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VII.—THE TEJAS: THEIR HABITS, GOVERNMENT, AND SUPERSTITIONS.

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Among the various accounts of the North American Indians none is found dealing with a nation which possessed the distinguishing excellence of having been always friendly to the white man, a people recorded in the diaries of the priests who went among them as courteous and docile and with a natural inclination toward all that was good.

That the historian has neglected the Tejas Indian will be perceived by whomsoever attempts to search for data upon which to build a narrative of these tribes, agricultural in their habits, living in houses, and banded together in a confederation. The contrast they present when compared with "the wild tribes" which surrounded them makes this neglect the more marked, rendering most valuable and important any light which can be thrown upon their peculiar traits, their location, and the boundaries of their domain.

Bancroft, in his *Native Races of the Pacific*, follows the Apaches and Comanches, with their various tribal offshoots, down into Texas, yet does not name the Tejas Indians, although his many other histories mention them constantly. With the object of writing an account which can hereafter be referred to as authority, I have searched out my data in various old manuscripts, diaries, and reports made to the church, corroborating the matter so found by the allusions of many authors scattered through their different works.

The name Tejas had existence long before the time of the generally accepted account of how Texas received its appellation. True, the Indians cried "Tejas! Tejas!" upon seeing De Leon and his soldiers, and Father Manzanet, the priest who accompanied the expedition, says in his narrative that it meant "Friends! friends!" But Salmeron tells us that the

Aixos and their kindred tribes "have much gold, which they call Tejas."¹ So the natives may have intended to convey a very different idea from that with which they are accredited. The origin of the name has not been ascertained, but the first mention of it which I can trace is where it is said that Nuno de Guzman in 1530 had as a slave one of the Tejas Indians.² From that time on every account of every expedition made to the east of the Rio Grande del Norte mentioned them.

Cabeza de Vaca in 1535 passed up through what is now Texas and traversed the very part where the Tejas Indians dwelt. He does not give the names of the tribes in his narrative, translated by Buckingham Smith, but relates many things of the natives with whom he was thrown which apply directly to the Tejas and harmonize entirely with the very full account which I find in the manuscript of Father Francisco de Jesus Maria, translated by Professor Wipprecht, then of the Agricultural and Mechanical College at Bryan, Tex., which translation is now deposited in the library of the State at Austin, its capital.

Bandelier, in his papers of the Archæological Institute, mentions that the Tejas were known to Coronado,³ who journeyed through a part of their country during his expedition in 1540. In 1606 Ormate penetrated to their domain. In 1626 Benevides, writing of what Mother Maria de Jesus Agreda had done among the different nations, speaks of "the Theas Indians," saying that was not their exact name, but it had that sound,⁴ and Manzanet, in his report to Don Carlos de Sigüenza y Congera concerning the Tejas, mentions having a letter in his possession which tells of this.⁵ In 1650 Diego del Castillo penetrated "far beyond the Nueces to the country of the Tejas, where he found pearls;"⁶ and in 1654 a similar expedition went out under Diego del Guadalupe. In 1683 a Jumana Indian from the Nueces came into the mission of El Paso with a request that the friars there would send priests to teach Chris-

¹ Bancroft's Northern Mexican States, page 383.

² Relacion de Castaneda, in Ternaux Compans Voyages, IX, I.

³ "Y otra nacion de gente se llaman los Tejas, todos lobrados los cuerpos y rostros."

⁴ Shea's translation, Lenox Library, New York.

⁵ Wipprecht's translation, State library, Austin, Tex.

⁶ Bancroft's Northern Mexican States. This must have been in the Llano or San Saba River, where pearls are still found.

tianity to his tribe and to the Tejas, giving a report of that province, which was represented "as one of the richest and most fertile in America."¹ Paredes, writing of them in 1686, speaks of their living by agriculture and of their being far superior to the roaming Indians. We now come to the manuscripts of Manzanet, written in 1690, giving an account of receiving reports concerning the Tejas in 1685 and alluding to the work which had already been done among them by Mother Maria Agreda, the date of which Benevides² puts at 1620. It was, perhaps, due to her ministrations that all the writers, from Benevides on, speak of these tribes as being ready and anxious for Christian teaching and of finding them so tractable.

LOCATION.

It is said that Capt. Herbert Martin left the Nueces and went "50 leagues southeast to the land of the Tejas."¹ Manzanet locates them in all that territory about the San Antonio, Guadalupe, and San Marcos rivers, speaking of them as being scattered over enormous tracts of land. He mentions them as being where it is mountainous and again almost to the seacoast, near Espiritu Santo Bay. This is carried out later by Father Francisco de Jesus Maria, who tells of their mountainous country and of their plains stretching nearly to the Gulf. He says that three great rivers crossed their land, one of which was the Trinidad—the Trinity. They were settled on the banks of the Neches and on the San Miguel, where this priest established the second mission built in that immediate neighborhood—the Mission of the Most Holy Name of Mary. The first nine tribes he mentions occupied 35 leagues of land. He then tells of twenty-one more tribes of the Tejas, the last five of which constitute "a very large province which is toward the north," about 505 leagues³ distant from the first nine named, and with all the rest of the twenty-one scattered "between north and east." He names eight more tribes in the direction of south and west from the first named, about 80 leagues, and still farther south and west he tells of ten more, giving all their names. Here, then, are forty-eight distinct tribes which formed the nation of the Tejas, or "friendly Indians," for the

¹ Bancroft's Northern Mexican States, page 383.

² Shea's translation, Lenox Library, New York.

³ The translator must have written leagues, but meant miles; the first is impossible.

same authority says: "I observe that by the name of Tejas all of the friendly tribes are to be understood; the name belongs to all of them, though their language may be different. This is a general term, and because of the old friendship which they entertain toward each other; it is in this way that 'Tejas' means 'friend.'"¹ He says, too, that the proper name of the province is Aseney, "though not one of all the tribes has that name," while Bancroft writes that the Tejas and the "Cenis" or "Asenais" of the French were the same people.

Lieutenant Bonilla, writing in 1772, says:² "From the Medina River, where the Government of Coahuila terminates, Tejas begins, and ends at the fort of our Senora del Pilar de los Adaes. The length is adjusted at about 240 leagues and her breadth at about 800."³ This territory must have taken in even more than the priest has ascribed to the nation of the Tejas.

GOVERNMENT.

The forty-eight tribes were not all united under the rule of one man; they were in leagues of from five to nine, and all these leagues made a confederation. Hence, they did not comprise a kingdom, but several provinces linked together, and having one head, for Manzanet speaks of "the chief of the Tejas" in such a way as leads one to think he means the chief over all the leagues of tribes; while Father Maria writes of "the great xinesi" as though he were higher than the ordinary ruler over the several leagues, who was called simply xinesi or ineci.

By common consent a certain number of tribes came together and allowed themselves to be governed in a certain way. We have no record of how this was first brought about, but Father Maria, who lived long in their midst, gives a full and very interesting account of the manner in which their government was administered.

Each tribe had a caddi or governor who ruled over a district in size according to the numbers of the tribe beneath his dominion. Under every caddi were certain officials who promulgated his orders; these were called canahas. If the tribe was large,

¹ Fr. Jesus Maria; Wipprecht's translation.

² A Short Summary of Events.

³ The length is impossible, not the breadth. The translator, or copyist who worked for him, must have confused miles with leagues.

there were seven or eight of these; if small, but three or four. When the tribe went to war or set out on a buffalo hunt it was the canaha who gave the order for selecting and arranging the place where the caddi should rest for eating and sleeping. It was also his duty to fetch him the box of tobacco whenever he would smoke, and he had to fill the pipe and place it between the lips of his superior.

There were other subordinate officers called *chayas*, who executed all which the canahas proclaimed. Under these again were petty officers called *jaumas*, who insured promptness in the execution of punishment, seeing "that the idlers were whipped by giving them strokes with a rod over the legs and belly."¹ Each tribe was officered in like manner, and over whatever number were leagued together ruled a chief officer called the *xinesi*. He held his office by the direct line of lineage, and when he died the man nearest in blood entered as his successor. This was also the case with the *caddis*, but all other officers were selected by the council of the old men.

When the *caddi* desired to transact a particular piece of business it was the place of the canahas to call together all the elders of the tribe. They met in the house of the *caddi*, who, when they were assembled, told them of the matter, what were his views concerning it, and why he had so determined. Then each man spoke out his thought, according to his age, the elder having precedence; no one was allowed to interrupt the other, but must take his turn, giving his reasons for his opinions. The *caddi* listened to all, explaining his own reasons and arguing with them upon theirs. Then he chose the course which appeared to be wisest after all this discussion, showing them clearly why he had so determined.

The Indians had a high respect for their rulers, and among all the officers mentioned the greatest harmony existed, "so that we have not seen any quarrel, small or great, during a year and three months."² All the tribes held the *xinesi* in much awe; they endeavored to please him in every way; they gave him a part of all that they possessed, and his word was law.

The ceremony of seating themselves in high places belonged only to the *xinesi* and the *caddis*. Each one of these had a strong upper story or stage to his house, upon which he could

¹ Fr. Jesus Maria; Wipprecht's translation.

² Fr. Jesus Maria's MS.

seat himself and observe all that passed. Every word he uttered while in this position was regarded as a positive command from which there was no appeal; therefore the caddis would only occupy these seats upon very particular occasions. These stages were in the shape of tables, and when the caddis sat there they placed their feet upon benches.

That there was a nobility, or rather a distinction of caste, may be gathered from the priest's account, which says: "The houses of the caddis and the nobility have each a bench, upon which no one is allowed to seat himself except the xinesi. In all of these houses there is also a high bed in a niche, whereon he may sleep and refresh himself."¹

Manzanet also remarks, in his report upon the affairs of two years previous: "From this it can be inferred that among them there exists quite an aristocracy, with the distinction between a nobleman and the common people."²

The Tejas had evidently a community of interests. If the house and property of one were destroyed, all the rest joined in and contributed toward providing him with a new home and all needful for his subsistence. Everything was possessed in common; they lent each other their trinkets, and there was no traffic but barter and exchange. This rule did not seem to apply to their deerskins, buffalo hides, or what clothing and blankets they received from the Spaniards, but to their utensils for labor, dwellings, or anything that could be of public benefit if owned by all instead of one. In planting time they all worked together and sowed the land of all the tribe, beginning with that of the xinesi. Here they planted but a small spot, "in order that he might have something green for his pleasure"—he had no need, as far as subsistence was concerned, for all the tribes contributed to his support. Next they planted the field of the caddis and officers in turn according to rank. The old men came next, and so on down to the youngest. The caddis and officers worked with the rest, but not the xinesi—he did no labor, never going out except to walk or to visit. The women and men did not work together, and none were obliged to labor in the fields who had employment within the house. They would not allow idleness; there was always something to be done, and those who would not perform their

¹ Fr. Jesus Maria; Wipprecht's translation.

² Fray Damian Manzanet's MS.

part were punished. They labored industriously out in their fields as long as the weather was not severe, but when the cold rains fell or the north wind blew they would not venture out of their houses. Yet they were not idle; they sat around the fire employing themselves with handiwork. It was then that they made their bows and arrows, their shoes of buckskin, and the implements which they needed for husbandry. The women made mats out of reeds and leaves, fashioned the red clay into pots and pans, and busied themselves with dressing the skins of the deer and the buffalo hides.

At certain times of the year they arranged feasts in honor of the great xinesi in remembrance of victories which their ancestors had gained. It was only at these times that all the various tribes of the confederation came together, those under different xinesis mingling in friendship, while their chiefs paid homage to the great xinesi by presenting him with bows and arrows and other things which they considered of special value. For three nights they danced, while their great chief had to see that they, his guests, were well provided with all they desired to eat. During these three days he was believed to be fasting, neither eating nor drinking; nor did he even rest, for he kept moving from place to place, keeping up a kind of tune like that the other Indians sang while they danced. Father Maria says that some superstition was attached to all that, but he could not quite fathom it, nor could he get a lucid explanation from the Indians themselves.¹

RELIGION.

The Tejas always selected their very oldest man for their priest, and it was he who presented their offerings to God. A part of every article of food was given to the priest before they ate of it themselves. There was a house set aside to be used exclusively for these things. The priest entered here with great veneration, particularly when about to make an offering. This was not done to idols—the Tejas had no “graven images”—but only to that One who, as they said, possessed the power of doing everything and upon whom all things depended—that is, they recognized and understood a Great First Cause.¹

The people showed the greatest respect to the priests, as did the xinesi and the caddis. Their manner of saying prayers

¹ Fr. Jesus Maria's report to the Count Galve.

was by taking a small box of tobacco and throwing a little up into the air, down to the ground, and then on each side of them. Upon sitting down to eat, instead of pronouncing a benediction, the priest took the first mouthful and cast it out of his plate in the form of a cross, "or as if marking the four winds of heaven—north, south, east, and west."¹ All these tribes believed in one God—in their language, Ayo-Caddi-Aymay. They never spoke of Him in jest, but always said that whatever He did was done well, for He knew all things and was just and would surely punish offenders.²

The Tejas Indian believed that when one died the soul went to a place called cayo, meaning "fell to the ground." Each soul went to a separate house and waited until all of its kindred had come. Then they were gathered together and had to go to a new earth to breed anew. "It was for that reason that they buried their dead with their arms and utensils and carried food to the graves that they might eat and have strength to make the journey and be well provided when they reached the new land"³ The guardians over the souls, they said, "locked them into their houses with keys as large as oxen."

SUPERSTITIONS.

These Indians had numberless superstitions. If a house burned down they said the ground was angry because it had to support the building, and therefore it caused the fire. Then they would not build again upon the same spot. They believed that the hills and trees could be affronted, and so tried in many ways to propitiate them. One belief that was common to all the tribes was that the old men made heaven, fashioning it in the form of a circle, the outline of which was given to them by a woman who was born from an acorn. She then took up her abode in that place, and she it was who daily brought forth the sun and gave birth to the moon and stars, to the rain, the frost and snow, the thunder and lightning.

If the fire would not burn they said it was annoyed; then they threw into it some of the fat of the buffalo as an offering, and, as a matter of course, it would blaze up. Then they were

¹ Fray Damian Manzanet's MS.

² Fr. Jesus Maria; Wipprecht's translation.

³ "Y otra nacion de gente se llaman los Tejas, todos lobrados los cuerpos y rostros."

pleased, believing that their propitiatory offering was accepted. When a death occurred they thought that Death was angry, so made himself known and remembered in that manner. Therefore they at once erected a pole and hung offerings upon it in front of the house where the person had died, that Death might become pleased and not kill any more. Every kind of superstition was mixed up in the practice of their physicians; but there was a healthy check to too much charlatanism, for we are told that if too many of a physician's patients died the people killed him with cudgels. These medicine men cured disease by sucking the place where the pain was, and so drawing it out; also by incantations and ceremonies. It is to be remarked that no priest mentions in his writings anything concerning the administering of the various remedies drawn from nature, such as roots and herbs, in which the Indians have always been thought to have excelled.

They had unwavering faith in dreams. They believed that whirlwinds were caused by the spirit of evil, and would prostrate themselves before it and pray. They thought and did the same about meteors; indeed, they considered that all things could be influenced by entreaties—so they solicited the deer and buffalo that they should allow themselves to be slain; the maize, that it would grow and let itself be eaten; the air, that it would be pleasant and healthful.¹

When a father or mother was very ill they drowned the youngest child as a propitiatory sacrifice.²

CUSTOMS.

When a prominent man died among the Tejas many ceremonies were performed, two Indians being elected to serve as priests. Into the coffin they put bows and arrows, tobacco, and "some of the herb called *acoxio*." The priests, entirely nude, passed around and around the coffin, continually moving the contents from place to place, while they talked to themselves softly, as if praying. Then they went to the place of interment, which was always near the dead man's house. There they talked again to themselves, making a stroke with an ax at the spot where the head of the corpse was to rest and

¹ Fr. Jesus de Maria's MS.

² Revillagigedo; see *Apuntes para la historia antigua de Coahuila y Texas*.

another stroke at the foot. Then the grave was dug, while the two returned to the house and gave directions about having the body placed in the coffin. This, we are told, was, in the case of the xinesi, as "big as an ox cart." They spoke to the corpse as if it were alive, retiring presently to "talk to God." Soon they returned and told the body what they had said and God had replied. At this juncture an old man came forth and stood in the midst of the people, carrying the largest weapon he could find. He lamented the death of the man, telling the tribe how much they had lost, what a fine warrior he had been, and how many buffalo he had killed, how vigorously he had ever worked. He admonished them to weep for him and show that they felt their bereavement. Then he sat close to the dead and spoke to him, telling him that they all loved him very much; that he must go away comforted and take with him the ax and utensils they had put in his coffin. Then the body was carried away, the men running before it as fast as they could, shooting arrows in the air to announce to the other departed souls that this one was coming. All the buffalo robes and skins of the deceased were laid in the grave and the coffin placed on top of them; then two priests closed the grave, speaking all the time in a low tone. All went home after that, but returned at once with some of whatever was best that they had to eat. This they put upon the grave, with tobacco and fire; then placing a pot of water there they went back to their houses to feast.

Such were the ceremonies they performed when one of their chiefs died. If it was a common person they had less pomp, but if it was a xinesi they would not bury him for two days, for all the tribes over which he ruled must perform the ceremonies. After he was interred they placed before the door of his house a figure of the world, represented by an upright pole upon which was fastened a large globe of fine grass. "Upon that globe they put the moon, represented by large sticks formed in that shape."¹

When an Indian killed a deer he saved the head for luck. If the owner died at the end of a year or before, the relations went out at night crying and singing sad songs. Behind them all walked an old woman carrying the head of the deer. This she placed on a pyre upon the top of some arrows. Around this they passed all night long, the old woman crying, the rest

¹ Fr. Jesus Maria; Wipprecht's translation.

singing and dancing. By dawn it was all reduced to ashes, and in this way was buried the memory of the dead.¹

Whenever their relatives died the women screamed and cried, relating their virtues and great deeds. They painted their faces at that time to represent a skull, and when they could cry no longer they painted tear drops upon their cheeks.¹

They believed that if they saw their relatives die they would die too; so they kept away from the very sick, and sometimes even buried them before the breath had quite left their body.¹

Their marriage customs were very peculiar; some tribes mated with but one woman, while there were others who practiced polygamy irrespective of consanguinity.² If a man fancied a woman whom he knew to be a maiden, he would take to her some of the best things he had. If her parents allowed her to accept the gift, this was an assent to the marriage, but he could not take her along with him until the caddi was first informed. If the woman was not a maiden, all that was necessary was for the man to say, "Will you be my friend? I will give you ——;" whatever he desired to offer. If his offer pleased her, she went with him. Sometimes the agreement was made only for a few days, sometimes it was stated it was to last forever. "But they never kept their word,"³ nor were there any penalties attached to unfaithfulness. If a woman found a man who in her opinion would give her more than the other, she would take up with him. They did not consider this a disgrace, for one was no more bound than the other. It was all a matter of arrangement; they did not fight or quarrel over it, but they met and talked the thing over between themselves. The woman would say, "It is true that you gave me all that, but it is as nothing to all this other man will give me." She would tell the first man to "have patience; go off and find something else to give me and win me back, or else be comforted; find some other woman who will take you."

There were but few men who had not been thus treated. The father remarks:

There are many similar things which make one laugh, and yet in another way fill one with pity and compassion. But there is one thing I much

¹ Revillagigedo; see *Apuntes para la historia antigua de Coahuila y Texas*.

² Martinez; see *Apuntes para la historia antigua de Coahuila y Texas*.

³ Fr. Jesus Maria; Wipprecht's translation.

appreciate—they never take more than one wife at the same time—that is, they never bring the second home where the first will see her and know of it. If she should discover that he is living with some other, she will have the honor to go away and leave him to her, finding for herself some other husband.¹

The Tejas did not take care of their maidens; indeed, they did not seem to care whether they were maidens or not, and at last when they came to be married they would leave one man and take up with another as they felt inclined.² The women were not at all ashamed of their lewdness; indeed, they boasted of their adventures.

In the xinesi and caddi families and those of the officers there was seldom anything of this, because no one dared to give the two first named an affront, as it was punishable with death, and the officers, who were accounted nobility, tried to imitate their superiors, and so set a good example to the rest of the tribe.³ The wives of the xinesi and caddis were called by one common name—Aquidau. That marked their station immediately, for all the other women had each her individual name.

When a child was born the father went to bed for five or six days, abstaining from eating meat or fish for fear that the animals would be offended at the birth and not allow themselves to be caught. At the end of that time one of the priests took them by the hand, and that ended the fast.² The women were sometimes guilty of great cruelty, for they would kill their babies at birth if they thought their husbands did not wish them to have any. They had been known, too, to set fire to a house and burn up their children in it, saying that they were of no good.¹

Both sexes were fond of all ornaments. They wore little white beads made of bone, rattles of snakes, and hoofs of deer, all made into strings and fastened to their leathern garments so as to make a noise, which was their delight, especially of the women. These last painted themselves also over the shoulders and back, "in many drawings, particularly their breasts, of which they took great care." The men wore many

¹ Fr. Jesus Maria; Wipprecht's translation.

² Revillagigedo; see *Apuntes para la historia antigua de Coahuila y Texas*.

³ Fr. Jesus Maria's report to the Count Galve

fine feathers, and were proud of their nice long hair, which they wore spread over their shoulders and "nicely combed." Those who did not possess fine heads of hair scraped their scalps in the manner of a tonsure, leaving a long lock of hair in the middle, reaching to the waist. They used shells for this purpose, taking great care to rid themselves of their beard and eyebrows.

They had a peculiar fondness for bells, also for all iron instruments, especially knives, axes, and hoes, for, as they were housebuilders and planted for a subsistence, they set great store by all which might lighten labor.

These Indians were expert hunters, but could not support themselves by small game alone; so at certain times the whole Tejas nation joined together for great buffalo hunts. The nearest place for finding this animal "was about four days' traveling." They combined for this purpose, as the great danger of these hunts consisted in the probability of the hunters being attacked by their enemies, the "wild tribes," of whom Father Jesus Maria gives a partial list. Of buffalo meat the Indians made two dishes only, one boiled, the other roasted, "which they ate without broth." Their plates were round earthen pans and small baskets woven of reeds, and where none of these grew they made their baskets from the leaves of the various trees. While eating they sat upon benches fashioned from a single piece of wood and not very high; "they sat with one knee lifted up," using their hands for spoons, which they would wipe upon anything which was in reach—their clothes, some grass, on leaves, even on their own feet—"yet liked well to lick their spoon, for of such use they made the two first fingers of their right hand."¹

The acorns of different kinds of oaks they used as they would corn, crushing them into meal and of that making their bread. They planted two kinds of maize—one that matured in six weeks and the other in three months. They raised also "very good pumpkins, watermelons, and turnsoles." They utilized the seeds of all these, mixing them with their corn, grinding them all up, and thus making "very good tamales." They planted several different kinds of beans, and used a kind of seed which was fine like the seeds of the cabbage; this they ground up with maize and ate dry, as a powder, "first see-

¹ Fr. Jesus Maria; Wiprecht's translation.

ing that they had water near at hand, as it had a habit of sticking in the throat.”¹

It is to be remarked that in spite of telling us all that they do about the planting by the Indians of the Tejas, what they raised, and speaking of their implements, the priests never mention that they used irrigation. We know that there are still the remains of old aqueducts, irrigating ditches, and such improvements, to show that those who planted in the region of the San Antonio River knew of and used this method of cultivation; but we must conclude that they were introduced by the fathers at a later period—say subsequent to 1700—and that, whereas the Pueblo Indians of Isleta depended upon this process of fertilization, the Tejas Indians, living farther east, had better seasons and a surer rainfall, therefore did not find it necessary to irrigate. It was left to the priests to teach them the way in which to make a certainty of good crops, even as they taught them to raise sheep and to spin their wool into clothing and blankets.

When an Indian coming from a distance arrived at the houses of any of these friendly tribes, he was an honored guest. The visitor never had to ask for anything to eat, for it was the custom that all which the host had should be brought out for the guest. When they helped themselves to food they seemed determined to consume all which they had taken, eating slowly, singing, whistling, and talking while at their meals. Those who ate all that was placed before them by the host they considered as braggarts, while they ridiculed those who ate little, “but they abhorred those who ate until they were nauseated.”¹

Nothing was given to a guest before a meal, but afterwards all the requisites for smoking were supplied. Of everything served at a meal a portion was first reserved for the caddi. If the host held that office, he invited the whole village to do honor to his guest and a grand feast began. The caddi first threw some of the food into the air, to the ground, and then on each side of him. Then he went, all by himself, to the elevated place in the corner of his house, and while the others formed a dance he talked, first to the corn, that it should allow itself to be eaten; then in the same way to each dish successively which formed the feast. Then he entreated the

¹ Fr. Jesus Maria; Wiprecht's translation.

snakes that they would not bite, and the deer that they would not kill the snakes. Next he consecrated to God the whole harvest of that house, and finished with announcing that God said they should eat, or that they would all die of hunger. Then the feast began, "and they filled themselves to loathing, for in such a way of stuffing did their feasting always end."¹

The Tejas Indians paid especial reverence to age, and everything was regulated with respect to it. The young were not allowed to speak in the presence of the old without receiving permission, nor were they permitted to seat themselves unless invited to do so, and if they violated this rule the elders chastised them with their own hands.

The punishments which were inflicted upon offenders consisted of public whippings, according to the crime. If it was for murder, they gave the culprit so many blows that he lost consciousness, and did not generally recover. If he had killed a caddi, one of his family or relatives, or had placed a personal affront or injury upon him or his, the criminal received the judicial degree of capital punishment. This, the priest remarks, he had never witnessed, but that all knew and spoke of it, even the children.²

These tribes, like all of their race, were cruel in war, but not more so than those who were at enmity with this nation of "friends." Father Maria chronicles that "their captives were put to death by tying their feet and hands to a post in the form of a cross; there they were torn to pieces, the blood being drunk and the flesh, half roasted, being devoured."¹

All the men who performed some great and heroic feat in war were called, besides their names, Amay-oxya—that is, "Great man." They carried for their banners the skins and scalps of the men they had killed, while all the skulls of their dead enemies were hung up on trees near the house of the Great Xinesi.

When they had determined to go to war, they assembled six or seven days beforehand to have their war dance and feast. In front of the dancers a pole was erected upon which was hung whatever they were going to sacrifice to their god. They offered up to him meat, corn, tobacco, bows, arrows, and fat from the heart of the buffalo, praying to him for the death of

¹ Fr. Jesus Maria; Wipprecht's translation.

² Fr. Jesus Maria's report to the Count Galve.

their enemies, for strength to fight, fleetness to run, and valor to resist. In front of the pole a fire burned, and near by sat an Indian, painted to represent a demon. They painted themselves, they said, so that their enemies could not recognize them, and they had the same habit when they paid a visit to distant tribes, or received them in turn. The demon who sat by the fire threw the sacrifices into the flames, while the men sat around smoking and rubbing their bodies with handfuls of grease, making their supplications. Every prayer was for victory and vengeance; they asked the water to rise and drown their enemies, the fires to spread and burn them, their arrows to kill them, and of the wind that it would blow all hostile arrows aside. Upon the last day of such a meeting the caddis would come forward and make a speech to the tribes in some such way as this:

“Well, then, men, if ye are such, it is not necessary to remind ye of your women, your fathers, and sons; but I charge ye here assembled not to allow them to be a hindrance to your victory.”¹

Their clothing consisted of a mere waist draping of deer-skin or buffalo hide. The women used the first, the men the last, “so they might distinguish the sexes.”² During the summer the men went naked about their houses, but the women, however young, were always covered from the waist down. At festive times they did not lack for ornaments, such as collars, necklaces, and amulets, “which resembled those the Aztecs wore, with this difference, that the Tejas Indians knew nothing of gold or silver.”³ In those days—1692—they had acquired many things from the Spaniards and French, such as little bells, glass beads, and other like trinkets. At their feasts some of the men seemed to take a pride in the fine manner in which they attired themselves, but most of them endeavored to resemble demons, even ornamenting their heads with the horns of deer, and painting themselves in the most ridiculous and hideous way. They soon learned from the Spaniards to set great store by wearing apparel made out of wool, especially of a blue color, “because it was the color of heaven,” says Father Jesus Maria, but Fray Damian Manzanet, writing some

¹ Fr. Jesus Maria's report to the Count Galve.

² Revillagigedo; see *Apuntes para la historia antigua de Coahuila y Texas*.

³ Wipprecht's translation, State library, Austin, Tex.

years previously, remarks upon the same peculiarity, and says that the chief of the Tejas told him that it was because this was the color worn by the beautiful woman who taught them long years before—Mother Maria de Jesus Agreda.

In Manzanet's report to Don Carlos de Siguenda he gives a detailed account of the house of the chief of all the Tejas, evidently the great xinesi, with whom Father Maria was brought into such close contact a couple of years later.

The house was made of posts and grass and was about 20 varas high. It was circular and without windows, getting no light but that which entered through the door, which was "like that of a room in our own country." In the center there burned a fire which was never extinguished, day or night. Around one-half of the room there were ten beds. These consisted of a rug woven of palm leaves stretched between four posts. Upon this rug were spread hides of the buffalo. Above the upper end of the bed, tied to the foot end, was suspended another rug of palm, formed like an arch and lined with a fine kind of mat and painted. It served as a pleasant sleeping apartment. Along the other half of the house there were shelves about two varas high, and above these were placed baskets of palm, round and very large, in which they kept corn, nuts, acorns, and beans. There was also a row of very large, round, earthenware pots made of clay. These were used only for atole—Indian corn gruel—when there was a feast and many people assembled. They kept there, also, six wooden mortars for grinding corn when it rained, for when the weather was fine they ground it without the house, in the courtyard. They had benches of wood, "nicely fashioned," to sit upon, and one was placed immediately in front of the fire, but no man was allowed to occupy this save the great xinesi himself. Outside of the courtyard, in front of its entrance, was another large house which was unoccupied until a council of the chiefs of the leagues—or xinesis—was called; then it was there they were lodged. There was still another house, but smaller, in which the pages slept, for it was a rule that when a council was called each chief must take with him his page, and they were lodged in that house in the succession in which they arrived, each man being given as a bed a mat of palm, rudely painted, with a sack of palm, also fully painted, for his pillow. When the council was dismissed the pages went home, taking with them the mats and pillows as

gifts. All the time that they and their masters remained in that place they were the guests of the great xinesi and fed at his expense.

There was a house used solely for these council meetings, and no one could enter it save on such occasions and as a councilor. A great deception was practiced here upon the under chiefs in this way. The great xinesi pretended that he received advice direct from God, given him through two little children who were said to live in the council house but were never seen by any but himself. He averred that they were sent to him from Heaven, and that through them he conversed with God. The chiefs heard this with awe, and thus he insured unhesitating compliance with his orders. When he desired to make public the utterances of the children he called his chiefs to the council house, where in an elevated and inclosed place about the size of two square yards the children were supposed to be. On each side of this place were chests, woven of reeds, in which the offerings made to the children were laid; but when the great xinesi thought that the tribes had not been sufficiently generous he would strike the chest and say the children would not speak until they were given more.

About the fire in the middle of the council chamber sat many priests, who kept the flame ever burning. When everyone was seated, the great xinesi drew out from the fire some coals, upon which he threw the heart of a buffalo and some tobacco, as an offering to the children. As soon as he was through with these offerings he covered up the fire and closed the door so that no light could be seen. Then the people without the house began to sing and dance, and those within were silent, listening for the voice. Then the xinesi called in his own voice to the children, begging them to speak to God and say that all in Aseney were going to lead new lives and endeavor to be good, therefore please to make the maize grow, to render their footsteps fleet, to give them health and strength, and to send them many women "for their use." All this time he held in his hands a small pumpkin; this was supposed to speak if God was pleased. When it was silent the chiefs became alarmed and promised many gifts from their tribes to the children and the great xinesi. Then he would roll the pumpkin upon the floor and plead with the children, repeating the promises. Soon the pumpkin began making a noise and a

child's voice was heard saying that God was satisfied, but would punish them if they broke their word. Then the voice told them all that they should do, and the great xinesi sent them off in search of the things which they had promised, while the voice warned them to do all that they had said. The men would go out very much frightened, "hastening away, while each one made a cry like a goat when he is breaking out of an inclosure." The great xinesi remained, stirring the fire until all had gone; then he too came out and went to his own house, about a hundred steps away. No one was ever permitted to see these children, and all were told that it was death to whomsoever should enter that house and attempt to behold them.

"I have not yet been able to find out what it all means," comments the father, and then goes on to dilate upon the trickery that was practiced. Evidently some of the Indians were first-class ventriloquists.

Every eight days ten Indian women had to enter the service of the great chief. These arrived each morning at daybreak, laden with firewood; they swept the courtyard, carried in water, ground the corn for tamales and pinole; they attended to all that was needed, and every night each one went back to her own home to sleep.

For "lunch" the xinesi had tamales, "made in their own particular way;" nuts, pinole of corn, "very nicely prepared;" and a large earthen pan of corn, ground nuts, and beans all cooked together. For "supper" he was served with tamales, cooked beans, and ground nuts. Dinner is mentioned by this priestly chronicler many times, but he gives no bill of fare.

It surprises one to learn how highly the priests thought of these Indians. Father Maria said that it would be easy to evangelize them, because they were so docile "and rather advanced in a kind of civilization;" their language was so easily learned, and they could be won over by gifts without any trouble, for they were much influenced by generosity, the mean man being "bad" and the generous one "good" in their estimation. They were especially tractable and courteous, inoffensive, and obedient, endeavoring to break no laws. "They went to war with their enemies, yet cultivated their fields, and would not abandon their country nor their houses." During sickness they were particularly good to each other,

visiting one another and helping in many ways, besides taking the sick something good to eat.

Father Damian Manzanet distinctly says "that at no time was it necessary to send to the Tejas any soldiers for the safety of the priests; for from the day that the holy fathers first came among them they did everything they could for their welfare, receiving them with unbounded love and kindness." That other feelings arose, was alas, too true; but that was plainly the fault of the Spanish soldiery, who abused the kindly natives, interfered with their wives, and made themselves generally obnoxious. Then jealousies developed between the military and the clergy, and as a consequence the innocent Tejas Indian suffered.

While the Aztec and Pueblo Indians have been fully studied and diffusely discoursed upon by many writers, this record of the Tejas nation and its customs is, I believe, the very first which has ever been put into a connected narrative. That its people will compare favorably with the Aztecs in their form of government and with the Pueblos in their industry will be shown, I think, by even this necessarily restricted relation.

