

# A Hopi Ceremonial

By ELSIE CLEWS PARSONS



LORA would not go with me to the Hopi country,—her baby was sick,—but she had the happy idea of giving me the photograph of her Hopi friend as a card of introduction, knowing as well as I how reassuring to any Pueblo Indian on meeting a stranger is the knowledge of having a common friend. Thirty-six miles from Zuñi to Gallup, a hundred odd miles to the first mesa, and at the post-office and store at the foot of the mesa I asked a woman coming out if she happened to know John Kochisi and where he lived. I showed the photograph.

"I am his aunt," said she, interested and smiling, "and this letter is for him. He lives on top of this mesa at Sichumovi."

I invited her into the motor, and we went on up the steep road past the shrine-guarded boundary-line between the Tewa town and the town that for many a generation has harbored Zuñi visitors, Sichumovi.

John Kochisi happened to be sitting at his door. At the end of the room a supper party was gathered in a circle about the loaves and piles of wafer bread and the bowls of mutton stew earned that day at work in the corn-fields of the family. It was mid-June, the corn-planting season not quite concluded, and the working parties of relatives and neighbors were still being called together every four days or so at dates set by the "sun watcher"—dates named after the places where the sun was rising, Grasshopper, Coyote Bitch, Tunneled Rock, and others. How calendary methods vary!

The photograph and Flora's messages were effectual; John had a room at my disposal. It was the same room that Douglas Fairbanks had lived in when he was there a few weeks past, making a film, and I was shown the photographs from the envelop the aunt had just

brought from the post-office—photographs of the slim actor dancing with a portly Hopi matron and winking an eye at the motley crowd of Indian and white lookers-on. The Pueblo Indian is fond of burlesque, his own, but that any Pueblo Indian woman would thus lend herself to the American sense of burlesque was a surprise. Pueblo Indian women, young and old, are shy and reticent. No doubt the dance was a pecuniary transaction, like the photographing by tourists of the Indian pottery-venders at the stations on the Santa Fé railroad; but even so, since Sichumovi was not Albuquerque, the photograph was startling, and on top of my satisfaction at being so advantageously installed for ethnographical pursuit, comically dismaying. Would I have to live down Douglas Fairbanks?

Knowing that host and hostess would want to put my room in order, I walked out to visit Walpi, next door, where the mesa narrows into the long ridge which, seen from below, keeps one guessing where rock ends and house begins. It was the hour when laden donkeys were coming up the trail, to be unpacked and left over night in the little corrals on the edge of the mesa. One of these donkeys was causing irritation to somebody, for as I passed by I heard an angry exclamation. Irritation, plus cruelty, with draft animals is common enough on the part of Pueblo Indians, but the expletive he used and even the loud, angry tone would be novelties at Zuñi. American oaths and American humor! Indeed, the first mesa had been corrupted, just as they told me, by its "snake-dance" visitors. Then in the next few steps toward the eastern edge of the mesa I almost stepped on some green prayer-sticks, duplicates of those I had been studying the winter before in the American Museum, and from the open slab shrine to my right protruded still another type of prayer-stick, the long

willow twig to which the eagle prayer-feathers are fastened that every man makes in his *kiva* for all those at home to pray with during the winter solstice ceremonial. And was not that the skeleton of an eagle over there in the rock crevice, buried ceremonially just as Dr. Fewkes has described?

And I was soon to find that my household was quite as uncontaminated as any Pueblo Indian household I knew anywhere. The singular-looking hoops which hung to a corner of my ceiling, and which I learned were a store-bought machine to teach a child to walk, interfered in no way with original beliefs about hastening the child's development. Here, as at Zuni, a mocking-bird was held to his lips that he might learn readily to talk, and were he sickly, would he not be "given" to some one to sponsor him in later years in his secret society? Besides, in other parts of the roofing prayer-sticks were stuck, sticks made by the war priest to keep the house strong, and just over my American bedstead was fastened to the rafters a *shalako* shrine in which the "two little ones" were a prayer for increase of offspring to the household. The floor, to be sure, had been boarded over, but under the boards there were still other prayer-sticks made for the house when it had been rebuilt to entertain the *shalako*, those masked impersonations of supernatural messengers that the people of Sichumovi alone of all the Pueblo peoples have in common with Zuni.

It was the old story, as old as Spanish occupation, of foreign goods and contrivances fitted into native concepts and habits of mind. Perhaps the most remarkable instance of this process John Kochisi supplied from his personal history. For several years he was a student at Phoenix, and he qualified to graduate with his class, but absolutely refused. Graduation to his Indian way of thinking was an initiation, a rebirth into a new life, the American life, and that break with the old life, "life as a regular Indian," as he put it, John did not wish to make. And so he took what the school could give him, but on his own terms. Last year at Hampton Institute there was also a case of an Indian refusing to graduate, a refusal

interpreted by the school authorities as due to a sense of sin, of unworthiness to receive the certificate of the institution. The complacency of our cultural egoism!

One evening I, too, was given the choice of rebirth into another culture, and, unlike John, I accepted. Perhaps the consequences were less grave, or perhaps the spiritual break with the old had long since been made. At any rate, when our evening visitor suggested to John and me that it might be well, in order to disarm criticism of my presence on the mesa, for me to have my head washed and get a Hopi name, we concurred. Our visitor was a man of prominence, the head man of the winter solstice ceremony, and so frankly it was decided by John and me that he, Sixtaime, should become my "father." The connection was satisfactory to all three of us, to John because, as the neighbors began to take notice of me, their questions also began to be disturbing, particularly as the rumor had unfortunately gone abroad that I had books about the ceremonies; to me because the necessary rite would not only be of interest in itself, but gave promise of future privileges; to Sixtaime because his clan would get a new child, if only a white child.

Early the next morning, but not in accordance with the rule before sunrise, Sixtaime came into my room to fetch me and lead the way across the plaza to his sister's house, a Water clan house. Sleeping pallets had been rolled up and put away, and the household of three generations, mother, daughter, and daughter's husband and children, and two clanswomen from outside were sitting against the wall on box stools and chairs. In the middle of the room was a chair for me, and on the floor near by the large pottery bowl in which my head was to be washed. There was some water in it, and the yucca roots lay at hand.

I sat down, and took out the one hair-pin that held up my hair. Sixtaime talked a little with the others; as I knew English talk was not expected, and any Hopi formulas which might be in order I did not know, I said nothing. Chii, Sixtaime's sister, my aunt to be, left the room to bring in the ear of corn that was to be an essential part of the rite;

then she spread a sheepskin by the bowl, and, kneeling on it, stirred the yucca roots vigorously in the water. The suds mounted, a pretty sight. Chii beckoned me to take her place on the sheepskin. I knelt, facing east, and with the bestalked corn-ear as a dipper Chii put some suds on the top of my head, dabbing twice with the corn-dipper. She did this four times, praying the while. Over against the wall Sixtaime sang a low song, the *asnaya* ritual song of his clan. Now Chii's place on my right was taken by her daughter, Naboi, also, in accordance with Hopi kinship nomenclature, my aunt. The dipping rite was repeated without prayer. It was the turn of Öte, the grandson, a boy of eight, and then of his sister, a year-old baby, whose hand was made to clasp the cornstalk by her mother and directed in the proper way. The baby was followed by Agnes and "Nettie's mother," the two clanswomen from other houses.

My "father," aside from his song, took no part in this washing, nor did the husband of Naboi, who belonged, of course, to another clan; besides, head-washing is always a woman's function. Now I think of it, it is a puzzle why Öte, "my little father," took part. I did not think to ask about it at the time. At Zuñi one might have suspected that the little boy was destined to be a *klathmana*, one who changes his sex because he prefers the work and interests of women; but among the Hopi there are none of these men-women.

The ritual washing over, my aunt proceeded to give my head a thorough washing, also my face. Here I misbehaved, I suspect. The water running down my neck I ignored, but I wiped my eyes. Fortunately, however, not too much, for Chii had now to rub my face with corn-meal, and the skin had to be wet for the meal to stick. With the washing they had washed away my "old name and life." Rubbing on the meal meant I was to start anew; I was being given new life.

Chii rubbed my face and chest, and my right hand she filled with the corn-meal from her small glass bowl. On top of the meal in my hand she laid the ear of corn, stalk outward. "Nettie's mother," who had been the last to en-

gage in the washing rite, now stepped up, knelt by me, took the ear of corn, and with a circular motion waving it four times toward me she said in Hopi, "Talasveñsi, thus named, may you live to be old and your life prosper." She replaced the corn-ear in my hand for the next to use in a similar way. Agnes seemed not to have thought of a name in advance, and she knelt there with bowed head for two or three minutes, trying to think. Finally she thought of Yuyuhuñöma, and pronouncing it, she repeated the formula of blessing. In the reverse order that was being followed it was the baby's turn; but this time the baby was passed over, and the little boy took position, naming me Suñawaimana, Pretty Girl. There was a little laughter over this, but whether the joke was on me or on the little boy I had to guess. To these names, following the ritual, daughter and mother of the house added Kūmaiyaunöma and Kumawaisi.

"Thank you for us all; it is done," said my aunt, and with a smile to each on my part, my "father" led the way back across the plaza and on beyond to the shrine at the edge of the mesa, where live in stone some of the guardians of the town, chiefs, like Mountain Lion or Bear or Sun, who had said of old that they were withdrawing from their disobedient people, to live somewhere else, and yet to live, too, in these stones. "Pray to us, and we shall hear you," they had said. Into this *pahoki*, or place for *paho*, or prayer-sticks, Sixtaime indicated that I was to sprinkle the meal I still held in my hand. Guessing at the correct ritual, I held the meal to my mouth to breathe from, and then with a fourfold sweeping gesture sprinkled it into the shrine. The proper prayer I did not know, so Sixtaime prayed for me as I sprinkled, formulas much like those used in the naming rite; but in this case it is said to be the sun to whom one tells one's name, and from whom one asks for long life and prosperity.

Back in my house,—that is, the house of what would now be considered my own clan, the Mustard clan,—Sixtaime told the household my several names: Talasveñsi, or Corn Pollen; Yuyuhöñ-noma, or Cloud-Covered Rain-Streaks; Suñawaimana; Kūmayaunöma; and

Kümawaisi, the last two names referring each to the corn-meal that is rubbed on the face. Yuyuhuñnöma appeared to appeal to them most; that was the name they thought would "stick." I, too, liked it best. It describes, as one may suppose, the familiar phenomenon of a heavy rain-cloud fringing along its lower edge into slanting streaks of rain, and a phenomenon that is commonly expressed in Pueblo Indian art by the design of a semicircle over parallel straight lines.

For Yuyuhuñnöma and all these other names, I said to John, who was interpreting, I wanted to thank my "father," and I would thank him in Zuñi fashion. So taking his right hand in mine, I raised it toward my mouth, breathing in from it. Without unclasping my hand, my "father" drew it in turn toward his mouth and breathed in. This hand-clasp at Zuñi, and probably elsewhere, is not, directly at least, a gesture of thanks; it serves as a greeting or farewell to priests or doctors. However, knowing the elasticity in application of Pueblo Indian patterns, it occurred to me just then as a suitable expression of feeling on the part of a visitor from Zuñi. Giving thanks at all was an innovation, too, for the thanksgiving was properly the other way around. My "father" and his "sisters" were supposed to give thanks to me for becoming their child; nevertheless, it seemed to me at the moment that some expression of gratitude was due my "father" from me as a white. Too thorough an affect of assimilation is, after all, not acceptable, as I had lately learned from the story about a certain white visitor at Hano whom they had liked very much in the beginning, and "then did n't like any more" because she began to dress as a Hopi girl. Moccasins were all very well, I was told (I was wearing moccasins), but when it came to wheeling the hair, hair-wheels were for Hopi girls, not for white girls.

Well, relevant or not as was my Zuñi hand-clasp, it served to remind Sixtaime of a visit he had once paid Zuñi. He talked about it. Finally he said that now he, too, would give me a name, a Zuñi name, and he took from me the ear of corn and, waving it in front of me, named me in Zuñi Utean E'le, Flower

Girl, a name, as John interpreted, which referred to all the blossoms of Zuñi, the blossom of every plant that grew at Zuñi.

To Zuñi in two days I was scheduled to return. Meanwhile the next day I carried in to Nettie's mother, who was preparing to feed her working party on the return from the fields that afternoon, a basket-placque heaped with corn-meal,—one always did that for one's aunt on such occasions,—and just before leaving the mesa very early in the morning I called on Chii and her household to say good-by. This time we all talked English, fairly fluent English at that. The buggy was driving off when "my little father" came running after us with the present of a little pottery bowl. For some reason the large bowl in which my head had been washed had not been given to me, according to rule, and Sixtaime had been apologetic about the omission; they would repair it, he said, when I came back to them, and this little bowl was, I suppose, an earnest of that expectation. It was a pleasant departure into the translucent desert.

Back in Zuñi I returned John's picture to Flora, telling her the story of my visit, and incidentally showing her the ear of corn which I was to keep as "my mother" until I died. "Yes, we do that, too," said Flora. When he first visited them, John's head had been washed by her household. On that it seemed to occur to her that I might wonder why they had never performed the rite for me, also a stranger and their friend. "But because we are what we are," she said, referring to the high position of her family in the hierarchy, "they would not let us wash the heads of white people—or of Navaho." I was unmerciful.

"The Muki would not wash the head of a Navaho, either," I observed; "but they wash the head of a Melika—as yet."

Flora admired my new Hopi names. Then I told her that I had got besides a Zuñi name—"your own English name in our Zuñi language—Utean E'le, Flower Girl, or Flora. That name came to you from the Romans; it came to me from that Muki man of the Water clan who became my father."



# His Absolute Safety

By SANDRA ALEXANDER

Illustrations by John R. Neill



CYNTHIA WARING opened her eyes as Honora came into the room with her early cup of tea, and stretched her arms high above her head.

"Leave the windows, Honora," she commanded yawningly. "I want to smell it." She turned on her side and looked out through the frame of ramblers, out through the branches of old trees and beyond to the sound, sparkling as only salt-water can on a clear spring morning. She took a deep breath, and closed her eyes to taste it more completely.

Honora put the tray down on a table beside the low bed and fussily made straight a rug. She seemed on the verge of saying something, but Cynthia opened her eyes and voiced it for her.

"It 's good to be back, Honora."

The woman nodded her prim head, with all the privilege of an old servant. Evidently she did not trust herself to speak; and yet emotions were the last things in the world one would have accused Honora of possessing.

"Yes," Cynthia went on lazily; "it is good to be back. The old place has n't changed very much. I think we 'll settle down this time, Honora, for good. That would please you, would n't it?" Still Honora did not speak. Cynthia went on: "Ten years is a long time to be away from home. My conscience hurts me in its sentimental spot; it does, Honora."

"Cook says the Dunlaps still live next door." Honora spoke for the first time that morning.

"The Dunlaps? Yes, of course." There was no need to tell her the Dunlaps still lived next door. How well she knew it!

She drew herself to the side of the bed and took the mules Honora held out to her. She walked over to the window.

No, it had not changed, unless it was more beautiful than she remembered. Had the sound always melted away in the distance like that? And was the shore that marvelous shade of green? She had forgotten. And ten years in one's hardy border did make a difference, of course. The delphiniums were giants. Evidently the people who had taken the house had done themselves rather well as to a gardener.

"Cook says Mrs. Dunlap's death was real sudden," Honora contributed again a little later, as she wielded an expert brush in and out of Cynthia's red hair.

Cynthia bent her head away from the woman's eyes.

"I think I 'll have a blue muslin frock this morning, Honora," she said by way of answer.

"Blue muslin, ma'am!"

The shocked amazement of the woman's tone made Cynthia bite her lip to keep from laughing aloud. She nodded her head at the prim image confronting her in the glass. Honora resumed her brushing.

"We have n't a blue muslin ma'am!"

Cynthia straightened her face.

"Oh, we have n't a blue muslin—not a blue muslin with ribbons? Dear me! Well, we must get one right away. Something about the sound seems to call for it. A white frock will do; and you might hurry, Honora."

A little later she went slowly down the shallow stair and out through the broad front door. The irregular stone terrace, with its tubs of fat hydrangeas and the tightly stretched awnings flapping above, seemed something she had missed for years. It was good to be back. She had been teasing Honora this morning, but she had spoken more truly than she thought. How had she stayed away so long? She stood still and looked at the sound again. The peace and beauty of it made her heart ache. She went on