

# SCRIBNER'S MAGAZINE

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## VANISHING INDIAN TYPES

### THE TRIBES OF THE SOUTHWEST

By E. S. Curtis

ILLUSTRATIONS FROM PHOTOGRAPHS BY THE AUTHOR



WHEN Coronado, with his venturesome little band of three hundred mail-clad Spaniards, crowded his way into the North in search of the seven cities of Cibola, with their fabled hoards of gold, he encountered many small bands of roving Indians, whom he termed "wild Indians." These so-called wild Indians were the Apaches and Navajos. From their geographical proximity and linguistic relationship they were, and have been considered, in a broad way, as one group. It was with the Southern branch of this Athapascan group that Coronado and his men were brought most in contact. The village Indians of the region called them "Apaches," meaning enemy in its broadest sense—that is, "Every man's enemy." These roving bands of marauders were then living more from what they might steal from the less warlike villages and Pueblo Indians than from their hunting or farming.

From Coronado's day to the one of the final struggle when old Geronimo was made prisoner, every page of the Southwest history tells us of the Apache's cunning, ferocity, and physical endurance. Scarcely a tribe of our American Indians but what have engraved their record of crime and infamy high up on history's wall, yet above them all is the Apaches'.

From 1540 to 1853 New Spain and Mexico carried on a so-called warfare with these people. The Apaches were vastly outnumbered by the Mexican soldiery, but what they lacked in numbers was more

than made up in courage and craftiness. The Apache ever had a thorough contempt for the Mexican soldier, and in later years, when they were fighting with firearms as well as arrows, they would not waste cartridges on the Mexicans, but would kill them with arrows, spears, and stones, saving their cartridges for other and more worthy foes.

When this Southwest region became a part of the United States the Apaches were a serious problem with which we had to contend. Our Government vacillated between a simpering peace policy and the other extreme, their extermination. Their zone of wandering being intersected by the international boundary-line further complicated matters. They would raid down into Mexico and then rush back with the plunder to our side of the line, out of reach of the pursuing soldiers. Next, it would be a raid on the Arizona side and a flight into the wild mountains of Sonora. The Mexican Government attempted to assist their miserable army by giving a scalp bounty, and for years they paid out their gold coin for Apache scalps. Scalp hunting became a recognized industry. The horror of this was that, to the Mexican official, all scalps looked alike, whether from the head of a hostile or a friendly Indian. The price was one hundred dollars for a man, fifty dollars for a woman, and twenty-five dollars for a child. It is small wonder that the tribe sank deeper into savagery than ever, when we stop to think that the men knew there was a price set on the scalps of their wives and children; and there was a horde of human fiends, white

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in color, but more savage than the savage himself, who were hunting them as they would a cougar of the mountains.

After years of wabbling between peace and extermination, General Crook, with his wonderful insight into the Indian character, was given the difficult task of settling the Apache question. It took him a considerable time to perfect an army organization fit for a campaign in a country where the mountains in winter were deep in snow and bitterly cold, and the desert in summer a waterless furnace. He also had to contend, for a time, with the well-meant but more than useless Peace Commission, as well as the politician and grafter, who desired anything but a final settlement of the Indian troubles, as it was out of such troubles that they made their living. This crowd of fellows could well have been classed with the Mexican scalp hunters. The scalp hunting caused the loss of many white settlers, through the Apache's desire for revenge, and the grafter helped to continue the trouble that he might grow rich.

General Crook took the Apache question up in a manner which showed the Apache that he had to deal with a man different from any with whom he had heretofore been brought in contact. He sent out asking the Apache head men and chiefs to come to his camp, so that he might talk with them. When they assembled, he told them, "I have come here to settle the Apache fighting. You who want peace can come on to the reservation, raise crops and I will help you start your farms and the Government will buy hay and grain from you and pay you for your work. Any of you who do not want to do this and want still to fight and steal, can go back to the mountains, and I will fight you until you come in or kill the last one of you, but I am going to do just what I say. I am not going to lie to you, but I am going to kill the last Apache who does not settle down on the reservation."

The chiefs drew off to themselves for a talk. Their spokesman said to his brother Indians: "He is a new kind of man. He doesn't say anything about the Great Father or that the Great Father sent him, but he tells us that he does not lie and that he will kill everyone who does not come on the reservation."

They realized that this was truly a new

kind of man, and the outcome of that conversation was, that Crook was furnished the company of strong young Apaches for which he had asked, which enabled him to fight Apaches with Apaches. In less than two years the Apaches were a conquered people, the first day since Coronado met them three hundred and thirty-three years before.

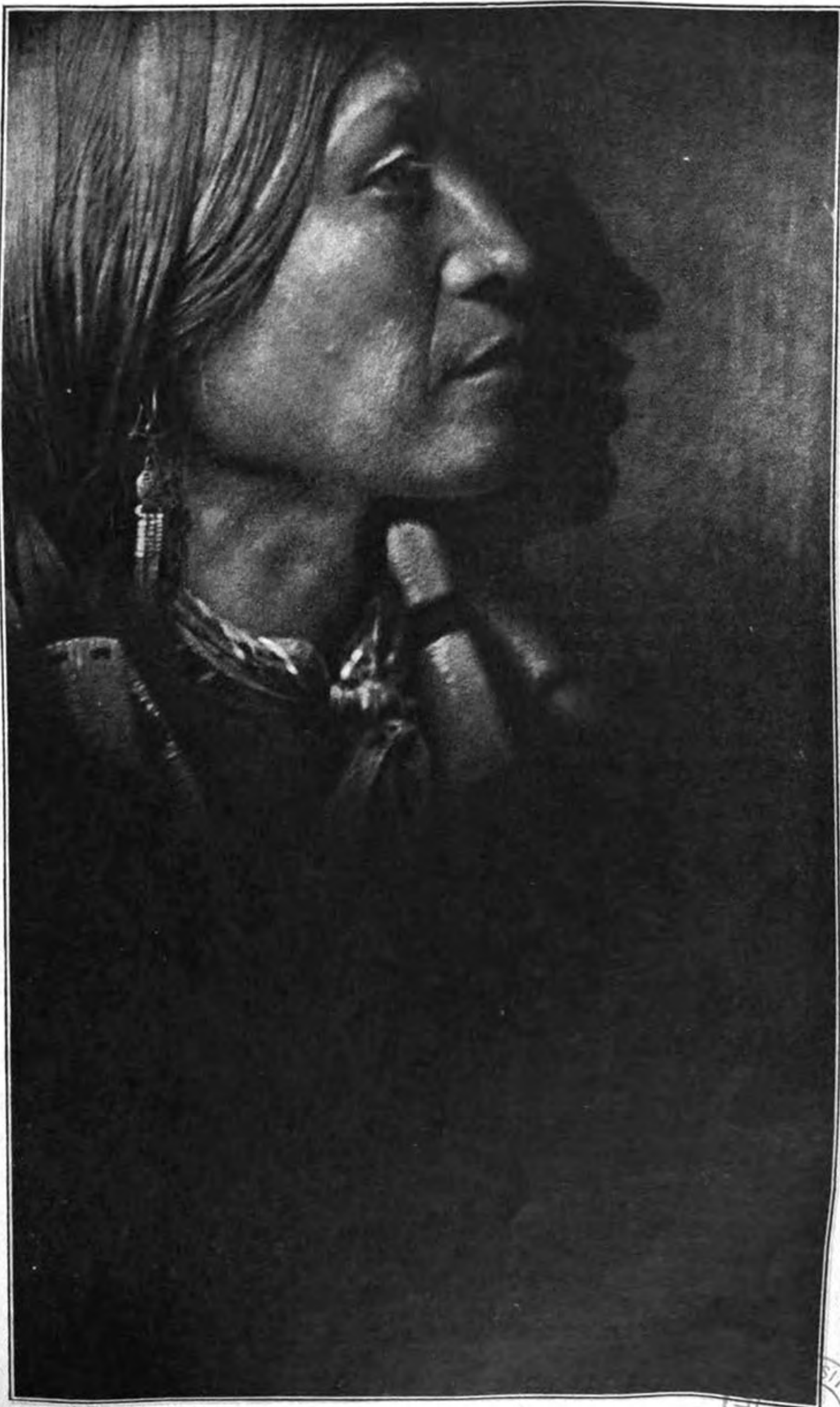
The next two years saw great improvements among them. Lands were cleared, irrigating ditches dug, new homes built, and all was prosperity and peace. The Apache problem seemed settled. Sioux and Cheyennes and other tribes of the North were making trouble, and Crook was transferred to the Department of the Platte and at once began his campaign against the Northern tribes. He was scarcely off the Apache reservation before the contractors, Government employees, and political grafters were at work to undo all that had been done.

Their efforts succeeded so well that each year found the Apache growing more dissatisfied and restless. This culminated in the outbreak of 1882. Crook was hastily summoned and took charge of the Department of Arizona. Geronimo and many of his band were taken to the Southeast as prisoners, and the others were settled on the White Mountain reservation, which has since that time been their home.

This reservation is a part of the high table-lands of Southeastern Arizona. It is one succession of mountains and high mesa parks, broken here and there with valleys and streams. The mountains and mesa lands are wooded with pine, cedar, fir, juniper and oak, and in the valleys is found mistletoe-grown cotton-wood, willow, alder and walnut, with much sumach, all jungle woven with the vine of the grape, hop, and columbine. Everywhere, on mountain and in valley, there is a great profusion of the many varieties of cacti, and in spring-time, canyon and valley, mountainside and mesa are a blazing mass of wild flowers.

Entering the reservation by the Holbrook way, the first few miles is through a splendid pine forest which covers one-fifth of the reservation. Going down the Black Canyon the road is through a few miles of fine oaks, and then on to the valley of the White River, which has long been the home of the Apache, and before him the home of a race of which history knows but little.





*From a photograph, copyright 1904, by E. S. Curtis.*

Vash-Ghon, Jicarilla Apache Chief.





*From a photograph, copyright 1934, by E. S. Curtis.*

A Hill-top Camp.—Jicarilla Land.

For several miles the road clings to the crest of the canyon, at the bottom of which flows White River. As we pass along this road, low mounds are seen everywhere about us. To the uninitiated they mean nothing, but let us make a close examination. The surface is strewn with fragments of Indian pottery, and we at once know we are standing on the ruins of the home of a prehistoric people. About us has been a community life of which only a backward reckoning and the study of the Pueblo creation myths can give us any comprehension. Here they lived their life, with its cares, its joys, and its mysteries. We realize that the crumbling rock was once the walls of a home where into the world were born tiny brown infants. The infants grew to maturity, mated to dark-skinned companions, and passed on to withered leaves of life's autumn, to sit in the shade of these walls and cackle at the romping antics of other brown infants. Ages have passed, the walls have crumbled, and in the ruins trees have taken root and grown to rugged old age.

There are approximately 2,000 of the Apaches scattered about on a reservation of two million acres. Of agricultural land

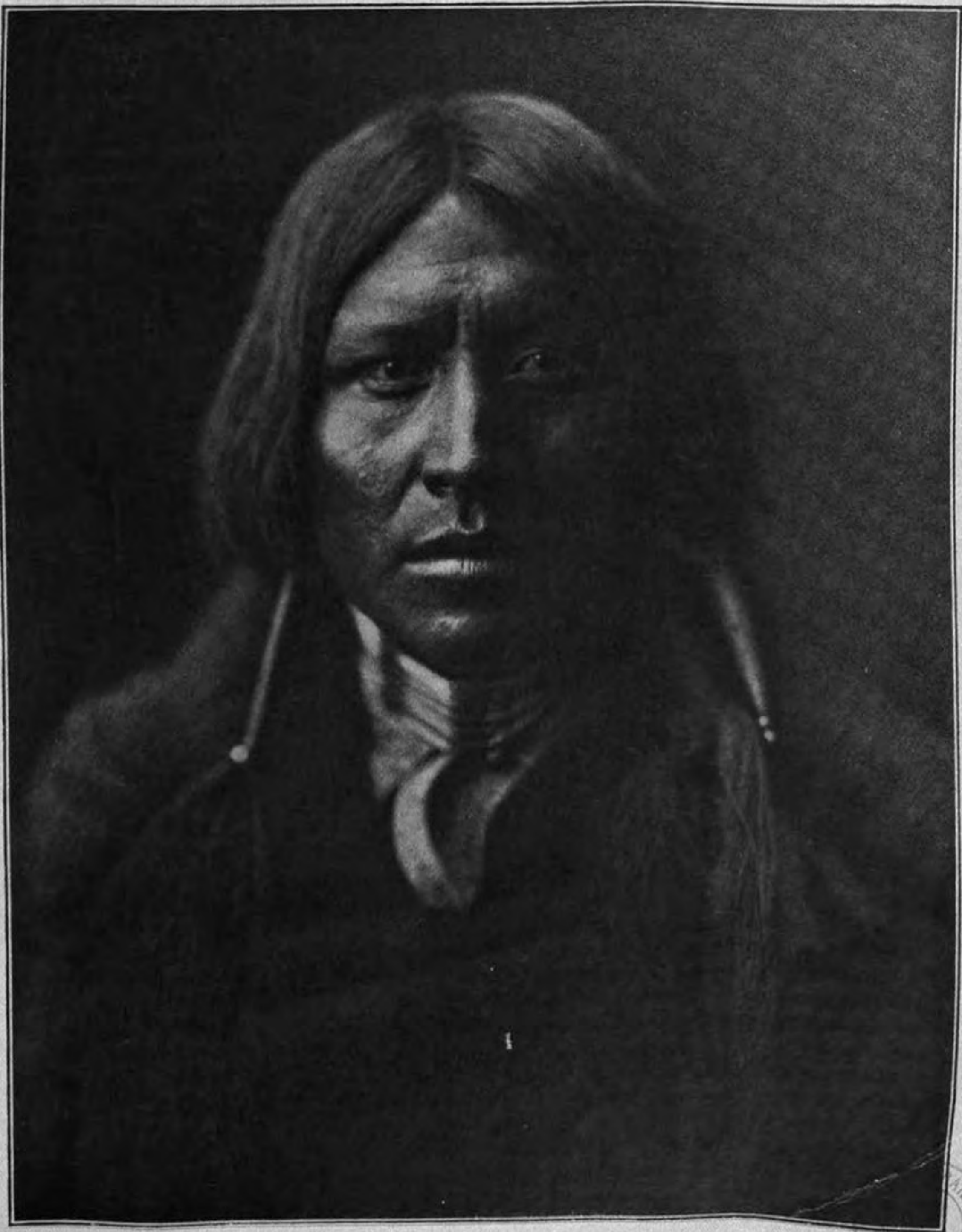
they have something over two thousand acres, the greater part of which is now under cultivation. This arable land lies along the different streams which have their source among the high peaks in the north-western part of the reservation, and break through the hills and mountains on their way to Salt River.

White River and its eastern branch, with their comparatively wide valleys, come first in importance; then the Cibicou, Carrizo, Bonito and Turkey Creek.

The Apache home, which he calls *congah*, is built by forming its framework of poles, thatched with native grass. Through this loosely matted covering the smoke from the camp-fires finds its outlet, and the rain and snow sift through, making them a poor shelter in times of storm.

Squaw labor is of small account, more especially since the Apache has many wives; hence the Apache family builds many homes—in fact, a home wherever circumstances may require. The Apache himself likes nothing better than to be on the move. In his own words he says: "Why live all the time one place when many fine places to live?"





*From a photograph, copyright 1904, by E. S. Curtis.*

A Jicarilla Type.



In the good old days the zone of wandering centred in the mountains in what is now Southeastern Arizona. This was their stronghold, their fortress. From here they raided to the Southeast well down into Sonora (Old Mexico), west to the Colorado River, north into the Hopi and Navajo country, and east as far as central Texas. From this mountain rendezvous they would swoop down upon the Mexicans or Indians of Sonora, or perhaps upon the Pueblo villages of the north, and in later years the white settlers of the Southwest were kept in momentary peril of these roving bands. To follow them was a fruitless task and led to certain destruction. The Apache is a true nomad, a child of nature, whose birthright is a craving for the war-path, and who drew from his mother's brown breast the indomitable courage and endurance of which the world knows no equal, and a cunning which is beyond reckoning. His character is a strong mixture of savagery, courage, and ferocity, with a gentleness and affection for his family, particularly his children. He knows no such thing as fear. Death, which he faces with indifference, holds no terror for him. On the other hand, a friend may die and he will grieve to such an extent that he will commit suicide. Mr. Cooley speaks of an instance where a medicine man was killed in a tulapi debauch. His friend, a medicine man, rode up, looked at the body, chanted a few words and stabbed himself, saying, "I want to go with my brother."

General Crook, who knew the Apaches as no other man knew them, and who finally conquered them, said they were the worst tribe of American Indians to subdue. They had the instinct of the animal, the ferocity and cunning of the tiger, with the reason and logic of civilization. They rarely burned or otherwise tortured their captives, but the Mexican early learned to shoot his women rather than let them be taken prisoners.

The taking of scalps has been spoken of so commonly in the press of the United States that it has become a general practice, when speaking of a man having lost his life among the Indians, to say, "He lost his scalp." Novelists even of to-day, when locating their stories in Apache-land, almost invariably scalp the victims of Apache vengeance. As a matter of fact, one can say that the Apache never took scalps. Men who

have lived in the Apache country and have been closely associated with them for thirty years or more, claim that no full-blooded Apache ever scalped a man he killed. On the contrary, he would not touch a body after death, and would throw away his weapons if stained with human blood. Their own dead the men never help to bury. This task is left to the women.

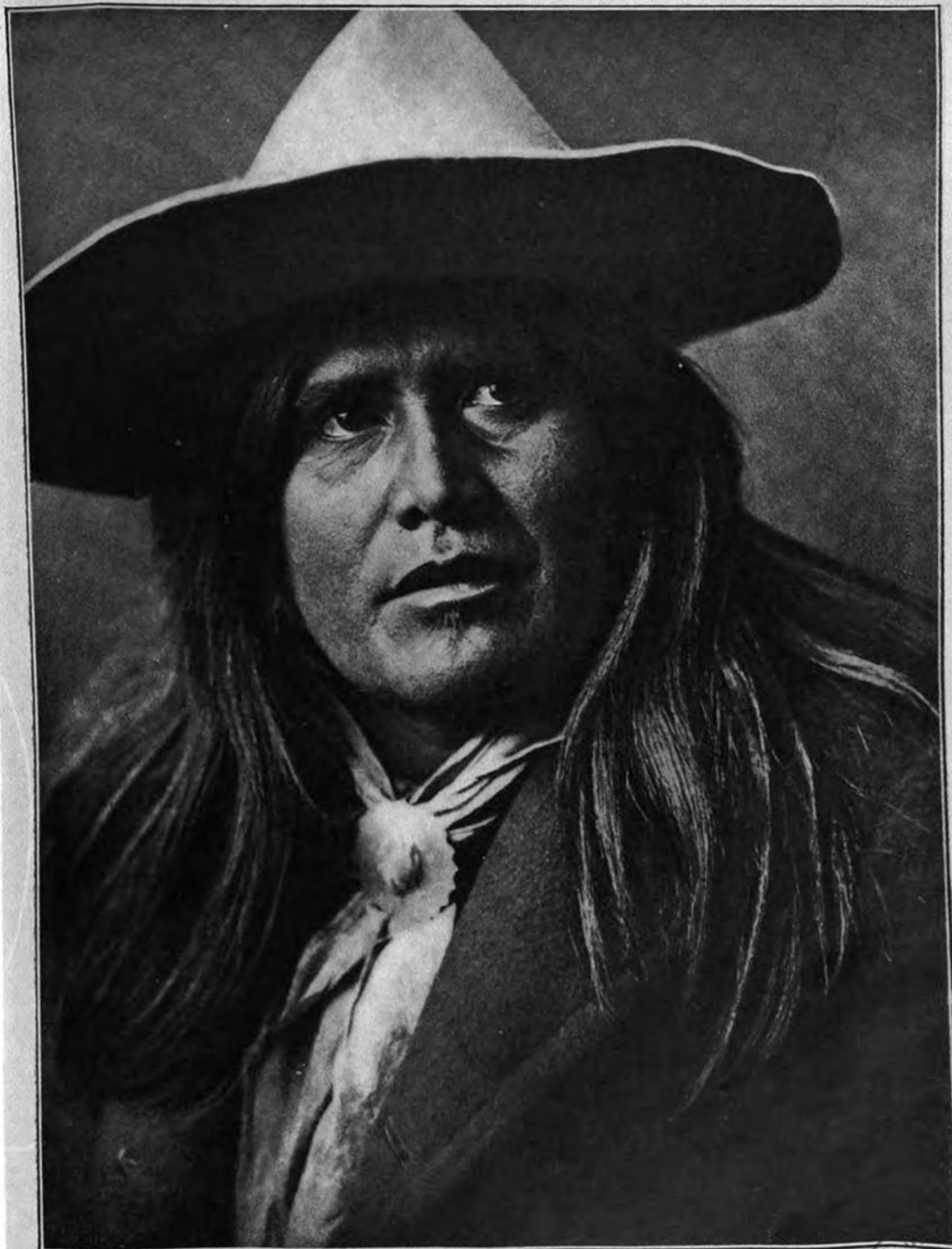
The Apache woman, according to her code, is strikingly modest and proverbially virtuous. The success with which they conceal their bodies with their scant clothing is quite marvelous. In their conversation they know no sex distinction. The Apache language has no profanity, but what it lacks in that is more than compensated in coarseness.

With these people civilization is making considerable advancement. He who was a renegade is fast becoming a worker of the soil. Old Geronimo, the worst of them all, is passing his final years, virtually a prisoner, at Fort Sill. Jolly old Cheno, whose record of crime has few equals, tends his crops and tells of a long time ago when he, lone-handed, within a single night, killed thirty Mexicans. The spirit of the Apache is not broken; he has lost none of his cunning, craftiness or endurance, but he sees that the day of the war-path is no more.

The Apaches, like many other North American tribes, are sun-worshippers. Their myths tell them that the sun is the all-powerful deity and to it all supplications are addressed. On going into battle, planting corn, or in starting on a cattle-stealing expedition, the sun is asked to look with favor. That they believe in a future world is proved by their custom of killing horses and burying them, as well as their clothing and implements of the chase, for life in the future world. Not only the medicine men but the people claim to hold communion with the Chindi or spirits of their ancestors. They are also great believers in omens, talismans and amulets, but are very conservative and it is with difficulty that one gets them to discuss things supernatural. They will not talk about God among their own people with familiarity, and scarcely at all with the white man.

The Apache medicine man is the strongest influence among them; he is their wise man and prophet. They have a sub-chief and head chief, but the medicine man is the





*From a photograph, copyright 1903, by E. S. Curtis.*

The Apache Cowboy.





statesman, the power behind the throne. The chief has been elected by his people; they know they have made him such, and that he is but human; but the medicine man they believe understands things of the supernatural and receives his power from God. With all his jugglery and hypocrisy he has much that is real. Life's problems, from his degree of civilization, have been

edge tells them is best, but while its purpose is that of a utensil, it must have lines of symmetry and beauty. While decoration with them is secondary to form and usefulness, every basket is a wonderfully designed piece of handiwork and causes one to wonder how a people apparently so dull to the beautiful can be its creator.

Wherever one meets an Apache squaw



*From a photograph, copyright 1903, by F. S. Curtis.*

The Lost Trail.—Apache.

well worked out. He is a deep student of nature and the supernatural. There is always about his person the medicine string and its accompanying bag of hoddenton, amulets made from slivers of lightning-shattered trees, trinkets of stone, shell and metal, none of which he allows touched by profane hands.

The Apache handicraft shows best in their basket work. It is in this that they show their love and appreciation of the beautiful. They have but few forms or shapes, and each of them shows the workings of a primitive mind on the problem before it. The basket is to be used for certain purposes. For this reason its form and material construction must be such as their knowl-

he will see the burden basket or tatsaca. This is a roughly made basket, decorated with diagonal lines which are more often painted than woven. The bottom is covered with buckskin, from which strips of the same material extend to the top; buckskin fringe hangs from the base, upper rim, and perpendicular strips. These baskets are in constant use. The women carry them on their backs by a leather string which passes across the forehead. They are also hung from the pommel of the saddle, and in them is carried everything, from the youngest baby to camp utensils. The tus, or water-bottle, is a closely woven basket, coated inside and out with piñon gum. Its form is that of a vase, its coloring a deep rich brown



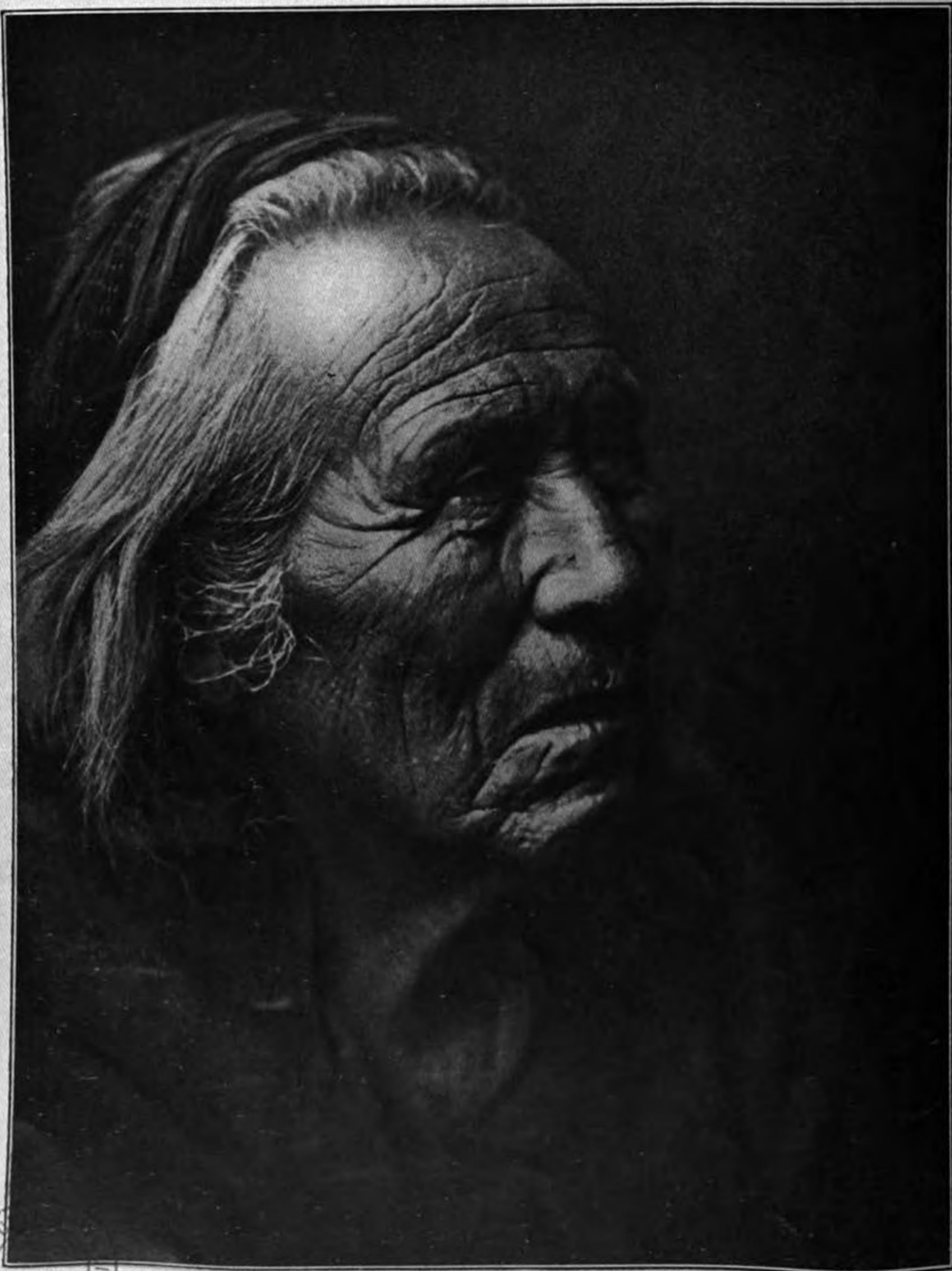


*From a photograph, copyright 1903, by E. S. Curtis.*

Getting Water.—Apache Land.







*From a photograph, copyright 1904, by E. S. Curtis.*

The Navajo Medicine Man.





*From a photograph, copyright 1904, by E. S. Curtis.*

A Chief of the Desert.—A Navajo.





from the gum with which it is coated. The tuseskoga is the most pretentious of their basket work. Its form is vase-like, as is their water-bottle; it is elaborately decorated and so closely woven that it is water-tight. The tsa is a low, bowl-shaped basket, which is used as a food dish for dry or liquid foods, and by the medicine men for their medicine paraphernalia. The materials used in their

across the saddle, and the burden basket is hung over the pommel at one side; on the other side is hung a water-bottle, and from the back of the saddle another burden basket and a second water-bottle, and then a few miscellaneous traps are fastened on, and on top of all this the Apache girl climbs, completing a splendid picture of pagan barbarism. With the women the primitive dress was



From a photograph, copyright 1904, by E. S. Curtis.

The Navajo Blanket Weaver in the Canyon de Chelly.

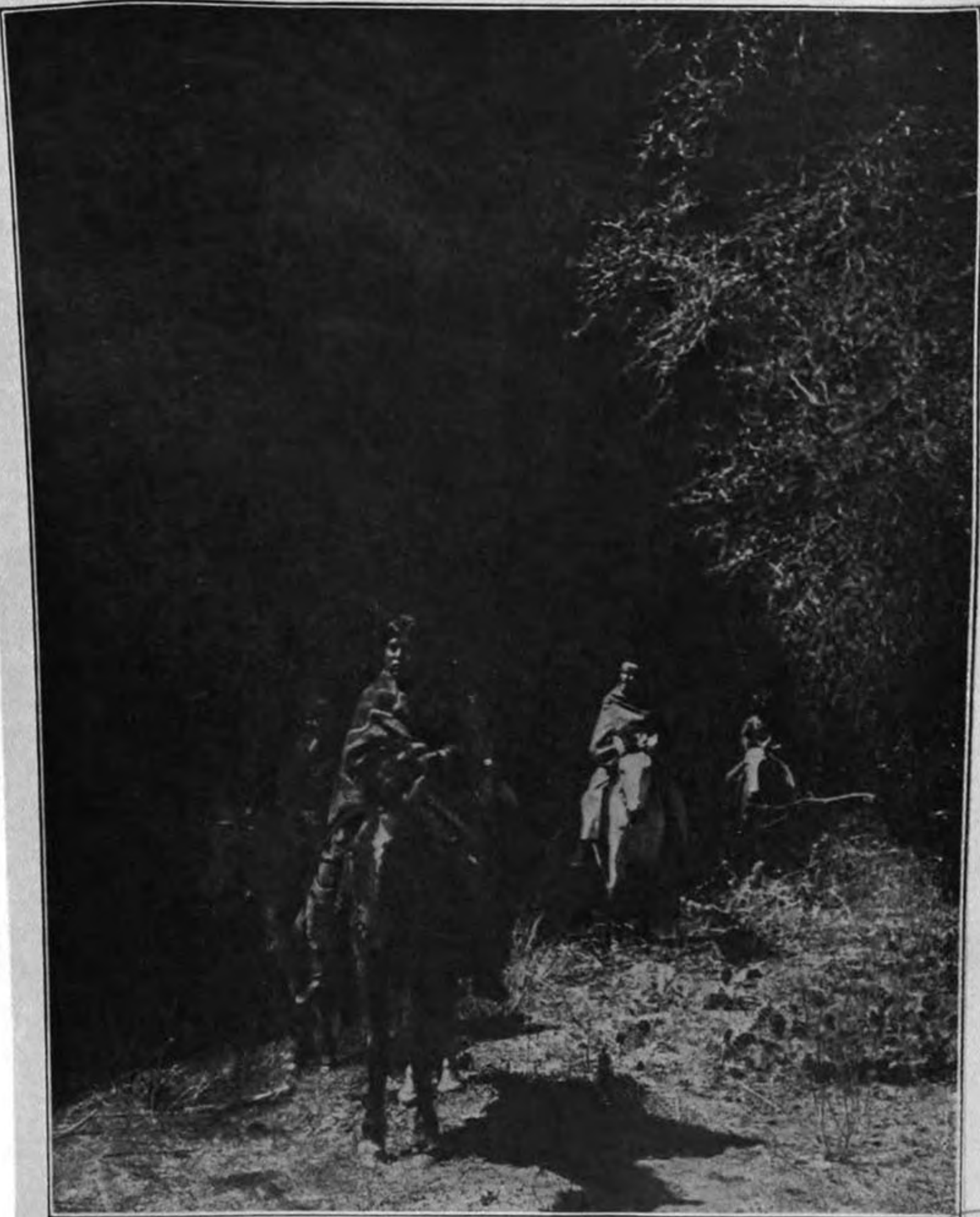
basket-making are cotton-wood and willow as the basic material. Usually the black in the design is from the martynia pod, the browns or reds are from the root of the cactus. The women do but a limited amount of weaving in beads. Most of the beads worn by them are simply strung on threads, which are wound about the neck or wrists, yard after yard, until they form a coil an inch or more in thickness.

Saddle bags or pouches are made from rawhide, with *appliqué* of the same material and red flannel, decorated further with earth paints as well as a long fringe of the leather. These carryalls are hung

a short buckskin skirt and waist of the same material; both skirt and waist were ornamented with *appliqué* of skin and buckskin fringe and, like everything else that the Apaches wore, were hung with metal pendants. The form of the garments is now the same as of old, but the material is bright-colored calico, cretonne or flannel, or such as can be procured from the trader.

Contrary to the general opinion, the Apache is a good worker. Men and women alike work at the heaviest sort of labor. The first Apache women I met were at work in a woods felling timber and cutting it into





*From a photograph, copyright 1904, by E. S. Curtis.*

Out of the Darkness.—A Navajo picture in Canyon de Chelly.

cordwood. To see women in the forest working as woodmen was a novel sight to me.

These people must be self-supporting, as the Government no longer treats them as objects of charity, nor does it owe them any vast sums of money which must be paid

in annuities. The Government has lately adopted the wise plan of helping them to support themselves. The policy is to provide as much work for them as possible. This work is of a public improvement nature, such as building and improving the



highways and constructing large irrigating ditches for the benefit of the community. In time gone by if an Apache wanted a wagon, he would go to the agent and make his wants known. As he got it without effort, no care was taken of it. Now if he wants a wagon the agent gives him work that he may earn it, and it is safe to presume that when he has worked a month and a half for a wagon he will take care of it.

To-day their principal source of living is their farms along many of the streams or narrow valleys. In their natural state these valleys were a jungle of small timber and undergrowth which had to be cleared away before the land could be cultivated. Their crops can be grown by irrigation only, and many of their irrigating ditches are miles in length and well constructed. Corn is the principal crop, although small grain, beans, and vegetables form a considerable portion of their harvest.

While their environment is much the same, and the root of the language exactly so, in culture, character, and appearance the Navajos differ much from the Apaches. The Apaches were by every instinct a fighting people. On the contrary, the Navajos never were. From the nature of the country and their great numbers had they had any organized fighting ability they would have been much harder to conquer than any other of our Indians.

During the so-called Navajo war the Navajo nation had no chief with any considerable following—in fact, they never have had, like other tribes, a head chief who could demand co-operation of other head men or chiefs. In historical times Manuleto had a greater following than any other chief. Had the Navajos been under a capable leader not one of the soldiers who went into Canyon de Chelly would have come out alive.

The Navajos are a pastoral, patriarchal, semi-nomadic people. Their whole culture and development centres in their flocks. Their reservation of 12,000 square miles is desert, broken with mountain and mesa. On the mesa and low mountains there are considerable areas of piñon and cedar, and on the higher mountains a limited area of beautiful pine forests. Over this region the Navajos drive their flocks. At the season when the slight rainfall gives even a scant pasturage on the desert plains, the flocks are pastured there. As the past-

urage on the lower levels is both burned with the hot, scorching sun and exhausted with pasturing, the flocks are taken up into the higher mountains, where there is more moisture. Again as the deep winter snows come on the sheep must be taken down out of the mountains to escape them. During this time they are kept on the wooded mesa, where there is less snow, and a plentiful supply of wood, of which there is none on the plains below. Year in and year out the Navajo flocks are driven back and forth from plain to mountain-top, mesa and foothills.

While the Navajo's life is a wandering one, he is not what could be called a true nomad. His zone of wandering is limited; on the same grounds his father and father's father have kept their flocks. The average Navajo could not guide you a distance to exceed fifty miles. Last season the writer had with him two Navajo men of middle age, who had lived their lives within a day's ride of the mouth of Canyon de Chelly, and this was the first time they had traveled the entire length of the canyon. This seems strange, from the fact that it is a most remarkably scenic spot, and the larger part of the great wealth of Navajo legendary lore centres in this canyon.

The Navajo family usually has three homes, the location of which is determined by the necessities of their life. One is the summer home, where they grow their small crops of corn and vegetables. This farming they do in the narrow sand washes, where, by planting to a great depth, they get sufficient moisture to mature the crops. In a few limited areas they have irrigated farms. In Canyon de Chelly, which may be termed the "garden of the reservation," there are tiny irrigated farms and splendid peach orchards.

In their pastoral life they naturally do not lead a community existence. Their domiciles, or hogans, are usually grouped two or three in the same locality. Each hogan represents a family, and a group is usually that of relations formed into a clan. The hogan is a dome-shaped structure of poles covered with earth. From its low construction and earth covering it is inconspicuous. One might ride from morning until night across the reservation and not see a hogan or an Indian. Still he has possibly passed within a stone's throw of many hogans and been peered at by dark

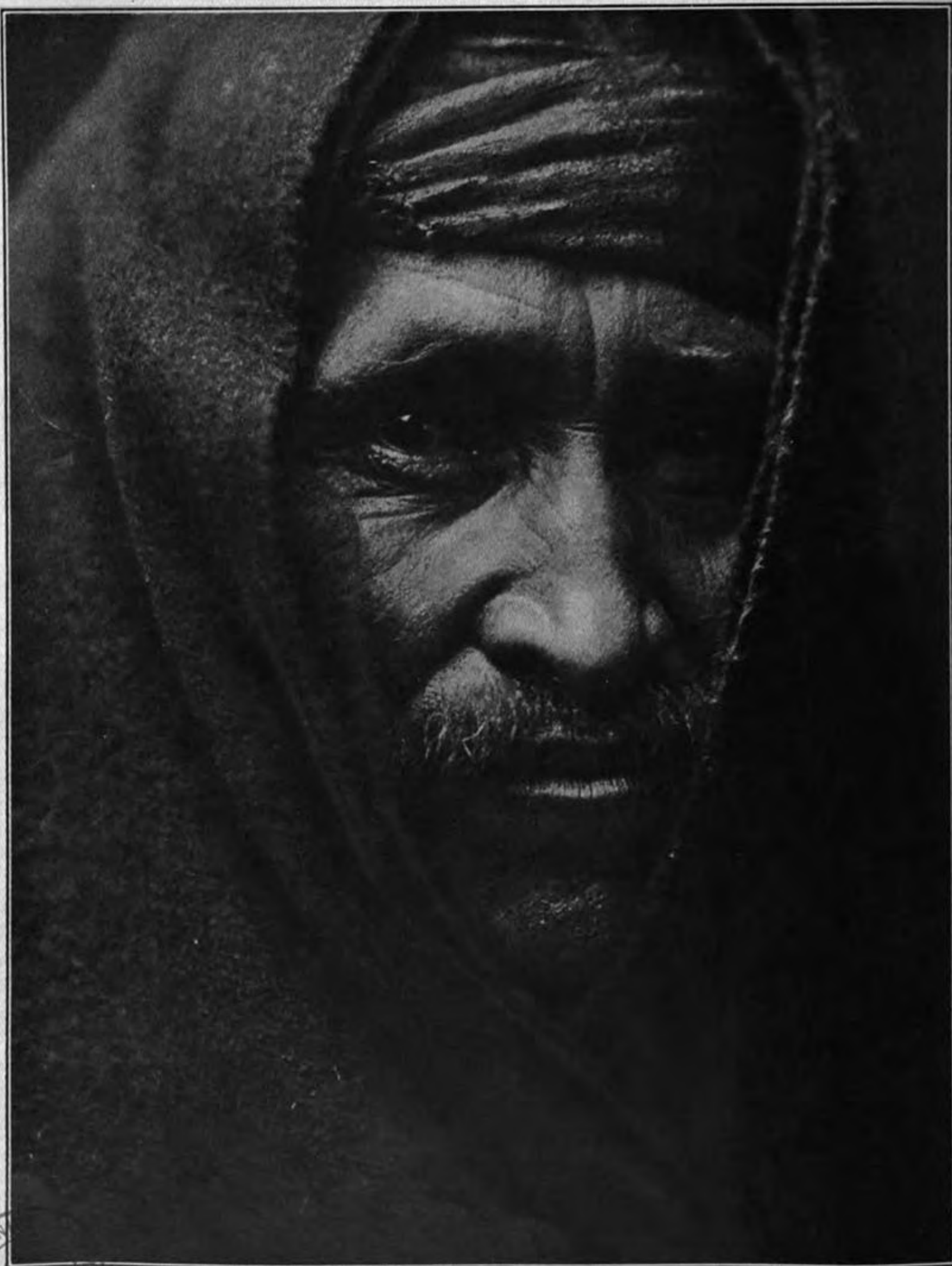




*From a photograph, copyright 1904, by E. S. Curtis.*

Navajo Child.





*From photograph, copyright 1904, by E. S. Curtis.*

The Singer.



eyes from brush concealments. At the end of a long day in the saddle the visitor will begin to wonder where the 20,000 Navajos have concealed themselves. To answer that question, just as the long shadows of evening are creeping on he has but to go to the summit of some of the many low mountains and look about. Here and there in every direction he sees the smoke of camp-fires as they are preparing their final meal of the day. In this clear, rare atmosphere the horizon is the only limit to his vision.

Just below, perhaps a mile away, is the smoke from a group of some half-dozen hogans; miles beyond is another group; and still beyond another, and so it is along the whole sweep of the horizon.

With a little Government assistance in utilizing the possible water-supply for irrigation, the Navajos will take care of themselves and in time make a splendid community of shepherds and farmers. For the student there is among them a great wealth of ceremonial life which shows but a slight deterioration by the contact with civilization. The medicine men are still the dominant factor of the Navajo life. These medicine men are so-called singers, and the medicine ceremonies, "sings." The principal ceremonies are the two great nine-day sings, termed by Washington Matthews, who spent many years in the study of their life, the "night chant" and the "mountain chant." Besides these two elaborate ceremonies, they have one-day sings, two-day sings and four-day sings, all for the curing of disease.

Thirty miles square of mountain-top in northeastern New Mexico is the reservation of the Jicarilla Apaches. There is no more reason why these people should be termed Jicarilla Apaches than that the Navajos should be termed Navajo Apaches. The only thing in common with the Jicarilla and the Apache groups proper is the linguistic relationship. In appearance, life, and manners they resemble more the Northern Plains Indians.

It is with the Jicarillas that we see the dividing-line between the great Northwest plains tribes and the countless numbers of desert and village Indians of the Southwest and Mexico. Their culture shows the contact with both with a slight leaning toward the ways of the northern brothers. Their domicile, while not well constructed,

is the tepee of the plains peoples. The feather head-dress is also worn by them, whereas with the Apaches the head-dress of this kind is unknown.

In their legends and myths they closely resemble the Navajos. Their origin legend, the story of the Deluge, their person of miraculous birth and the countless miracles which he performed, are almost identical with those of the Navajo.

They were not continuously at war with the Whites as the White Mountain Apaches were. However, by those who have lived in the region of the Jicarilla reservation they are considered "a bad lot." They are unfortunately, brought much in contact with the Mexicans, and from them get liquor. This fact, undoubtedly, is greatly responsible for their unsavory reputation.

Their reservation as a place upon which a community of people are expected to be self-supporting is a rather hopeless one. It might be asked why this unfortunate selection was made. Such questions are difficult to answer. It is not their original home; it was set aside for them and they were moved upon it. At that time they, like nearly all Indians, were drawing rations, and it is likely that any place where there was room enough for them to roam about answered as well as any other. As a place to live, if one is relieved of the necessity of being self-supporting, it is ideal, and in the summer-time at least is a wonderfully beautiful spot and should make glad the heart of the aborigine as well as the scenic-surfeited ultra-civilized. Owing to the high altitude, the great depth of winter snow makes sheep-raising impracticable. Being on the divide, there is no extensive water-shed, which makes irrigation a serious question with the chances against a successful outcome. Since the Government ceased issuing rations the Indians have been given employment on irrigation works.

This effort to irrigate is by means of small reservoirs depending on the winter snow-fall or flood season for their water-supply. It is too early yet to say whether the effort will meet with any degree of success or not. The summer grazing is good and with a small acreage of irrigated land which would supply the necessary winter food, Jicarilla would easily be self-supporting.