

## Indians observe the Day.

Moquis celebrated Christmas long before Columbus came to Discover America.

IN the course of studies of Christmas observances in America attaches of the government bureau of ethnology have discovered that the festival was known to and strictly observed by the Moqui Indians long before Columbus discovered the continent. What is more, they pursue the practice even to the present day and there is much merry mumming at or about December 25, with exchange or gifts and masquerading by persons who are got up in picturesque costumes to represent supernatural beings.

The St. Nicholas of the Moqui, however, is the sun god, and their festival is to celebrate his commencing return northward from the land of shadows that is supposed to be located in the far south. On the top of the highest building in the town the priest of the sun stands and looks away 100 miles southwest, where the great San Francisco mountain uplifts its rocky mass out of the desert. One end of the mountain is prolonged to the Eldon mesa by a series of foothills, and between the end of the mesa and the second series of hills is a peculiar notch. In this notch is supposed to be the sun house — the place where the sun god has his home.

When the solar orb sinks at nightfall into that notch it has reached its most distant point of the horizon, and the 21st day of December has arrived. Formal notice of the fact is given by the sun priest, and an announcement is made of a general rejoicing. Various divinities, dressed in strange costumes, will appear in the town and the occasion will be signalized by a mystery play symbolizing the struggle of the sun against the powerful devils which try to keep him back and prevent him from returning to the north.

The sun god has a number of dangerous enemies — hostile deities, among whom the most powerful is the great