early account of the original inhabitants of southwestern Colorado.

THE SOUTHERN UTE INDIANS OF EARLY COLORADO

by Verner Z. Reed

EDITOR'S PREFACE

WHEN author Reed had this account published in 1893 — now about a century ago — the coercion of the American Indian to retire to restricted reservations had just been completed. The cultural shock of the transition to this new life style — still so troublesome to the tribes — had just begun. And it had begun later for the Utes than for most of the original nations. Consequently, ancient traditions were still much remembered and aboriginal means of living still much in use, and both figure prominently in this early article.

We are told, for instance, of face painting, of the nomadic life style, of the matriarchial lineage of families, of medicine men, of wars with other tribes, of courtship and family customs, of religion, and of the variance between Indian custom and white man's law.

Of course, our author, not being a Southern Ute, cannot represent the Indian view perfectly. Occasionally he seems almost to be making value judgements comparing Indians to what whites were *supposed* to be at the time. Likely, a comparison to what whites were *actually* at this time of the American frontier would have shown the Indian more stable and of higher moral character and responsibility. Perhaps the same would still be true today.

It is thus dangerous and misleading to judge one culture against another, yet such a writing technique is quite helpful — at the least it is quite human — if one is to understand the similarities and differences of the brother races. Thus, it is hoped that readers today will keep an open mind and take in historic perspective any observations that our author made in 1893, but which would be inappropriate today. We think that in such a context the material will still be useful — even helpful — in understanding the Southern Utes, for there is not much other published information on this interesting people.

This material first appeared in *The Californian Illustrated Magazine* for 1893, and the illustrations accompanied the original article. So far as we know, the writing has never before been reprinted, and thus we are hopeful that its reissue now will help all to appreciate the heritage of the American Indian better, and in particular this small but interesting tribe of Southern ute people who were lucky enough to have resided in one of the most magnificent spots of the American continent.

William R. Jones.

A UTE COUNCIL FIRE.

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THE SOUTHERN UTE INDIANS OF EARLY COLORADO

by Verner Z. Reed

IN an older time the Ute, or Utah tribes of Indians, roamed over the mountain ranges of all of Colorado, Northern New Mexico and a portion of Utah. They have always been mountain dwellers, but they often made incursions to the plains to hunt buffalo and deer, or to fight their hereditary enemies, the Comanches, Kiowas and Arapahoes. It is not many years since the white people first began to colonize the lands of the Utes, and among the Uncompahgre, Uintah and Southern Ute tribes are many men not yet old, who have lived lives as wild as the lives of their ancestors before the discovery of America. But the white men came rapidly after they began to come; they coveted the rich valleys in the country of the Utes, and in time the Utes were "corralled" onto reservations, some of which have from time to time been made smaller by government treaty land purchases.

The Utes have ever been brave, fierce, fearless, warlike people; their thoughts were of battles and hunts, and they have not kept pace with some of their cousins of other tribes in the arts of civilization. They are now at a point that is midway between the old era and a new. The days of battles, rapine and pillage are over, but what the new era will be no man can tell. There is little doubt that most of the Utes are yet as savage at heart as were their most bloodthirsty ancestors—Utes of old-time thoughts, customs and desires, but hedged in by the mighty power of the conquering whites, who compel them to live in a different way from that of the free, wild, olden time. They are among the last Indians that civilization has attempted to reach. Civilization has touched most of them not at all, and scratched the others only skin deep, and the Utes are extremely interesting as being among the best examples of the aboriginal tribes of the West who continue to lead lives akin to those of the old days before the white men had come.

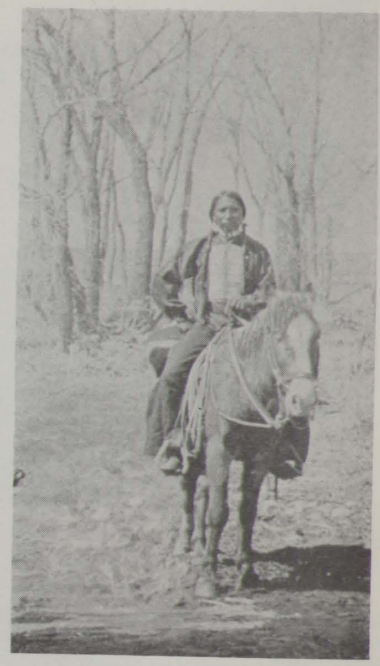
The Utes are divided into three main tribes, the Uncompahgre and Uintah tribes of Utah Territory, and the Southern Utes of Colorado. At one time all three of the main tribes acknowledged the authority of a common head chief, although each tribe had its own sub-head chief. Ouray was the last chief to hold sway over all the Utes, and since his death the three main tribes have maintained entirely separate organizations.

In the extreme southwestern corner of Colorado, in the picturesque "Silver

San Juan," a country reached only by crossing over the tops of towering mountain ranges, is the reservation of the Southern Utes, the only Indians now remaining in Colorado. The reservation is about fifteen and one-half miles wide from north to south, and one hundred and twenty miles long from east to west. It comprises a series of fertile valleys watered by streams that trend to the southwest and flow through the San Juan into the Rio Colorado, and whose waters in time enter the Pacific Ocean. The reservation contains valleys, mesas and mountains, and is suitable for hunting and fishing, or for farming. To the east the Conejos range of mountains shuts out the wide world; to the north and northwest the white summits of the La Plata and Needle mountains rise to the line of perpetual snow; and to the south and southwest is the great desert country that borders the land of the Navajo. The valleys in the reservation lie between high mesa walls that in many places rise almost as high as mountains, and between the valleys are high table lands and foothills, covered with sage brush, cactus, yucca, and clumps and forests of scrub oak, piñon and pine. The streams, among which are the Rio de Pinos, Rio Florida, and the Las Animas, carry great quantities of the purest melted snow water, and are capable of irrigating large areas of the richest and most productive land in the West. The altitude averages six thousand feet; the climate is generally equable and mild; there is a little snow, not a great deal of rain, and a vast amount of sunshine.

UTE INDIAN WAR DANCE COSTUME.

The Southern Ute tribe was formed by the union of three tribes or clans, viz: the Weeminuchees, the Moaches and the Capotas. The Weeminuchees have always lived on or near the land now comprised in the reservation; the other tribes, or clans, were removed there about sixteen years ago. The government of the tribe is graded as follows: head chief of the tribe; chiefs of clans or sub-tribes; head men of bands. At the present time Ignacio, "the living good Indian," is head chief of the tribe, and also chief of the Weeminuchee clan, the largest of the sub-tribes. Buckskin Charley, whose original name was Horned Toad, is chief of the Moache clan, and Sevaro is chief of the Capota clan. The clans are subdivided into bands, each band numbering from four to ten men, and being governed by a head man or sub-chief. It will thus be seen that a common citizen in Uteland owes allegiance first to the head chief of the tribe, then to the chief of his clan, and lastly and leastly to the head man of his band. There is also a war chief whose authority in time of war would transcend that of the head chief. Buckskin Charley, who did hard fighting with other tribes before the days of railroads and white settlers, is war chief of the tribe, and it is believed that in the event of a serious emergency he would also hold that office over the two other main Ute tribes, the Uintahs and Uncompahgres of Utah. The sway of the chiefs is not tyrannical or severe, but it is almost absolute, and their subjects yield ready obedience to orders, as a bullet is the penalty of serious disobedience. Tribal law attaches no emoluments to the office of chief, but it is the custom for the chiefs to have first choice of such good things that come the way of the tribe.

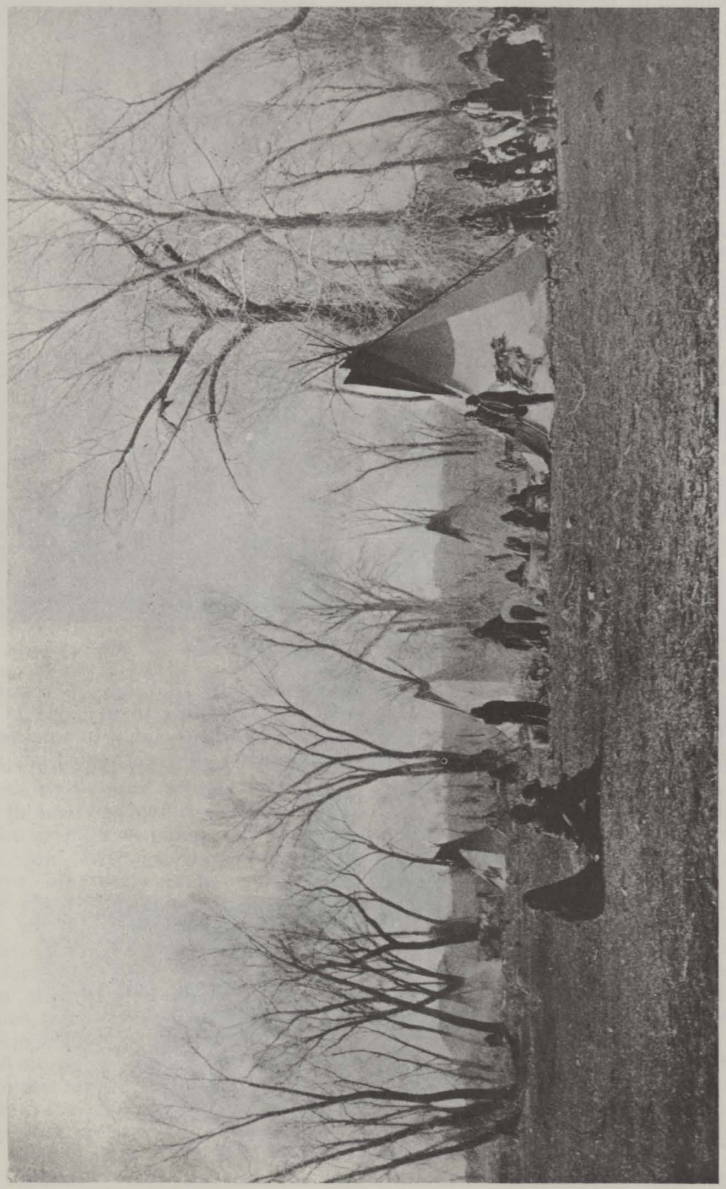


MOUNTED UTE.

At the census of 1892 there were 986 members of the Southern Ute tribe, of which 489 were males, and 497 females. The census stated that there were 425 families, but that is far from being correct, owing to the fact that the Indians have not a good conception of the meaning of the word "family," and made many erroneous statements. Many single families were numbered as three or four families. Many men with wives were listed alone, the man being classed as a family, his wife and children as another. It is rather difficult to determine what constitutes a Ute family, and the census statistics regarding families are almost without value.

Of the sub-tribes the Weeminuchees numbered 550 members, the Moaches 270 members, and the Capotas 166 members. There were 290 males over eighteen years of age and 199 under that age. Of the females there were 305 over sixteen years of age and 192 under that age. The census of 1893 will show an increase in the number of all the clans, the total population being now estimated at 1060

UTE BOYS ON HORSEBACK.



INDIAN CAMP.

UTE FAMILY.

people. The tribe has been increasing in numbers for several years, the increase being attributable to the absence of warfare, to the presence of an American physician, and to a life of lesser hardship than was known in the old era of battles.

The average life of the men is about twenty-five years, that of the women somewhat less, on account of their harder work and greater exposure; but some of the women attain great ages, the oldest person on the reservation being a woman ninety-three years old. Any noticeable increase in the population of the tribe is prevented owing to the fact that when twins are born only one is allowed to live, and because children born deformed are not allowed to grow up. The superfluous twins and deformed children are carried to exposed places in the forest and allowed to die from neglect. It would seem more merciful to kill them by a less lingering and painful process, but the manner of their taking off is according to Indian ideas of right. It is doubtful whether there are any Indian ideas of mercy. If twins should be one of either sex the male is reared, if they should be both of one sex the healthiest and most promising one is reared.

The Ute men are generally well formed and agile, and possess great endurance. They are quite strong, although their muscles are soft and flexible. Some of them become stout, while others are thin and "wiry." They have prominent noses and ears, high cheek bones, and rather retreating foreheads. They all have long, black, glossy hair, of which they are scrupulously careful. They do not average as tall as white men, although a few of them are over six feet. The women are shorter and stouter than the men. In girlhood and early womanhood they are plump and well-formed, but as they grow older, they become fat, and their busts and hips develop to an unusual size.

UTE INDIANS OF
SOUTHERN COLORADO.

From an Anglo-Saxon point of view the costumes of the Utes are simple and scanty, but they are always picturesque. The clothing is now made chiefly of velvets, calicoes and cotton cloths purchased from agency traders, but is cut after the patterns of the olden time when the materials were the skins of animals killed in the chase. A few of the men wear hats, which are invariably small sombreros. In addition to this the male costume consists of an undershirt of cotton, a long-sleeved overshirt falling to the knees, leggings of cloth or buckskin, a gee-string and moccasins. The overshirt is usually fringed at the neck, cuffs and bottom, and generally the breast piece is made of double thickness. Should the overshirt be of buckskin it is almost invariably painted, yellow being a favorite color. The leggings fit the limbs very close; they reach from the ankle upward to the beginning of the hips, and are fastened to a belt that encircles the body. The same belt to which the leggings are tied holds the "gee-string" in position. This garment is a strip of cloth or buckskin about eight inches wide, and from three to five feet long, that passes between the hips and hangs down in front and behind. The moccasins are almost invariably made of buckskin or elk hide, and are generally beaded. The leggings and shirts are also beaded, and often finely fringed. As an outer garment there is the invariable blanket, which is worn almost constantly, winter and summer. The top of the blanket is passed over one shoulder and under the other, and is fastened around the waist by a belt; over this is worn the invariable cartridge belt and six-shooter, as all the Utes go armed. The Utes do not weave, procuring their blankets from the Navajoes, or from the government traders.

The costume of the women consists of a dress that reaches from the neck to below the knees, leggings that reach from the knees to the ankles, and moccasins. They all wear very wide belts, to which they hang their purses, awls and tools, and as outer garments they wear shawls or blankets. Some of their dresses are made of buckskin, or the tanned skin of wild mountain sheep. These skin dresses are almost always painted, and small bells and rattles are attached to them. They also wear bead jackets, or scarfs, some of which are executed in very good designs.

The men wear a great many ornaments, consisting of ear rings, finger rings, bracelets, armlets, breast plates and hair ornaments. They make very good rings out of German silver and turquoise, and make their own armlets from the same materials. The necklaces and breast plates are made from the teeth of wild animals, or from beads purchased from the Mexicans and traders.

The men take good care of their hair, parting it in the middle and braiding it in two long queues, one of which hangs over either shoulder. These braids are often wrapped in beaver or otter skin, and bear teeth and claws are sometimes tied to them. The women also part their hair in the middle, but do not braid it, cutting it off so that it falls only to the neck. The men wear eagle and crow feathers in their hair, but the women do not.

Both men and women pluck out their eyebrows, and nearly all the men pluck out their scant beards, although an occasional one will indulge in a small mustache. The men paint their faces almost constantly, the women more rarely. On ordinary occasions a man will have his face painted in but one color, but for a dance, a council meeting or a ceremonial occasion of any kind, he will use many different colors and designs. He also paints the front portion of the hair and portions of the clothing. The women paint their clothing but little, and their face painting does not often go beyond round spots on the forehead. The children, especially the boys, begin face painting very young.

CHIEFS OF THE
SOUTHERN UTES.

BEAR DANCE.

UTE WAR DANCE HEADDRESS.

The Utes are a roving people, who dwell in tents and wander up and down their reservation hunting, fishing or visiting, carrying their tents and belongings with them. The government is endeavoring to encourage farming and permanent residence among them, and thirty-two farms are now being worked on the Southern reservation; but when the season of farm work is over, the farmers wander and hunt with their fellows. The government has erected small houses of planks or logs on the farms, but the Indians usually prefer to live in wickiups, as did their forefathers, conical shaped tents, formerly covered with deer skin and buffalo hide, now almost invariably made from canvas supplied by the government. The tent poles are erected something after the soldier fashion of stacking arms, being joined, and often tied, at the top, and over this framework of poles the canvas is stretched. An opening for the escape of smoke is left in the top, and another for ingress and egress in the side, this door-hole being covered with a flap stretched on sticks. A small excavation is made in the center of the wickiup and used for a fire place, the fire being built on the ground. A mat of limbs and small tree branches is built around the fire place, and this mat is covered with blankets and skins that serve as seats during the day and as beds at night. In the wickiup are kept the few utensils used in Ute housekeeping, and here the Ute family rests, eats, cooks, sleeps and receives visits from friends. The women build, and usually own, the wickiups. When the family moves, which is often, the women take down the tents, roll up the canvas and load it on packhorses, tie the ends of the tent-poles to saddles and allow the poles to drag on the ground. They also load the coffee pots, willow water jars, baskets, wooden ladles, blankets and hides onto pack horses, and they and the children ride on top of the packs. The men ride ahead of the cavalcade, and do not usually load goods on their horses. The half-grown boys and girls ride

UTE WAR HEADDRESS.

behind the van and drive the sheep, goats, and extra horses.

The Utes are sometimes polygamous, but not to any great extent, owing to the equal numbers of the sexes. Several men have two wives, and a few have three. All the wives sometimes live in one tent with the husband, but it is customary to have a separate tent for each wife and her children. The men marry at about eighteen years of age, the women from fourteen to sixteen. Courtship is of short duration. A brave, after falling in love with a girl, will don his best clothes and feathers, paint his face in the brightest colors, load himself down with beads and ornaments, and then frequent the wickiup of the family of his inamorata. He will converse volubly with the girl's relatives, but affect a profound indifference toward her, often not noticing her when she speaks to him. She and her friends understand the significance of these tactics, and the man's availability and desirability as a husband are discussed. The girl's parents may endeavor to dissuade her from the proposed alliance, but by long established tribal custom the final decision is in her own hands, and she may marry to suit herself. If a man believes his suit is looked upon with favor, he goes upon a hunt, and returns after he has killed a deer. With the body of the deer slung to his horse he rides to the wickiup where dwells the object of his longing, ties his horse to a tree near the tent, and goes in, often not noticing the girl. If the girl has decided to reject him she pays no heed to him, but if she accepts him she goes out to his horse, waters and feeds it, unstraps the deer and cares for the meat and skin, cooks some of the meat and invites him to partake of it with her, and by so doing she has concluded both the engagement and marriage, for the two will begin living with each other at once, with no further ceremony. The young couple usually begin married life by dwelling in the wickiup of the bride's mother, but after two or three children are born to them, should they live together so long, they will build a wickiup of their own. As soon as married the man joins the clan of the woman and becomes one of the same people as herself, and the children, when born, belong to her clan. In case of divorce the man may return to his own clan, but often does not.

Divorce, or more properly separation, is very common, and may be effected by either the man or the woman. In case of separation each takes his own property, and the wife usually returns to her mother's family, taking her children if they are very young. If the children are almost grown, the sons go with the father and the daughters with the mother. Parents are very affectionate toward their children, but seem to have little regard for children who have left them because of divorce. In some cases the easily made marriages have lasted through life. Ignacio, the head chief, has but one wife. He entertains a great regard for her, and has lived with her for many years. In some cases a man or a woman may have been married as many as two dozen times.

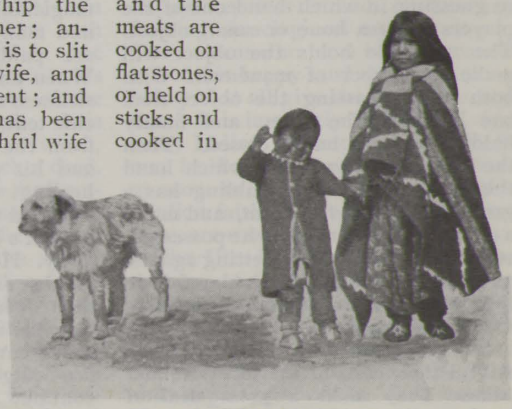
SEVARO, CHIEF OF CAPOTA SUB-TRIBE.

BUCKSKIN CHARLEY.

The morals of the Utes are very lax, as are the morals of almost all wild Indians. A woman is supposed to be true to her master, but the man is free to indulge in as many amours as opportunity and his inclinations will permit, and he will not fall in his wife's estimation thereby. If a woman is unfaithful her husband may adopt one of several courses. The mildest punishment is to kill the favorite horse of the man who has trespassed; another punishment is to whip the woman and separate from her; another, now falling out of use, is to slit the nose of the unfaithful wife, and kill the offending co-respondent; and in rare cases the husband has been known to kill both the unfaithful wife and the offending man. Usually, however, if the wife consorts with another Indian her punishment consists of being beaten or divorced; but if her crime is committed with a negro, a white man, or a Mexican, the punishment is death. No half breed children are allowed to live if it can be avoided, and many an erring woman has seen her child killed, and has lost her own life for bringing into the world a little stranger in whose veins flowed the mixed blood of two races.

The men do the farm work, when any is done, and hunt and fish, and sometimes care for the horses. The women build the wickiups, provide wood, carry water, do the cooking and most of the laborious work. The female children begin to work young, but the boys do little except ride, herd horses, and practice shooting with revolvers, guns, and bows and arrows. The children are as well cared for as their elders, and are greatly loved by their parents. The families are not large, but two or three children being usually born to one mother. The children are not named as soon as born, and when a name is given it is usually hap-hazard, and may be changed several times during a lifetime. The infants are of course placed in *koonuhs*, or pappoose boards, and carried slung over the mother's back.

There is little regularity about the Ute family life. Each one eats when he chooses, sleeps when he likes, and arises when he pleases. The food consists of beef, coffee, *tortillas*, and wild game. The *tortillas* are cooked by holding them over the fire, and the meats are cooked on flat stones, or held on sticks and cooked in



UTE CHILDREN.

the flame. The cooking utensils are few and crude. Ladles are hewed out of oak knots; willow *ollas*, or water jars, are woven by the women and are very serviceable; drinking cups are made from cow horns that are heated in the fire and then flared; and jars and cups are procured from the Apaches and Pueblo Indians. In eating, the Indians sit upon the ground, and needless to say, they exemplify the old saying that fingers were made before forks. Chunks of cooked meat are usually kept in the wickiups, and any member of the family may eat of it when he chooses. They retire to bed early, and usually sleep late. An entire family will sleep in a single wickiup, each one wrapping himself in a blanket or skin, and lying with his feet toward the fire. The intercourse among the members of a family is nearly always pleasant, quarrels are very infrequent, and children are rarely chastised by their parents. Children hold their parents in great respect, and brothers and sisters are usually very affectionate and friendly with each other.

Both men and women are inveterate gamblers, betting on horse races, foot races, on the Mexican game of monte and the native game of *kan–yu–te*. This game, the only native one, is very simple, consisting merely in guessing in which hand one of the players holds a bone or small object. The one who holds the object will make a number of maneuvers with both hands, passing the object from one hand to the other, and finally holding up both hands closed. Then the players will guess in which hand the object is held. Gambling has a great fascination for them, and many a man has lost everything he possessed, even to his clothing, by betting against a run of bad luck. They play fair in their games, and a dishonest player, if discovered, might lose his life.

In handiwork the Utes are less skillful than most of the other frontier tribes. They make a great deal of bead work, consisting of ornaments for leggings, moccasins, dresses and shirts, hat-bands and scarfs. They make saddle bags of buckskin and ornament them profusely with beads. Almost all kinds of clothing are made out of buckskin, sheep skin, and elk hide, and whips and lariats are also manufactured. They make very good arrow quivers from raw hide, and arrows that are identical with those of the Apaches, being three-feathered and pointed with flint or iron. They also make a few bows, but they are not equal to Apache bows. Their willow work consists only of water jars and a few baskets. They make finger rings, ear rings, bracelets and breast-plates, and manufacture some of their paints from plants and minerals. In the past the men were all expert in the use of bows, arrows and spears, but they have lost this skill with the introduction of fire arms.

An important but dangerous occupation among the Utes is that of the *pwu–au–guts*, or medicine men. The medicine men use very little medicine, healing by magic, called *po–o–kan–te*. The healer procures his magic power from dead Indians who visit him at night from the Happy Hunting Grounds, where he goes when he is in trances, and from eagles, bears, and other birds and animals. When a man establishes his reputation as a magician he is believed in implicitly, and many fees of blankets or horses are paid to him for his services. When an Indian is to be treated for sickness a small wickiup, or medicine tent, is erected at some distance from the other tents, and the doctor and his patient repair there for the healing. The medicine man places his head upon the afflicted parts of the patient's body and draws the disease away. He ties a little bundle of herbs to the sick person's garments, and then chants and makes motions over the invalid. The chant is sometimes carried on for hours, a bright fire being built in the tent if it is to continue during the night. The chant is unspeakably weird, and can be heard

UTE MEN AND BOY.

at a long distance. The patient's male friends may visit him in the medicine tent, but in most cases women or strangers are not allowed to come near, it being believed that women exercise a bad influence. The medicine man, as well as the patient, believes fully in the power of magic to heal, but if a cure is not effected the patient and his friends believe that the medicine man is not trying to cure, that he is using his magic for evil purposes, and they may take the unlucky magician's life. I know of two instances where so called bad medicine men, or witches, were killed. In both cases the killing was done with the consent of the chiefs, and in one case a chief held the victim while his throat was cut by the father of the boy who had been bewitched. It is esteemed no crime to kill a witch, and trouble rarely follows such a deed.

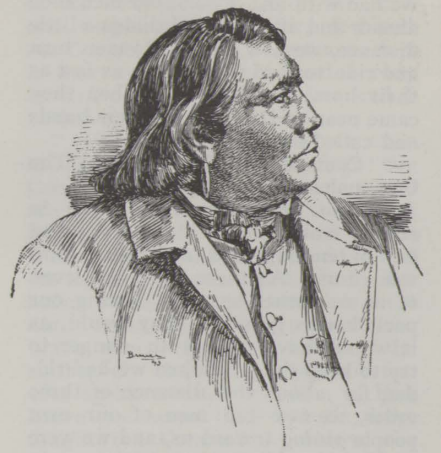
The Utes believe in trance mediumship, in the power of a medium to leave his body and visit the Happy Hunting Grounds, and in the supernatural power and magic of animals and birds. The eagle, in their estimation the king and ruler of all birds, possesses wonderful *po-o-kan-te*, and if an eagle is killed and its heart eaten by a medicine man, they believe the eagle's magic is transferred to him. The eagle's feathers are believed to impart bravery to their wearer, and many fine feather war bonnets have been made by the Utes, a few yet being found among them.

The Utes believe that one God, or Great Spirit, rules all the Indians, and that he desires his children to be mighty hunters and brave warriors. They believe that their code of morals came originally from this Great Spirit, and that war is a good thing in his sight. They believe in a future life, but not in a future punishment. As soon as an Indian dies it is believed that his soul goes at once to the Happy Hunting Grounds, a fair land in the sky where there is no death, where there are towering mountains, broad forests, grassy plains and rivers of sweet waters that flow undiminished forever. In this Happy Hunting Ground each tribe of Indians has its own land, and when an Indian dies he dwells among his own people. In this blessed place there is no sickness, the men are all strong, the women are all beautiful, the horses are all fleet, and existence is one long, happy, endless round of hunting, feasting, dancing and making merry. The Indians who have been in trances tell of this happy land, a strange thing being that all give the same description. It is implicitly believed in, and every Indian, no matter what his life may be, believes that he will go there as soon as he dies. Because of this implicit faith no Ute fears death, and none are cowards.

The Utes have great respect for the memory of the dead, and while they erect no permanent monuments, they can remember for long periods the burial places of friends. Their burial customs vary according to the rank and importance of the dead person. If a witch is killed he may be thrown into any hastily dug hole without ceremony. An ordinary Indian will

THE UTE CHIEF'S WOOING.

be buried with some state. A horse will be killed over his grave in order that he may take it with him to the Happy Hunting Grounds, and a pipe, a jug of water and a few necessaries will be thrown into the grave. His female relations will cut their hair in mourning, and when any of them meet friends for the first time after the burial they will stop and give the death wail, a weird, melancholy cry, whose significance is known to every member of the tribe. If a chief or important personage dies, an elaborate funeral takes place. The women take charge of the funeral ceremonies, and the men, working under their directions, dig a grave, making it about eight feet deep. The grave is then lined with cloths and blankets, and a couch of blankets and robes is built in the grave, a pillow of fine furs being made for the head. The body, dressed in the best finery the Indian owned when alive, is then passed down to men who stand in the grave,



IGNACIO, HEAD CHIEF OF SOUTHERN UTES.

and is placed in an easy reclining position. Tobacco, playing cards, money, meat, fruits, saddles, revolvers and a jug of water are then placed in the grave for the dead man to take with him on his journey to the Happy Hunting Grounds. Rude timbers are then placed in the grave above the body, tanned skins or canvas are fastened to them, and then a wickiup is built over all. Six or seven horses are then killed for the use of the dead man's spirit, and sometimes the wickiup is burned down.

Five dances are numbered in the Ute catalogue, each of which has a sacred or mystic significance, although most of them are indulged in on festal occasions as well. The Dog Dance is danced by men only, being a kind of war dance. The Tea Dance, is danced by men and women, and the Ghost Dance, similar to the Sioux dance of the same name, is danced by both sexes. The Lame Horse Dance, is exclusively for women, and the Bear Dance for both men and women. The Bear Dance is given by some one of the main Ute tribes once each year, and is for the purpose of assisting the bears in the mountains to recover from hibernation, to provide food for the living bears and the spirit bears in the Happy Hunting Grounds, to charm the dancers against danger from bears, and is, besides, a social function. It takes place in March, lasts four days and one night, and is followed by a feast. The dance is held out of doors in a circular enclosure, called *ah-vick-wak-it*, the enclosure being made of green boughs.

No serious effort has been made to convert the Southern Utes to Christianity, and but little progress has been made in educating their young. Several boys and girls have been sent to schools and kept there for a few months at a time, but the best educated among them can only manage to read in the third readers of the public schools. They learn rapidly, taking into consideration the fact that before they can advance they must master a foreign language, but they are not kept long enough in the schools. Parents are very averse to sending their children to the schools, and the school training does but little good to children who are sent back to the old careless tribal life and blanket costume.

The lives of these Indians are very narrow and restricted. They are hemmed in on a narrow reservation, the boundary lines of which are the boundary lines of their world. They have no intellectual pleasures, and aside from hunting, gambling and dancing, they have little to occupy their minds. A few of the more active spirits chafe under their bonds of inertia, but there has been no trouble with the whites for many years. Brawls among themselves occur, but no more frequently than among a similar number of whites; but if they become serious, killing is usually the result. They have but little intercourse with the whites, as they know white men are not well disposed toward them. If they are approached in the right way they are very friendly, and they greatly esteem the friendship of white men whom they like and

respect. They are staunch in friendship, honest and truthful, but bitter and implacable in enmity.

A few of the men can speak some words of English, nearly all speak Spanish. Some speak the Navajo dialect, and many of the women understand Spanish to a certain degree, although few of them speak a word of English. Their own dialect is rather more harsh than other Indian dialects. There are comparatively few words in their language, but it is difficult to master, as a word may have many different meanings, according to the way it is inflected. They have a system of notation running to one hundred. After counting to that number they begin at one again, making a mark for each one hundred. Considering the few words at their command, and the meagerness of their language, some of them are very eloquent. The force of the spoken words is greatly enhanced by their intense earnestness when speaking upon serious subjects, by their indescribable dignity, by their sparkling eyes and by their magnificent powers of gesticulation in which they have no superiors. Buckskin Charley, the war chief, who, like many a white man, is painted worse than he is by his enemies, recounted to me the history of his life, speaking in the Ute dialect, his language being translated to me by a competent interpreter. An extract or two may serve to give some idea of Indian thought and eloquence. The first extract from his story is an account of a battle he took part in, and is given almost verbatim as translated.

"In an old time a great road came from the States to the city of Santa Fe. On the east side of that road, away on the wide plains, I and six other Utes went once to hunt buffalo. We killed great numbers of buffalo, and about the middle of one day we packed our meat and hides onto pack horses and started for home, wanting to reach our camp because we had used all the water we had with us. Two of our men rode ahead, and after we had ridden a little distance, we saw those two men turn and ride toward us, coming as fast as their horses could run. When they came near us they waved their hands and called out:

"'Comanches! Comanches! The Comanches are coming!'

"Then the Comanches came in sight; many, many of them, spread out in ten long rows, and riding hard toward us. As there were but seven of us we turned and ran, letting our pack horses go where they would, as it would have put us in danger to try to keep them. When we had ridden for about the distance of three miles, we saw ten men of our own people riding toward us, and we were very glad, and we ran our horses to meet them. I had but a bow and arrows, but my bow was good and my arrows had points of steel. Only one of all our people had a gun, as that was before the time many Indians had guns. Almost as soon as we reached

KA-RATCH, AN INDIAN POLICEMAN.

our ten friends the Comanches were upon us. There was no place to run, as our horses were tired; we had but one gun; we were very few and the Comanches were very many, but I knew we had to fight, and I rode up and down before the Utes and I said to them:

"'Utes, now has come our time to die. We cannot run from the Comanches. We have but one gun; we are but seventeen men and they are a great many, and they will kill us all. But we will fight bravely, and we will die together like men and Utes. But before we die, many Comanches must die. Come, be of brave hearts, be brave men, and let us fight and die so bravely that our people will forever speak to their children of how brave we were. Our people have fought the Comanches always, the Comanches have killed many of our friends, they have stolen many of our horses, they have taken many of our women, and now before we die let every man pay off his debt to the Comanches for the wrongs they have done us. When the Comanches kill one of us, then let us try to kill three Comanches. When we are all killed but two, let those two stand side by side and fight. And when the Utes are all killed but one, let that last one die killing Comanches. If the Comanches kill your horse from under you, stand on the ground and fight; if they break one of your legs, stand on the other leg and fight; if they break both your legs, lie on the ground and kill Comanches until you are too weak to put an arrow to your bow. Come, be brave, let us fight like Utes!'

"Then were my men of good hearts—they were Utes, they were brave, and I had cheered them although I was not yet a chief. Then the chief who was with us told me to command the fight. We could not live always, we must die some time, and I believed that in that fight we would all die, but no fear was in my heart, nor has fear ever been in my heart.

"Then the Comanches came close to us, and they rode up and down before us, calling to us and telling us our time had come to die. Then they shot a great volley at us, and in less than the beating of a heart we had shot back at them, and all the time we were very close together. Their first shots killed one of our horses, and their next shots killed one of our men who was a good friend to me, and then we called out to them:

"'You Comanche dogs, you eaters of dogs, we will kill you all!'

"Then the fight was fast and hard and hot, and we fought for many hours, fighting until the sun was almost gone. My men fought like men who fear nothing, and they were so brave and so mad with anger that the great band of Comanches became afraid, and after we had killed some of them they turned and ran from us like cowards. We were brave men, we had good *po-o-kan-te*, and so well did we fight that but one of us was killed, although more were hurt.

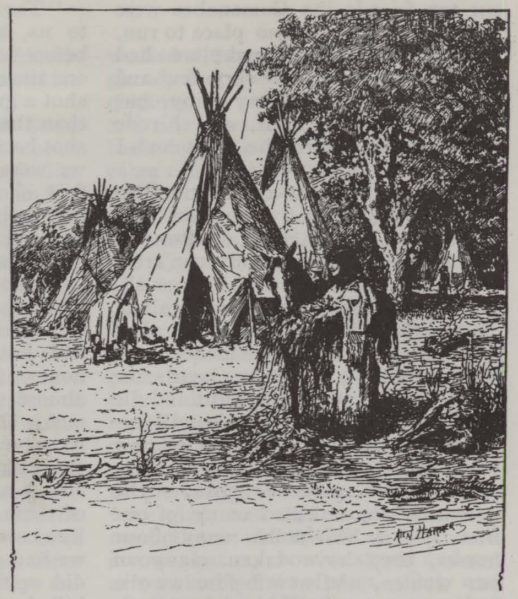
"When the fight was over we were worn out, for we had had no water all day. We tied our horses to pegs and we threw ourselves on the ground and slept until the sun came up, and then we buried our dead friend and killed a horse over his grave, so that he might have a horse in the Happy Hunting Grounds.

"Then we rode in sorrow to our camp, and our people grieved because one of us was dead, and the women relations of the dead man cut off their hair and wailed in sorrow for many days, and all our men met together and swore to kill any Comanches they might meet."

The following extracts from the chief's conversations are inserted here because they throw some light upon the relations of the white and red races, viewed from an Indian's standpoint.

"The way the times are now has made me many troubled thoughts. I am now too old to learn like the white men, and I was not born soon

enough to live out all my life like the Utes of the old time lived. I once thought the white people were very bad people and that they did much wrong; and the whites thought the Indians were very bad people and did much wrong. But I think different now, for I understand more of the laws that came from the God. Long, long time ago our god put us on earth and told us to fight, to hunt, and to take from each other in war. Your god put the Americans on earth to farm, to read in books, and to know many more things than the Indians know. The reason the white men know so much is because their god gave them the power. The Indians did as their god told them; the white men did as their god told them; but the white men did not understand the Indians, and the Indians did not understand the white men, and they were enemies. Your laws say: 'If a man kill he shall be taken;' our laws do not say so. Your laws say one thing, our laws say another thing, and we have not understood each other. But I believe that the white men's laws are good for the white men, and the Indian laws good for the Indian, and that when the white men and the Indians understand more of each other they will no longer hate each other. I believe that when all peoples know what God meant they will all be friends with each other; all Indians,—the Utes, the Navajoes, the Comanches, the Arapahoes—and the Americans, the Mexicans, and the black people."



THE INDIAN MAIDEN'S "YES."

This chief, his words accompanied by the most eloquent gestures, and emphasized with flashing eyes, told me many strange, wild tales of his people, tales of murder and bloodshed, with no idea that the deeds were wrong; but he also told me many thoughts he had upon the future of his people, upon their relations with the whites, and of things a semi-savage Indian would not be supposed to think about.

The Utes are a little nation, and are recognized as such by the government. They have their own rulers, their own priests, their own laws, their simple manufactures and their limited pastimes. They are of interest as being a people of to-day who live according to the savage customs of a thousand years ago. They are almost savage as yet, but within a few years their customs will have undergone many changes, and they will have become parties to the great scheme of American civilization.