

A MAID OF WOLPAI.

BY

R. W. SHUFELDT, M. D.

(With Plate I.)

With the present paper is presented an excellent picture of a girl about 15 years of age, belonging to the pueblo of Wolpai in north-western Arizona. She is in her everyday costume, and was photographed on one of the streets of her native city. At her hand are several pieces of their curious pottery. Nowadays the life led by one of these girls is full of all that is most engaging to the ethnologist. Prayed over at birth, she must have her delicate baby skin well rubbed with fine wood ashes, or else her bones might become loose as she grows older. Very soon she is strapped in her portable cradle, and toted about upon her mother's back, but while in the house must, in the same apparatus, be either stood up against the wall, or even hung up, where for an hour or more together, in either situation, her sole amusement consists in peering about the "living room." As soon as able to walk, this little child is permitted to toddle about everywhere or ascend and descend the house ladder before the second summer has passed over her head. She has no end of toys and other playthings to amuse her. From 3 on to 7, or perhaps a year or two more, her days are spent mostly in romping and playing with the numerous other children in the pueblo. Innocent of all clothing and possessing a wholesome dread of water for any other purpose than to drink, she is at this age as wild as a mountain sheep, and can with almost equal celerity run up and down the steep, rocky crags that so abruptly slope down from the pueblo on all sides save one.

Becoming more sedate after her tenth year, she now assumes the garb of her elder sisters, or the companions of her own sex, and with a keen interest commences her early education in those accomplishments which soon render her a useful member of the tribe. Very soon she is quite familiar with all the duties that pertain to the kitchen, and as Capt. Bourke pointed out, "is duly instructed at this tender age in the fabrication of pottery and basket work." As she grows stronger, the operation of carding and dyeing wool and the weaving of blankets, mantles, petticoats, garters, and sashes of cotton or wool. By the time she is 15, or even at an earlier age, she is considered nubile, and

fairly entered in the matrimonial market. She can bake, sew, dye, card, weave, and spin; her nimble fingers fashion the plastic clays into every shape needed for use or ornament; the tender shoots of the willows or the pliable roots of the grasses respond to her fairy touch and round themselves into beautiful baskets, vivid with coloring and repeating the sacred emblems of the butterfly, deer, or thunder-bird.

In the number of stews, ragouts, and broths which she knows how to compound of the flesh of the kid or sheep, and such vegetables as the onion, bean, and aromatic chile; or in the endless diversity of hominy, mush, pop corn, and piki bread, she will hold her own with the most ingenious American housewife.

The most striking feature about the girl in our plate is the manner in which she does up her hair. This is the custom of the young unmarried women, for the Wolpai maiden considers herself a woman grown at 15. They accomplish this remarkable feat in the toilet by wrapping their hair over some pliable switches of either willow or cottonwood, which latter have been previously wound round with blue yarn to keep them in place. Then next her head, the base of the whorl is also wound around to keep the whorl in proper shape. She also parts her hair in the middle, and wears two heavy locks, one over each temple, which hang down and are cut square off below, on a level with the nostrils. This girl as will be seen has quite a pretty face, and the great whorls of hair over her ears at the side of her head, are after all not so very unbecoming.

The hair is done up with especial care on all gala days, and upon such occasions in Moqui, Bourke says, "the young maidens of the villages were out in full force, decked in the most gorgeous finery of native manufacture, their freshly cleaned tresses of raven black were done up in flat, circular coils one over each ear, the general effect being to make them resemble the Chinese."*

In another place of the same work just quoted (pp. 117, 118), Bourke adds to the above statement that the "Moquis call themselves Hopii or Opii, a term not now in the language of everyday life, but referring in some way to the pueblo custom of banging the hair at the level of the eyebrows. This mode of wearing the hair distinguishes them from the Apaches, Utes, and Navajos, and, as Lochi wished me to bear in mind, showed that they were once 'todos los mismos' with the Mohaves, Yumas, Maricopas, and other bands of Arizona, whose practice of banging the hair is in such curious contrast with the loose, unkempt manner of wearing it peculiar to the Apaches. Now among numerous photographs of girls of Moqui and Wolpai none of them have the hair banged across the level of the eyebrows, but it is invariably arranged

* Snake dance of the Mokis, p. 114. That these coils are flat is an error quite commonly made, and that they are not always so may be seen from the plate in the present paper. All the published figures ever seen by the writer of the young unmarried Moqui women have the coils too small, too flat, and altogether too much like circular disks of wood.

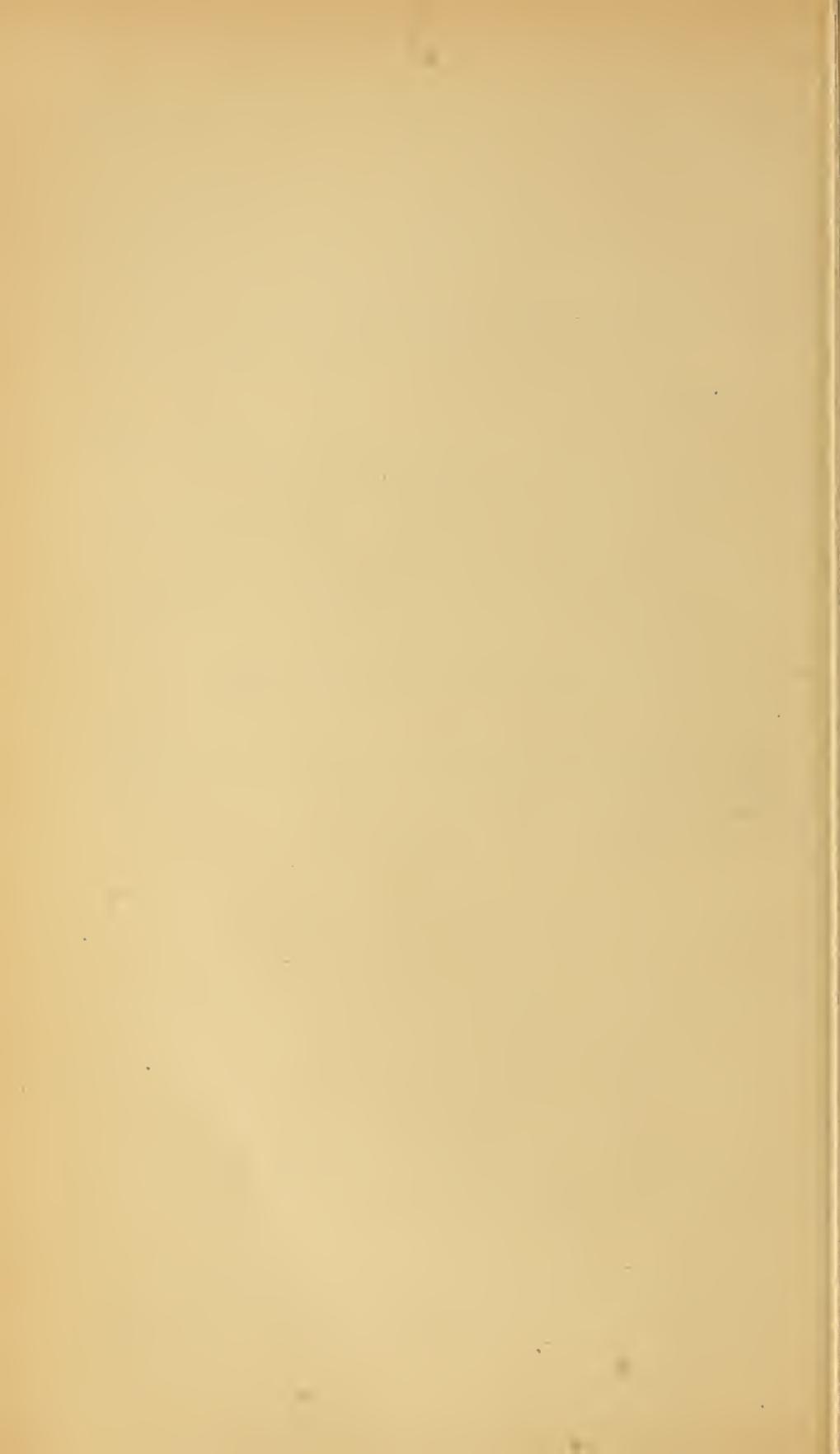
and cut as shown in the plate illustrating this article; moreover, the same remark applies to photographs of groups of these girls taken in the snake dance of August, 1889.

The right is reserved to the girls of all the Moqui pueblos to choose their own husbands and probably also to divorce themselves from the same, in case they discover they have made a mistake in any particular instance. Daughters also inherit their mother's property. After marriage the Wolpai matron ceases to wear her hair in side-whorls, but, parting it in the middle, clubs it behind into a queue much after the fashion of the men. She may or may not bang it in front at the level of the eyes, and as whim seizes her she may occasionally part it to the right or left side.

During the snake dance and in full costume it is the business of these Wolpai maid-servants, as well as the matrons, to sprinkle the corn meal. This they do most effectually on the snakes, on the dancers, on the ground, and indeed in nearly all other directions. They are never allowed, however, to handle the snakes, a privilege enjoyed only by the men.

Monogamy is the rule among the Pueblo Indians, and they do not obtain their wives through purchase. Indeed, in the household, the woman reigns supreme, and the man has but little to say. Among the Zuñis a purchase can not be made within doors unless it is by the consent of the wife, and the same holds true among the Moquis.

Taking it all in all, then, the life of a Wolpai woman is by no means an unhappy one; indeed, from her babyhood to maturity it is filled in with many pleasurable chapters, and no doubt a great deal of this is due to their contented dispositions, and their love of home life, and their untiring industry.





A MAID OF WOLPAI.

