STOOD beneath the dazzling blue sky of New Mexico. Around me rose the white walls of the Indian pueblo, Laguna. The Indian women were returning from the railroad, whither they had gone to sell their pottery to the passengers of the Santa Fé. I watched them as they trod the rocky trail in single file. It seemed impossible to believe that this bright bit of picturesque life was American. The brilliancy, and indeed the whole suggestiveness of the scene was oriental. The women carried earthen jars upon their heads and trays of smaller ware in their hands. Their skirts were short above the knee, and their legs were heavily swathed in buckskin: a time-honored protection against reptile and cactus. Over the head was thrown a bright shawl which hung to the bottom of the short skirt like a mantle.

The people of Laguna came early under Spanish influence and have been nominally Christian for three hundred years. But the Indian has woven into the Roman Catholic faith the bright strands of native custom and belief. For the old rain-dances are still held on the plaza, even before the square church. But what the Spaniard failed to do, the American is now accomplishing, the stamping out of "all things Indian": the deliberate crushing of every spark of native pride, the killing of a people's aspiration toward the good, the true and the beautiful in any direction other than the Anglo-Saxon.

I knew and loved the Indians of the Hopi pueblos in Arizona: a refined and gentle folk, as full of instinctive courtesy as the Japanese. I found their music and poetry to be of a high order of development. I had come to Laguna to observe how far the music of the Mexican pueblos was tinged with Spanish influence. I had hoped that these people, like the Hopis, would sing as they left their village in wagons to load wood, or as they returned from a day's work in the fields. But alas, the spirit of this pueblo seemed crushed. The poet is a day-laborer on the railroad, the potter makes cheap cups to sell to the tourist. Art, the expression of man's joy in his work, as William Morris has it, is fast fading away, and the natural utterance of a healthy people, the unconscious burst of song, is almost stilled. More and more do the lives of these Indians become silent and colorless.

The sun was bright, but my thoughts were shadowed. Was there,
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then, no spontaneous bit of music to be heard among these people?

Suddenly a voice rose high and clear, and at the same time I
catched the rhythmic scraping sound of the grinding-stone. Some
woman near at hand was grinding corn and singing at her work. It
is the custom of the pueblo Indians to grind the corn between two
great stones. One is a slab which is set into the grinding-trough at a
slight angle. The other, cube-like, is rubbed by the grinder up and
down over the corn upon the understone, with much the same motion
that we use in rubbing clothes upon a washboard. The grinding-
troughs, two, and sometimes three in number, are set into the floor of
the house. They are simply square frames to hold the understone,
with gutters on each side of the stone and at the base, for the scooping
up of the corn, and as a receptacle for the ground particles.

As the women grind, with rhythmic swing, they sing. And the
sweet, unusual melodies with the high scraping accompaniment of
the grinding, make a music as phantom-strange to unaccustomed ears
as are, to the eye, the lilac mountain-peaks and tinted desert wastes of
New Mexico.

The voice sang on and I turned to seek it. I made my way
through the little street with its terraces of roofs. The song seemed
to come from the upper section of a square white house. Led by the
sound I climbed a ladder to the roof of the first story, which was at
once the floor and balcony of the second. At my coming the song
ceased, and instead I heard a rapid whisper: “Aicol Aicol!” (American,
American). I paused at the open door of this upper chamber that
led upon the roof. Outside all was blue sky. Within were cool-
ness, emptiness, bare whitewashed walls. Two pueblo women knelt
at the grinding troughs; the younger grinding the corn to finest pow-
der, the elder sifting the ground meal through a sieve. They laughed
shyly as I entered and sat down with them.

Who was the singer? At the question the elder pointed to the
girl at the grinding-trough. The maiden flashed a smile as I asked
her to repeat the song. Silently she bent over her work. A few swift
sweeps of the grinding-stone and then, as though born of the rhythm,
the clear voice rose once more.

As the girl swayed over her work, her glossy black hair hung
straight before her face, shielding her sweet shyness from the stran-
ger. These women part the hair across the middle of the head, tying
it behind with a woven band, and allowing the front part to grow so
long that, unless swept to one side and twisted behind the ear, as is the custom, it would fall over the face to the chin.

The girl paused at the end of her song, and laughed softly behind her loosened locks.

"Tell me what the song means," I said, turning to the elder woman, who had been to school and spoke English.

The two conferred together in their own tongue, then sought to tell me of their song.

"It is about the water in the rocks," said the elder. "After rain the water stands in the rocks, and it is good fresh water—medicine water. And in the song we say: 'Look to the southwest, look to the southeast! The clouds are coming toward the spring; the clouds will bring the water.' You see, we usually get our rains from the southwest and the southeast. That is the meaning of the song; but it is hard to tell in English," she faltered.

Then again the maiden sang.

"And this song is about the butterflies, blue and red and yellow and white, telling them to fly to the flowers. At the end of the song we say to the butterflies: 'Go, butterfly, now go, for that is all!'"

Then said I: "I shall write these songs on paper, just as you have seen songs written in books in the schools. Then people will know that Indian songs are beautiful, and the songs will never wholly be lost, or forgotten."

The girl's eyes grew large. But the elder woman said slowly: "Many songs are forgotten. Our people do not sing as they used. I do not hear the songs I heard before I went to school."

"And these songs you have sung for me, are they new?" I asked.

"No, they are old," she answered. "The words are old words, words we do not use in talking now. I heard these songs when I was little. I think they must be very old."

"Do not forget them," I said, "and teach them to your children!"

But the woman only gazed before her, dull and sad.

What use, indeed, in the face of the crushing present to preserve anything of the past for a lustreless and alien future?

But my heart held the hope that these songs, reverently recorded, might one day be given back to their original creators by Americans who will find some beauty in the true life of a people whom we strive to educate, but never seek to know.
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CORN-GRINDING SONG

No. 1

\[ \text{TRANSLATION} \]

I-o-ho, medicine water,
I-o-ho, medicine water,
What life now!
Yonder southwest,
Yonder southeast,
What life now!
I-o-ho, medicine water,
I-o-ho, medicine water,
What life now!

*Medicine Water,* good fresh water from hollows in the rocks. *What life now!* life and health from drinking this water. *Yonder southwest, yonder southeast,* directions from which the rains usually come. Meaning of the passage: "Look southwest, look southeast! The clouds are coming toward the spring, bringing water."
TRANSLATION
Butterflies, butterflies,
Fly to the blossoms,
Blue,
Yellow,
Fly to the blossoms,
Red,
White,
Fly to the blossoms—
Away!
Butterflies, butterflies,
Fly to the blossoms—
Away!

These songs were translated for me by different Indians, and the translations compared and submitted to one who knows the language of Laguna. Yet, as I am no authority upon these Indians or their language, I cannot claim that my work is without error.

The first of the songs seems to be very old. Some of the words are archaic. I give the translation and also the explanation furnished me by the Indians. For Indian poetry, like all branches of Indian art, is symbolic. Just as a few lines in a design on jug or basket often stand for a thought, instead of representing an object; so one word in a poem may be the symbol of a complete idea, which, to the stranger who does not know the song-code, as it were, must ever be a door without a key. It is interesting to note that for this reason a song may often be interpreted variously by different Indians. For instance, the second song, the colors mentioned were said by one Indian to refer to the different colored corn over which the butterflies should fly. For Indian corn in this region is many-colored: glaring pink, bright red, deep blue, orange, yellow, black, white, purple and brightly spotted. Many songs, therefore, refer to the corn simply by color. But an old and authoritative Indian asserted positively that this song had nothing to do with corn: that it was all about butterflies, and that the butterflies were to fly to flower-blossoms, not to corn-fields.

Of course, slight variations in the melodic contour of the song are to be expected, when there is no notation and the songs, as one Indian expressed it with graphic gestures, are held, not on paper as with us, but “all in the head.”

I give the versions which, by careful comparison, seem most cor-
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rect, and which were afterwards sung for me by a very old woman, the wife of the medicine-man. The quavering voice of three score years and ten had the ring of old time authority. How often had she sung thus at her grinding in all these many years!

To understand the first song it must be remembered that the need of all pueblo Indians is rain. They are an agricultural people who live in desert lands. Even though the pueblos of New Mexico are near the Rio Grande, and are further aided by an ancient and very adequate system of irrigation, the cry for rain is still expressed in song and dance. When the welcome waters fall, they are caught in hollows in rocks, the primitive reservoirs of nature. From this song it would seem that such water is, or was, prized by the Laguna Indians as particularly healthful and life-giving.

These songs reflect the thought and the daily life of a people, and are thus real folk-music. Their simple poetry and perfect purity are characteristic of all the Indian songs that I know. Their charm is unique, and the strange, graceful melodies will appeal not only to those who love music, but to all who rejoice in the thought that in our country there is still an art born naturally and simply of “man’s joy in his work.”

THE pastoral stage was pre-eminently the play period of the race. On equally good grounds it may be called the period in which art made rapid development. Human culture had not advanced sufficiently to secure a clear differentiation between art and play. Neither was there any well-defined boundary between work and play. Now, an activity is more like work, in a moment it is more like play, and again it is art, or, possibly, all three at the same time.

KATHERINE ELIZABETH DOPP,
IN “THE PLACE OF INDUSTRIES IN ELEMENTARY EDUCATION.”