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The Pueblos of New Mexico

THE Pueblo Indians of the Southwest are one of the most widely known primitive peoples in Western civilization. They live in the midst of America, within easy reach of any transcontinental traveller. And they are living after the old native fashion. Their culture has not disintegrated like that of all the Indian communities outside of Arizona and New Mexico. Month by month and year by year, the old dances of the gods are danced in their stone villages, life follows essentially the old routines, and what they have taken from our civilization they have remodelled and subordinated to their own attitudes.

They have a romantic history. All through that part of America which they still inhabit are found the homes of their cultural ancestors, the cliff-dwellings and great planned valley cities of the golden age of the Pueblos. Their unbelievably numerous cities were built in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, but we can follow their history much further back to its simple beginnings in one-room stone houses to each of which an underground ceremonial chamber was attached. These early Pueblo people, however, were not the first who had taken this Southwest desert for their home. An earlier people, the Basket-makers, had lived there so long before that we cannot calculate the period of their occupancy, and they were supplanted, and perhaps largely exterminated, by the early Pueblo people.

The Pueblo culture flourished greatly after it had settled upon its arid plateau. It had brought with it the bow and arrow, a knowledge of stone architecture, and a diversified agriculture. Why it chose for the site of its greatest development the inhospitable, almost waterless valley of the San Juan, which flows into the Colorado River from the