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MARIA OF SAN ILDEFONSO

A short time ago, I went out to the Pueblo of San Ildefonso to see Maria Martinez, the great potter and my friend of long standing. I was taking with me a large photograph ^{re}production of one of Edward S. Curtis's photographs made in 1905. The subject was a corn dance at San Ildefonso Pueblo. I was making a gift of this print to the People of San Ildefonso, but before I presented this to the Governor, I wanted to see how many of the people in the picture Maria could identify. To my surprise she named at least eight either in the chorus or in the dance itself. Several others ^{people} joined us in looking at ^{the} picture and all were amazed at the ^{small} size of the now great cottonwood tree which grows in the North Plaza of the Pueblo.

Maria and I were sitting on the portal of her son's house. It was a lovely summer day, no wind, when there was a rush of the Pueblo's children running toward the tree to take part in field day event for it was ^TSan Diego Day. The children ^{re} commenced playing games of all sorts, with much laughter as they entered competitive events adding much gaiety and life to the otherwise quiet village.

Maria and I dropped into reminiscence speaking of the many persons both of us had known in the past. She spoke first, and so warmly, of Dr. Kenneth Chapman. This, of-course was as it should be, for not only had she known him since 1908, but he had ^{been} the one to encourage her and her husband to in the pottery making they were undertaking. Maria was shaping the pots and Julian decorating them with sure, skilful designs in a multitude of patterns. This was the beginning of their life long tradition and achievement

in the potters art. Maria spoke of Dr. Chapman's great interest ^{the} in the variety of designs, their perfection as well as the beauty of her pots and bowls and plates. Dr. Chapman's study has finally ^{been} presented in his book San Ildefonso Pottery, published by the School of American Research.

Maria spoke also of Dr. Hewitt, Archaeologist, who made the early excavations at Bandelier. She and Julian used to go there to watch the archaeologists at their work. She also visited them at work at Tsankawi, at Otowi, ^{and} at Puye. She spoke of other archaeologists she had known, Dr. Kidder who worked at Pecos; of Dr. Harrington, of Jess Nusbaum and Dr. Sylvanus Morley. She knew ^{all} ~~these~~ great scientists and remembered them so vividly. She spoke of others, ^{of} Ina Cassidy, of Edith Warner and Mrs. Van Stone who did so much to help with sales of pottery for many Indian Peoples during her many years at the Santa Fe Art Museum. She spoke of Mr. Connell and the Boy's School at Los Alamos, and of the great change at ~~war's~~ beginning when Los Alamos became the great Scientific Laboratory it now is, and of all the secrecy during those war years. She spoke of the many changes in Santa Fe and the ~~surrounding~~ country and of the slow development of education at the Pueblo. She spoke of the degrees which have been conferred on her, one from the University of Colorado, one from ^{New Mexico State University} ~~las Cruces~~. And she laughingly told of a grandchild who asked her how she could have gotten a degree when she had never gone to school. "School?" Her education came from the perfection she had developed in her long life as a potter, a field in which she stands at the highest level as attested by the many medals she has won, the citations she has received, the many trips all over the country where she has demonstrated her skill to the ^d ~~hundreds of~~ people.

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With all the changes, the hustle and bustle of modern life,
the Pueblo of San Ildefonso lies quietly beside the Rio Grande and
the Indian inhabitants who live there generation after generation
^{of them} ~~restfully~~ dignity and their acceptance of life as it comes.

Maria has undergone many hardships which are passed now. She is
eighty five, and when I took my leave, I was refreshed by her presence
aware of the deep richness of her life. She is a beautiful person.

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