

about seven miles up the valley, and encamped one mile below Rock Independence. This is an isolated granite rock, about 650 yards long, and 40 in height. Except in a depression of the summit, where a little soil supports a scanty growth of shrubs, with a solitary dwarf pine, it is entirely bare. Everywhere, within six or eight feet of the ground, where the surface is sufficiently smooth, and in some places 60 or 80 feet above, the rock is inscribed with the names of travellers. Many a name famous in the history of this country, and some well known to science, are to be found mixed among those of the traders and of travellers for pleasure and curiosity, and of missionaries among the savages. Some of these have been washed away by the rain, but the greater number are still very legible. We remained at our camp of August 1st, until noon the next day, occupied in drying meat. By observation, the longitude of the place is 107 deg. 25 min. 23 sec., latitude 42 deg. 29 min. 56 sec.

#### AMERICAN ANTIQUITIES.

##### *A description of the Ceremonies of Fire Worship, as practised by certain Tribes on the Arkansas.*

Mr. Ash witnessed an exhibition of fire worship, or the worship of the sun, as performed by a whole tribe at the village of Ozark, near the mouth of the Ozark, or Arkansas river, which empties into the Mississippi from the west.

He says he arrived at the village at a very fortunate period; at a time when it was filled with Indians, and surrounded with their camp. They amounted to about 900, and were composed of the remnants of various nations, and were worshippers of the sun. The second day after his arrival happened to be the grand festival among them. He had the most favourable opportunity of witnessing their adorations at three remarkable stages—the sun's rising, meridian, and setting.

The morning was propitious, the air serene, the horizon clear, the weather calm. The nations divided into classes: warriors, young men and women, and married men with their children. Each class stood in the form of a quadrant, that each individual might behold the rising luminary, and each class held up a particular offering to the sun the instant he rose in his glory. The warriors presented their arms, the young men and women offered ears of corn and branches of trees, and married women held up to his light their infant children. These acts were performed in silence till the object of their adoration visibly rose, when, with one impulse, the nations burst into praise, and sung a hymn in loud chorus. The lines, which were sung with repetitions, and marked by pauses, were full of sublimity and judgment. Their meaning, when interpreted, is as follows:—

“Great Spirit! master of our lives. Great Spirit! master of things visible and invisible, and who daily makes them visible and invisible. Great Spirit! master of every other spirit, good or bad; command the good to be favourable to us, and deter the bad from the commission of evil. O, Grand Spirit! preserve the strength and courage of our warriors, and augment their number, that they may resist the oppression of the Spanish enemies, and recover the country and the rights of our fathers. O, Grand Spirit! preserve the lives of such of our old men as are inclined to give counsel and example to the young. Preserve our children, multiply their number, and let them be the comfort and support of declining age. Preserve our corn and our animals, and let no famine desolate the land. Protect our villages, guard our lives. O, Great Spirit! when you hide your light behind the western hills, protect us from the Spaniards, who violate the night, and do evil which they dare not commit in the presence of your beams. Good Spirit! make



known to us your pleasure, by sending to us the Spirit of dreams. Let the Spirit of dreams proclaim your will in the night, and we will perform it through the day; and if it say the time of some be closed, send them, Master of Life! to the great country of souls, where they may meet their fathers, mothers, children, and wives, and where you are pleased to shine upon them with a bright, warm, and perpetual blaze! O, Grand, O, Great Spirit! hearken to the voice of *nations*, hearken to all thy children, and remember us always, for we are descended from thee."

Immediately after this address, the four quadrants formed one immense circle, of several deep, and danced and sung hymns descriptive of the power of the sun, till near ten o'clock. They then amused and refreshed themselves in the village and camp, but assembled precisely at the hour of twelve, and formed a number of circles, commenced the adoration of the meridian sun. The following is the *literal* translation of the mid-day address:—

"Courage, nations! courage! The Great Spirit looks down upon us from his highest seat, and by his lustre appears content with the children of his own power and greatness. Grand Spirit! how great are his works and how beautiful are they! How good is the Great Spirit! He rides high to behold us. 'Tis he who causes all things to augment and to act. He even now stands for a moment to hearken to us. Courage, nations! courage! The Great Spirit, now above our heads, will make us vanquish our enemies; he will cover our fields with corn, and increase the animals of our woods. He will see that the old be made happy, and that the young augment. He will make the nations prosper, make them rejoice, and make them put up their voice to him, while he rises and sets in their land, and while his heat and light can thus gloriously shine out."

This was followed by dancing and hymns, which continued from two to three hours; at the conclusion of which, dinners were served and eaten with great demonstrations of mirth and hilarity. Mr. Ash says he dined in a circle of chiefs, on a barbecued hog, and venison very well stewed, and was perfectly pleased with the repast. The dinner and repose after it, continued till the sun was on the point of setting. On this being announced by several who had been on the watch, the nations assembled in haste, and formed themselves into segments of circles in the face of the sun, presenting their offerings during the time of his descent, and crying aloud:—

"The nations must prosper; they have been beheld by the Great Spirit. What more can they want? Is not that happiness enough? See! he retires, great and content, after having visited his children with light and universal good. O, Grand Spirit! sleep not long in the gloomy west, but return and call your people once again to light and life, to light and life, to light and life."

This was succeeded by dances and songs of praise, till eleven o'clock at night, at which hour they repaired to rest, some retiring to the huts that formed their camp, and others to the vicinity of fires made in the woods, and along the river bank. Mr. Ash took up his abode with a French settler in the village. He understood that these Indians have four similar festivals in the year—one for every season. When the sun does not shine or appear on the adoration days, an immense fire is erected, around which the ceremonies are performed with equal devotion and care.

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#### *Origin of Fire Worship.*

For many ages the false religions of the east had remained stationary; but in this period, *magianism* received considerable strength from the writings of Zoroaster. He was a native of Media. He pretended to a visit in heaven, where God spoke to him out of a fire. This fire he pretended to bring with him on his return. It was considered holy—the dwelling of God. The priests were for ever to keep it, and the people were to worship before it. He caused fire temples every where to be erected, that storms and tempests might not extinguish it. As he considered God as dwelling in the fire, he made the sun to be his chief residence,



and therefore the *primary* object of worship. He abandoned the old system of two gods, one good and the other evil, and taught the existence of one Supreme, who had under him a good and evil angel—the immediate authors of good and evil. To gain reputation, he retired into a cave, and there lived a long time a recluse, and composed a book called the *Zend-Avesta*, which contains the liturgy to be used in the fire temples, and the chief doctrines of his religion. His success in propagating his system was astonishingly great. Almost all the eastern world, for a season, bowed before him. He is said to have been slain, with eighty of his priests, by a Scythian prince, whom he attempted to convert to his religion.

It is manifest that he derived his whole system of God's dwelling in the fire from the burning bush, out of which God spake to Moses. He was well acquainted with the Jewish Scriptures. He gave the same history of the creation and deluge that Moses had given, and inserted a great part of the Psalms of David into his writings. The Mehestani, his followers, believed in the immortality of the soul, in future rewards and punishments, and in the purification of the body by fire; after which they would be united to the good.—(*Marsh's Ecclesiastical History*, p. 78.) From the same origin, that of the burning bush, it is altogether probable the worship of fire, for many ages, obtained over the whole habitable earth, and is still to be traced in the funeral piles of the Hindoos, the beacon fires of the Scotch and Irish, the periodical midnight fires of the Mexicans, and the council fires of the North American Indians, around which they dance.

A custom among the natives of New Mexico, as related by Baron Humboldt, is exactly imitated by a practice found still in some parts of Ireland, among the descendants of the ancient Irish.

At the commencement of the month of November, the great fire of *Samhuin* is lit up, all the culinary fires in the kingdom being first extinguished, as it was deemed sacrilege to awaken the winter's social flame except by a spark snatched from this sacred fire; on which account the month of November is called in the Irish language, Samhuin.

To this day, the inferior Irish look upon bonfires as sacred; they say their prayers, walking round them, the young dream upon their ashes, and the old take this fire to light up their domestic hearths, imagining some secret undefinable excellence connected with it.

#### THE JOINT STOCK COMPANY.

We again recur to this subject, and shall continue to do so frequently, in order that we may sufficiently impress the minds of the Saints with the importance of it. We are greatly encouraged in our efforts for the completion of the company from time to time, by the good wishes and labours of others, and particularly by those of our esteemed and very zealous trustee, Mr. Samuel Downes, of Manchester, whose labours in the cause are unceasing, and who by his great success realizes the result of his efforts. We have received advices from him, stating that he has on hand applications for 1200 shares, and he calculates on obtaining some 600 more yet in the Manchester Conference. We have made this statement for the encouragement of others, and to show what may be done by diligence and activity in such a cause. Much depends upon official characters in connexion with the company for the promotion of its interests, as also upon Presidents of Branches and Conferences, that by their diligence and example others may be led to assist and support so great and powerful an auxiliary to the building up of the kingdom of God as such a company is calculated to be.

Many faithful Saints, and well-wishers to the cause of God, have long desired to see established some plan by which the genius, talent, mechanical skill, and pecu-