

"A TARUMA VARIATION IN THE STORY OF CREATION".

For some months I had been doing exploration work for an overseas concern in the forests around the sources of the Essequibo River, the least known part of the Colony, where the only inhabitants are the scattered remnants of the Taruma Tribe. I had with me "Saik Tau" a full blooded Taruma, who spoke Wapichan and Waiwai equally well as also his own language. The only other person with me was a young Taruma also, a nephew of Saik Tau, known as Jargi (the Taruma word for nephew). One night across the flickering firelight of our camp I heard a long lecture by Saik Tau to the nephew, and when he was finished I asked him to tell me what it was all about in Wapichan. I forget now what is the Taruma word for Tuminikar, but their Duid is the same as the Wapichan. I shall use Tuminikar as the name of the "Maker".

"Once upon a time before there were any people there were only Tuminikar and Duid in the world - two brothers who lived together. Tuminikar, the elder, made everything in this world, the birds, the animals and everything. The younger was Duid who tended the fire, cooked the meals and did whatever the elder brother ordered him to do. Duid was most unreliable; seldom did anything aright - a happy-go-lucky fellow - as even the Duid of the Tribe today - likeable and unstable.

In these days the brothers lived largely on fish, and there was one particular pool in which they caught most of their supplies. If Tuminikar was busy, Duid went alone, but if no work was on hand they would both take their rods and tackle and go fishing.

One day both brothers were fishing when Duid got a strange

bite on his line. Cautiously he drew up his hook to find, not a fish, but a strange implement which showed it had had constant and quite recent use. They scrutinised it carefully and took it home at night, when Tuminikar hung it up on the wall in his hut. Every day after that, when they went fishing, they brought up something new from the depths of the pool until Tuminikar decided they were articles that belonged to Woman. They varied the size of their hooks almost every day to suit different sizes of fish, as also the bait to attract them, and thus they got different articles, a fan today, a grater tomorrow, a comb the day after and so on. They kept on fishing and fishing each day, adding some new article to those on the wall of the hut already until they had everything that belongs to Woman such as every one uses today, even to her hammock; her beads; the paints which she uses to beautify herself with; the sweet smelling pigments so carefully hidden from us with which to make herself more seductive to us, and to ensure the love of any man they wish; even to those things she uses when she is sick according to her custom.

Meanwhile Duid had been making a variety of new hooks and baits, and particularly one from the jawbone of an alligator to which he attached a long new stout line of silkgrass. When he got it finished and was itching to try it out, it so happened Tuminikar was very busy that day, and so he went off alone. He had scarcely seen his new hook disappear in the deep waters of the pool when he felt a mighty tug. This time he had hooked something big, heavy and strong, so he dug his heels in the sand by the pool and pulled with all his strength. Presently there appeared the head, the shoulders and finally the body of Woman. He drew her clear of the water and stared at her in surprise. Disentangling herself from the hook, the Woman soon stood up when the beautiful curves of her body and her modestly shy glances at her captor

stirred some new unknown forces in Duid's mind and body.

Taking her by the hand, he led her by a round-of-way path to his own hut where he hid her behind a screen, and then lay down himself to rest. Towards evening Tuminikar, having finished his work, came out of his hut and called Duid to bring up their dinner. Duid answered that he had fished all day without success and that he was so tired that he had already lain down for the night.

Next morning Tuminikar shouted "Let us go fishing Duid", but Duid excused himself on some plea or other. That evening Duid again had a very valid excuse from not joining Tuminikar and so on for several days. He would be out and do various little jobs around the place, but on no account would he go out of sight of his hut.

Tuminikar began to suspect something behind all this, so on the fourth day he marched straight into Duid's hut, saw the screen which he tore down and ^{found} ~~saw~~ the woman. "So you caught Woman and this is why you do nothing these days" shouted Tuminikar in anger as he aimed a cuff at Duid's head, but already Duid was through the door. Tuminikar gazed long on the lovely form before him, then taking her hand in his he led her out and installed her in his own hut on whose walls already hung her every article either for home or personal use.

Happily they lived together, they loved each other and had children. It is from their children and their children's children that we - the Taruma - are descended.

Wapichanna Myth of Creation

"AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING:"

We were travelling up country by river in a native boat manned by some dozen Aboriginal Indians of the Wapichan^{na} Tribe and captained by Dukeri, one of the few remaining (almost) pure blooded Atarods. It was still early afternoon when we reached a large sandbank immediately below a considerable cataract which meant several hours hard work in getting the boat and supplies over, so it was decided to go into camp as the place offered wide open space to move about in, clear sky overhead, and a pleasant contrast to the towering forests that edge and flank the river generally, in the gloom of which our camp had been pitched for the last ten days or so.

The Indians also "wanted a rest" from the monotony of steady paddling and hard work day after day, and the cataract above spelled recreation to them, as, with their bows and arrows, they would get much fun and amusement, from their point of view, in shooting some choice fish that live around the rocks, while the adjacent high forest might yield some sort of game that would augment our rather depleted supplies. *of food.*

In the "Bush" the evening meal or dinner is generally served about sundown to allow washing up and other duties to be got through with before darkness sets in. Having finished dinner I strolled out of camp in the rapidly falling dusk for a quiet smoke till I found a convenient rock on which I sat down with the river flowing along within a foot or two. It was now delightfully cool after the tropical heat of the day penned in between the walls of a 200 feet high forest; a beautiful evening with an almost cloudless sky where a crescent moon shed a soft pale light over our camp and surroundings. A few last tints of a gorgeous sunset gave a little colour to the fast fading scene. Immediately in front ran the river,

silent, calm, mysterious, almost ink-black in the deepening night, its surface broken now and again by the splash and play of fishes in pursuit of food and flicked with great patches of foam and spume from the cataract above us as they whirled and spun seaward, very much like the cakes of ice on a home river in winter. The opposite bank showed sombre and dark - a towering bank of forbidding forest. Just behind ^{us} rose that forest wall also, but lit by the pale moonlight the weathered grey bark of the nearest trees showed up weird and spectral, the inky caverns between and beyond their trunks stabbed by the twinkling lights of innumerable fireflies. Up river the fall showed up, a bar of white from bank to bank except where broken by rock and island. Down river our camp fires glowed in bright contrast to the sombre river and forest, around which could be seen the dusky forms of the Indians moving silently to and fro while attending to last remaining chores of the day.

Presently I saw two of the Indians slip noiselessly out of camp moving along towards me till they reached my rock and sat down. It was old Dukeri and a young lad in his early teens making his first trip to the coast and back, and who was Dukeri's special attendant. At once they fell into conversation and I then realised that the old man had brought the youth out to tell over to him some of the oral traditions of the tribe in ideal environment and comparative quiet.

It is not necessary to follow Dukeri in detail through the peculiar, sometimes painfully slow process of leading up from the things of the moment, the doings of the day, to the subject at heart that is common to the ^{aboriginal} Indian method and mind. He touched on this and on that, each remark one step onwards till he got into his stride on his story proper. I was near enough to hear all that was said, and here follows as good a rendering as I can give of the more important

sayings and the story told.

"Ung Takan", began Dukeri, "my grandchild", your father handed you over as my special attendant on this your first trip to the "River Mouth" (Wanam), and in no one could he have better confidence. For three people and ten (70) times have I seen the seasons change and the fish, Dowbar and Paku, ascend the rivers to span^w in the Savannahs, and for more rains than you have I have sat in the councils of our Tribe to deal with the cases laid before the Chiefs and Headmen of Villages. I also know the River as I know my hand, its many cataracts and channels from its source till it is lost in the Parana Bowk (the ocean). I know the pools that hide evil monsters: the rocks that will strike you blind if your tender eye should glimpse *them* without due precaution, and every other danger of our route. In safety have I brought you past all these and I have told you the story of rock, pool, ^{and} mountain, so that when you come to hold the steersman's paddle in your turn, you may guide those under you in safety and tell such youths as make the journey for the first time of the many dangers that beset them. I am growing old now and may not be with you much longer; you are approaching manhood and I would not have you ignorant of our oral teaching of "Long Ago" (Wap- "Kuti Ai Now Paradan" - Meaning "Long ago those have spoken"), so that you can also pass on our legends to your children and your children's children. - "Kaimen Pu Abat, Ung Takan" (Listen well, my grandchild) tonight I shall repeat to you our "Story of the Beginning".

In the beginning as my father and his father's father have said there were two brothers, the one called Tuminikar, the other Duid. Tuminikar (Wap:- "Tum" verb to make, regular tenses-- Tuman, Tumini, Tumairun, Tumakakun, etc,etc) was the Maker. He, it was, who made everything we know, the world in general (Amarad), the

beasts, the birds, the fishes and even those people, our first forefathers. Duid made nothing, he generally did what Tuminikar wished him to do, but even these orders he carried out in such a careless, haphazard and untrusty manner as to cause annoyance and shame to Tuminikar. He was such an unreliable person, so really bad in many ways that as you know every really wicked boy in our Tribe whom no one seems able to control or to make conform to our general tribal rule and behaviour, is always called Duid. Tuminikar was altogether good. He created everything but never did anyone harm. Duid was just the opposite, made nothing and was always up to pranks that got people into trouble. It is Duid who leads you to do wrong, to lie, to steal, to deceive and many other things that lead to the cases that so often come before the Chiefs of our Tribe for remedy or adjustment, so walk very, very warily, Ung Takan. You may forget Tuminikar, but do not forget Duid, as in that moment of forgetfulness, he will trip you up and you will have to walk with the down cast eye and with shame on your face. Propitiate Duid; order him away but forget him not.

Out of nothing, Tuminikar made Man. He just made him, but finding Man was lonely and unhappy by himself, he formed Woman. He made her from the dung of an alligator, but she proved unpleasant to the Man. He objected to the sickly smell she gave off, so Tuminikar took a small bone from the left forearm of Man, which he formed into a new Woman and gave life to. She proved to be pleasant to Man's every sense; he loved her and soon they had a growing family.

To Duid was given the task of feeding these people. Every morning and evening he appeared with a large basket containing fruits, nuts, and edible tubers, just enough to satisfy all. ⁶⁵⁹ At that time the people did no work, they played with the children or the animals. They had a common language with all the beasts, the birds and other

forms of life, such as a few privileged people today still have.

As the families increased in number they began to become curious as to where Duid got the daily supply of food from. They would question Duid often and long, but to none would he give any indication where he got these foods. Still they remained curious and this led to further enquiry and investigation.

One day two young maidens went for a stroll in the forests, and chanced to meet a very disconsolate flea who was crying bitterly. They stopped to comfort him and ask what the trouble was. The flea told them he always rode on a certain Agouti, but that morning he had lost his balance, had fallen off unknown to his steed, and being so small had got completely lost in the surrounding tangle of leaves, saplings and trees. The Agouti had a well worn road somewhere along which he always raced to a spot where he got an ample supply of food and nuts for himself and family, but in which direction, the flea was in doubt, so the girls hastened home to call assistance to help the poor creature out of his troubles.

They were not long in locating the Agouti's road along which everybody hastened in search of the lost steed. They went on and on till presently they came to an enormous tree on which they saw growing every form of fruit such as Duid brought them each morning and evening. Digging in the ground revealed the yams, sweet potatoes, cassava, and other tubers they were eating daily.

Aha ! so this was the source of Duid's supplies. Now was their chance to eat just what each liked best, and as much as each wanted. After satisfying everyone's need, they left for home, each person carrying as much as possible of what they fancied for the evening meal.

At the customary hour that evening along came Duid with his usual basket of supplies, but everybody simply roared with

laughter at him. After teasing him some time they showed Duid the foods they had already got, and told him he need^ont bring any more, as they could now procure their own just as each liked. Duid was astounded and flinging down his basket on the ground, strode off to inform Tuminikar of what had happened. Very soon Tuminikar appeared before his people saying "What is this you people have done? I am very angry with you and I now go to cut down the tree you found. Every one of you must come now and select such seeds, nuts and roots that you like. These you must plant and so feed yourselves in future."

Tuminikar picked up an axe and set off through the forests to the tree with every person close behind. They quickly arrived and at once Tuminikar began to fell it. With a great crashing noise it fell to the ground. As you all know the axe falls with least effort at about waist height unless when a tree carries buttresses. Then we build a staging, it may even be to the height of two people and there we fell our tree, and it was thus that Tuminikar felled that tree. Long, long ago, the trunk and branches have rotted away and been lost, but the stump remains intact and now forms, as every one knows, the mountain we all call Rorawim (Mt: Roraima).

No sooner had the tree fallen than an enormous stream of water gushed from its butt, sweeping nearly every one standing around away to almost certain death in its rushing fury. In fact all might have gone, but fortunately one man wore suspended round his neck the bill of a large Muscovi Duck, which at once he launched on the flood. Hurriedly he embarked his wife and children, grabbing such seeds and nuts as were within reach, he hurled them into his craft, and jumping in himself, pushed off on the waters just as the whole world was becoming submerged.

The little family floated off in safety in their tiny craft.

For many days they drifted hither and thither with no knowledge as to where they were. At length their boat touched on something and feeling underneath they found they were resting on a rock. The water had begun to take off and soon they were able to get out on to solid land. Day by day as the floods crept slowly down, they found they were on a mountain top. They would pick up rocks to fling them as far as they could to learn from the sound - plung-ng-ng-ng- when the stone fell in the waters just how deep it was, but to their dismay only deep waters were heard on every side.

At last a small patch of comparatively level land showed up carrying some good soil on which they at once began to plant the seeds and nuts and tubers they had with them. They also built a house as they had to tend the field carefully, as also to wait till the floods completely dried off. Later on the savannahs appeared, broad and undulating and they were able to come down and walk about, and eventually, to leave the mountain entirely to settle on the level plains below.

That mountain is known to all as Siriri (Plantain Mt:), and even today when our supplies of plantain suckers run short from drought or other cause, do not we climb to the ^{at} first field high up on Siriri to obtain a new supply, as, there, they never die out completely. Around the mountain's foot do not we see the rocks lying scattered all about which these first people flung down to test the depth of the waters of the receding flood.

On your recent visit to the "River Mouth", Ung Takan, you have seen many new forms of foods that are strange. It may be that seeds were swept away to spring up elsewhere after the flood, it may be that other people were saved also, as, in recent years, strange peoples- the Mikur (Negro), the Paranakarri (English), the Karaiwa (Portuguese)- have come amongst us, and all bring strange new foods. Still though

strange to us they were not to those of long ago. Even the white flour (Prum) which tastes so good and made from some plant that even I do not know, even that and every other you may see once grew on the tree of Rerawin.

UNG TAKAN. UNG SUMATINAIRUN.

(My Grandchild. I wish to smoke.)

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for me

For over an hour I had lain prone in one position listening silently to the old man's story, and aching, almost to cramp, I welcomed a break in the narrative to move to a different position. As I did so the youth immediately scrambled to his knees and seizing a nearby dead branch of a tree, was on the defensive. Completely carried away by Dukeri's eloquence, the strain of following the tale, and the absorbing mental environment, the youth had become oblivious to everything around him, and my small movement, although full well he knew I was there, had brought him back somewhat rudely to this world of ordinary life and affairs, with its ever present need of vigilance so necessary to the Child of the Forest in evading actual and possible danger, especially that of Kenaima, seldom far from the mind of any Aboriginal Indian, and particularly so in a part of the country far from his home, where every mountain, rock and pool held fabulous monsters - imaginary in all probability but none the less real to his primitive and biased mind.

Instantly Dukeri stretched out a hand, grasped the youth's shoulder and pressed him back to the earth saying "Do not start or be frightened, it is our Naubanna (Patron, Master, Boss), and already he has much knowledge. I have told him of many things and he does not become angry or ridicule, so sit still and be quiet."

The old man had a basket hung from one shoulder, - the inevitable peg-all (hold-all) of his tribe - opening which, he drew forth tobacco and cigarette leaves; the former grown by himself in his own native field; the latter a laminated bark of a certain forest tree and cut into lengths of some 8 to 9 inches. With the dexterity of much and long practice, he soon had three cigarettes made, a match

was struck, and he lit all three passing one to me, one to his so-called grandson, while he kept the third for himself. Inhaling deeply and long the old man blew smoke up river, then down river and across murmuring "May Kenaima be far from us this night" before he again took up the thread of his interrupted narrative.

"Ung Taken" (My Grandson), When the waters had dried off and the savannahs appeared, gradually becoming clothed with grass and shrubs, the family came down from "Siriri", and built houses on the plains. Here they thrived and multiplied and became many until in time, they spread over the whole savannahs and even some went to live in the surrounding forests.

Tuminikar lived with them still. Changed into stone, do not we know, that the cakes of bread he last used and his other possessions, lie due East of the mountain Katambor. He helped his people by example and precept in those days, yet complete happiness or security was not theirs. Various men of huge form and armed with strange weapons came up against them to kill them off or carry them away, and they lived in almost constant dread of attack. Many great fights took place, but Tuminikar was there to assist and thus they were always successful.

At length however there came up one enormous giant called Baukur, of greater stature and strength than any hitherto. All the people were frightened at his very appearance and ran to hide, leaving Tuminikar alone to fight the ogre. Long and hard they fought; Tuminikar armed with the Shooting Stars; the Giant with the Lightning. For quite a time they were equally matched, but gradually Tuminikar grew tired and was beaten back from hill to hill until the Lightning flashing all over and round him, he was in grave danger of being killed. Tuminikar was now close to the forest behind the mountain of Katambor, and something must be done quickly; even the biggest and straightest Shooting Star seemed useless against the giant, so as a last resort he seized a huge

rock from a nearby hill. Quickly he tore this rock in twain, enclosed his only Son in it and stuck it together again. Taking careful aim he hove the rock at the giant. The aim was true, it struck Baukur low down on his side with such force that he fell to earth in agony from a dislocated hip. Instantly Tuminikar was on him and bound him hand and foot. Picking up the securely bound giant Tuminikar flung him far into the sky, and who does not know the constellation Baukur which to the Paranakarri (English) from beyond the seas is called Orion. Do not even we today see the ropes that bind, do not we see the drooping limb of Baukur that was smashed as he swings overhead at night. As Baukur rises over the rim of the World a bare hour ahead of the Sun, do not we, who are in the Councils of the Tribe and heads of families, know we have certain duties to attend to - the cutting or gathering of this or the planting of that.

Tuminikar now returned for the rock in which lay enclosed his only Son, but as he tore it open, he found him dead. He, who was the darling of the Tribe; He, whom every bird and animal worshipped, was dead. Oh! how we mourned; the long harrowing Hymn of Death was sung for many moons in every hut in the world.

So also mourned the birds and animals, and even today does not the Tukan (Toucan) Bird mourn, with his raucous yelping every morning and evening. He was Tuminikar Dan's (Wap: dan meaning child therefore the Maker's Son) particular pet and he has never forgotten his Kind Master. Has not the grief of years and the rivers of tears which he has shed, dissolved some of the gaudy colours of orange and black, red and green, and left a ring of a faded blue round each eye the width of the nail of a small finger.

Tuminikar took his dead son away and buried him. His heart was heavy and sad so he turned away and went forth from amongst his people and spake no more with them as at the first, but, ere he

went he told them that some day he would return and bring with him his only son also.

Just where Tuminikar Dan lies buried we do not exactly know, but we do know that on the way from Katamber to the forest behind where the rock rings hollow to even the tread of the careless passerby and more so to the stamp of the bare foot of the man with knowledge. In my goings to and fro I have often passed that way and I, as every man amongst us, have stamped that rock and stopped to listen to the hollow boo-o-o-om below. Few, today, have passed so often as I, and I know a difference in the sound.

That crust of rock and earth that holds Tuminikar Dan in its grip is wearing thin, thinner and thinner with the passing of every season of planting and reaping. Soon, soon, it may be tomorrow or the day after that rock will give way and Tuminikar Dan come forth to meet his father and to greet us his people.

Then assuredly shall we live in peace and contentment. Then the sun will no longer burn our crops; no more will the rivers rise in uncontrollable floods and rot our cassava; no more will the passing seasons cripple our limbs and dim our eyes and ears; no longer will Kenaima roam the country in stealth catching us unaware of his presence, when his arrows pierce our flesh and we are laid up in sickness or more often die. The Kenaima will be bound by Tuminikar even as he bound Baukur, and flung far into space also.

But- Kaimen Pu Irotan, Ung Takan - (Listen good and lay to heart, My Grandchild), only those who live good will be ⁶⁶⁸absolutely happy; those who obey their parents; those who are kind to and properly care for their children; those who hearken to the voice of their elders; those who keep in their hearts the remembrance and words of Tuminikar as handed down in the Tribe from father to son; only those will live with Tuminikar and his Son in Peace.

Such as steal and tell the lie, such as go roaming from woman to woman, such as are "Malenyan" (greedy, miserly, one of the worst of tribal sins) such as are cruel to their children or beat their wives with no just cause and do those things that is the prompting of Duid; with all such will Tuminikar be angry and drive far from him when even worse than now will be their troubles, ailments, and sorrow. Thus I warn you, my grandson, that you so live your life that whichever day Tuminikar may come back you may look him in the eye and not be ashamed with the sinking eye and down cast head, nor have the weak and trembling knee in fear of his anger.

And now, my Takan, we must to our hammocks. The moon is behind the forest and we must sleep. We shall suffer (Baiwep) from the cold, the mosquitoes will bite as also the sandflies and the fleas. We may dream of much that is bad or we may see those who have left us and are no more. The Waracabra Jaguar may growl at us and Kenaina pass close, but we must sleep as tomorrow we face the roaring waters of many cataracts and we must all be strong of arm and steady of foot to fight its fury in getting our boat and supplies safely over into smooth water above.

NARPSAFI.

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A TARUMA MYTH.

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We were a little party of six - a professor/anthropology, myself and four Aboriginal Indians. These latter had been selected from three different tribes, Atorad, Taruma, Wapichanna, on account of their fidelity to myself, their personality, their prowess as hunters, and above all their ability to read the ever changing pages of the colossal Amazon forests on some 1,000 miles of a journey in country which is the blackest (least known) part of the world to-day. We had been wandering for weeks in the forest of Brazil, South of British Guiana, an enormous area completely uninhabited except for, at distances of hundred miles or more apart, a few unknown scattered tribes of Aboriginal Indians, whose language and customs no one knows and to whom the introduction of white men might, to put it mildly, be decidedly unwelcome.

At the moment we were laboriously trying to decipher an old Indian trail, the only known connecting link between the MAPURA WAU and the TROMBETAS Rivers in Brazil along the crest of a chain of high hills. The trail had not been used for some years by anyone, and only an Indian possessing the acutest powers of observation and deduction could have followed it, so progress was slow and tedious, and to make matters worse it had rained "cats and dogs" all day. We had slithered down a particularly steep mountain side to find a noisy little creek which meant water - the absolute necessity of an overnight camp - but more useful still there was also a reef of wild plantains, and soon we had erected a dove-tailed benab - merely a sleeping triangular roof - to shelter us from the pelting rain. We cooked a scratch meal as we had no food of any kind except the little we shot along the route: hunting conditions had been the worst and we had no luck those days: we dug out dry clothes from our waterproof duffle bags; changed and hung up our hammocks in tiers under our miniature shelter, master and man irrespective of colour or creed, touching each other and were soon settled in for the night.

Under the 200 foot deep canopy of branch and leaf of the forest and the low dense cloud above it was pitch dark in camp by 6 o'clock: tired and weary we were all soon sound asleep slung in a triangle round a cheery central fire radiating heat to our chilled bodies and light by which to see our immediate surroundings if necessary. I was awakened some hours later by the motion of my hammock. Someone was apparently moving: the fire had died down to invisibility and it was pitch dark. Presently I heard a grumble "Why on earth did I ever come on this trip? Here I am cold, hungry and tired whereas if I had stayed at home I would have been comfortable and warm and loved in my own home". The Indian swung out of his hammock and began blowing with his breath, the ash-covered embers of our almost extinct fire until he had a bright cheery flame going again, when there came a voice from another hammock and "You wouldn't be one whit better if you were at home and well you know it". "Let me tell you" said the first speaker, "In the roof of my house hangs enough corn to last a whole year. I can eat when I like. I need not work unless I choose and I've a sweet little wife to love and warm me if I'm cold. Now here I am toiling up and down these beastly mountains and all for ---" "Oh shut up", said the youngest and only unmarried member of the boys, "you are toiling, yes, and for jolly good wages everyday while you are away from home. At the rate we are going, by the time we get home, you will have such a lot of

goods (payment being made in trade goods as money had no value to any of these men) that you will incite the love of every girl of your tribe, only it will be rather embarrassing in the case of an old sinner like you. Now I am young and attractive and instead of moping here like you I'm laughing all the time and looking ahead to the day when I get home and oh! boy!!!

"Speak for yourself, you young imp", came the reply, "but when you have learnt the tribal lore and classics as I, an old sinner, have done and you can read the signs under your nose as now, you will find times when, even against your will, your thoughts will turn to comfort and love." "Not much sign of love up here", said the youngster, "and under my nose - hrrrump - just what?" "I am of the TARUMA tribe", said the older man, "and as you are not, it is mine to excuse your ignorance, but I tell you that with every sign so easily read we are camping in the love nest of MATATIJI AND KAKANDAN." "And just who are they?" chimed in a low voice. "Ah! that is a long story" said the old man. "Tell it; tell it", said each in turn. "Let us all make a long cigarette first however".

The Taruma Tribe, quickly dying out when I met them over 30 years ago, and now practically extinct, had had at no time any active connection with the white man and civilization except for a recognised trader or two of their tribe, who, once a year at the most, made the long 200-mile journey through the forest to barter with a neighbouring tribe such commodities as they could make in exchange for a few knives, fish hooks or other necessities. Thus they were completely unsophisticated; uninfluenced by so-called progressive ideas; each guided solely by his personal experience and observation to a large extent, although modified by the oral traditions of his tribe and the wisdom of his elders. To such people each phenoma, the flora and fauna around him, and even the rocks and solid earth, has a personality of its own combined with a general language through which he knows their characters (to which he must accord fear, respect or ridicule), just as well as he knows the hates, the loves, and other idiosyncrasies of his intimate friends and fellow tribesmen.

Cigarettes had been made, each man now curled up comfortably in his hammocks and after a short silence the Taruma began his story.

There was a great chief once who had a daughter. As she came to the age of marriage she developed the most lovely form, colour, eyes and such sweet ways in behaviour as made her desirable to every man not only in her own tribe but also far beyond. Her name was MATATIJI and suitors were constantly making offers for her hand; so many of them that it was impossible for her father to decide who would make the best husband for his daughter. In his dilemma he set aside the customary tribal rules of marriage, and said he would leave the ultimate decision to MATATIJI herself, a very unusual proceeding, but which gave no better results as none that came asking her consent got anything further than the ordinary civilities of the daughter of any house to a stranger. Her beauty got noised around till every one knew and many, from a long distance, started on the journey to MATATIJI'S home, although most of them failed to reach it owing to the many guards and difficulties on the way.

One very determined suitor was a bachelor, Turtle, who had made more than one attempt to reach the Lady's home, but who had received very severe handling from the guards and always found himself back at his starting point. He was bemoaning his fate one day when a voice near him said: "You always travel by day, but why not walk only in the dark of night?"

"Because I can see the dangers so much better in the day" replied the Turtle. "You stay here until it is completely dark and I will help you", said the voice. The Turtle withdrew into his shell where he stayed until he heard his name being called. On poking his head out he found KAKANDAN (the Light in the Dark) lying beside him.

"Pick me up and carry me in your hand", said KAKANDAN, "by my light you will see the way and many dangers will be asleep in the dark." So off they set and travelled far in safety. One night however the Turtle saw two bright lights ahead which filled him with dismay. "Here is the Jaguar who attacked me, the scar of whose teeth you can still see on my shell", he shouted. "Don't be afraid", said KAKANDAN, "the Jaguar has no friends except his own wife, and if you wave me about in the air, he will think it is some new enemy, and will turn aside and leave us alone." The Turtle did as he was told and to his surprise the Jaguar disappeared and they saw him no more.

Together they journeyed on many nights very **successfully**. They had noted various vines drawn tightly across their path which from experience Turtle knew were traps of kinds set by the orders of the Great Chief to protect his daughter. They always turned to one side and walked round these with no harm. One night however something fell with a thud on the ground quite close. Turtle stopped at once. "Now what was that?" he inquired. "It is only a ripe fruit that has dropped from a wild cashew tree," said KAKANDAN. "Oh dear", said Turtle shaking with fear, "it was under such a tree that I met MAIPURI who kicked and trampled me so badly that I almost died." "It will be all right", said KAKANDAN, "put me down by the side of that old tacuba (fallen log) and we will stop here for you to eat a good meal. Just before daylight you go and start eating these fruits. You must shout loudly for the MAIPURI to come and join you. He will think how kind you are and won't hurt you."

The Turtle did as he was told and presently MAIPURI (*Tapir*) came crashing through the forest to see who was calling him. On hearing that Turtle had called him to share in a feed of nice ripe cashews he was very pleased and complimented Turtle on his hospitality. Together they ate fruit all morning until MAIPURI remembered it was time for his usual bath and he went off. Turtle returned to the tacuba and slept for the rest of the day in comfort.

Again they journeyed on by night a long distance, but they had only one fright. There was quite a noise overhead, branches were shaking and a number of shrill voices chattering. "Monkeys, monkeys," said Turtle, his face pale with fear, and he began to withdraw his head inside his shell. "They caught me before and tossed me to one another like a ball, when they finally flung me far into the forest every bone in my body ached and I couldn't walk for days". "Which monkey was it?" asked KAKANDAN. "The black Spider monkey", replied Turtle. "They don't move at night, silly", said KAKANDAN. "They are all curled up in a heap for warmth in some hole in a tree. Those above us are the KINKAJU (Night Monkey) and they harm no one."

They resumed their journey and after a long distance came to a large creek. "I have never been so far as this before", said the Turtle, "and the trouble is that I cannot swim." "That is all right", said KAKANDAN. "Put me down on the bank here, then

take a long breath and walk across the bottom of the creek. If you let out a bubble of air now and again I can follow you". Turtle did as he was told and was soon out of sight in the water. Then KAKANDAN called to a passing Water Spider. "I want to cross this creek. Be a good chap, and give me a lift over: just follow that line of bubbles and set me down on the other bank".

Thus when Turtle came ashore on the other side he found KAKANDAN waiting, and picking him up in his hand again the pair continued on their way. It was not long before KAKANDAN spied a fine big house which they knew was the home of the Great Chief. "We are almost there so let us stop a moment to comb our hair and put some paint markings on our faces", said KAKANDAN to Turtle. "Now listen good, when we get to the house and meet the Chief or his daughter MATATIJI, you don't speak one word; you must wave me about as much as possible to show ourselves to them, but leave me to do all the talking".

They found MATATIJI sitting spinning by the fire outside the house but everyone else seemed asleep. KAKANDAN at once introduced himself and told the lady he had come to claim her as his bride. He told her how her father knew him very well but as the final choice lay with her, he had, having met her so unexpectedly not had time yet to pay his proper respects. He then told MATATIJI how the fame of her beauty had reached him; of the long, long journey he had done to reach her, and of all the dangers he had faced for her sake. MATATIJI'S head began to droop in becoming modesty to hide her sparkling eyes at the recital until at last she whispered, "I will marry you but you must carry me away to your own country at once." KAKANDAN made Turtle move up close to her and she jumped on Turtle's back and took a firm seat on his slippery shell. Turtle did not require much urging to leave the house. He raced through the forest in high spirits and soon he arrived at the same large creek. He laid KAKANDAN on the bank and MATATIJI slithered down to join him.

Turtle of course knew what he was to do, so without a word to any one, he took a long breath and entered the water. He soon reached the other side but there was no sign of either KAKANDAN or MATATIJI so he waited some time then began shouting to attract their attention. Receiving no reply he re-entered the water to return to see what was wrong, but owing to the strong current in the creek he came out on the bank far below where he had left the pair. Thus even until now we have this Turtle (~~YERIKO~~) walking up and down and across every creek in vain right up to where the waters are lost in the hills and mountains.

Just as soon as KAKANDAN and MATATIJI saw Turtle disappear under the water of the creek they were in each others arms in their first embrace of love and they have been husband and wife ever since."

"Can you wonder", continued the Taruma, "when I look around our camp and see it all shining with couples with only thoughts of love in their minds that I regret ever having come on this trip and that my own thoughts are far away with my wife and her sweet -----". Hei - i - i!! came an interruption from every Indian and there followed a spell of rather ribald badinage. After this had died down I chimed in: "But just who or what are KAKANDAN and MATATIJI?" For a little Taruma looked at me across

^{the} twinkling fire, then he reached out for his knife. He cut a couple of points off the huge leaves of our shelter and laid them on the fire. At once we were in complete darkness, and he pointed to the phosphorescence that can be found fairly commonly in the forest floor where the decaying leaves of certain trees develop this phenomena. "That is KAKANDAN" I was told: "Yes, I know that quite well, but where is MATATIJI?" I asked. "You see that bright circle of light over there that looks like one of the shining ear rings we make from the fresh water mussel. There is one big one and some smaller ones. The big one is MATATIJI: the smaller ones are her little children."

The rain had stopped and although I could see what was indicated I was no wiser, so I had my men blow up the fire and taking a burning faggot went to investigate. I found some form of fungus growing on the decaying trunk of a large prostrate tree. This took the form of a toad-stool whose rather jagged crown was about the size of a shilling in the case of the largest, and about the size of a shirt button in the smaller sizes. In the dark these toadstools were distinctly phosphorescent and could be easily seen at quite a distance, but on approaching them with a lighted stick they assumed a very ordinary appearance: that of a light brown rather ragged edged fungus of no very apparent charm and attached to the bark of the fallen tree by a thin, slender stem about half an inch long. Investigation in the broadlight the next morning confirmed these findings. This luminous toadstool seems rather rare in the forests as in the course of over 20 years wandering I doubt if I have seen it more than half a dozen times all told. Decaying leaf phosphorescence on the other hand is very common and can be seen at many places in the forest if the weather is wet or showery.

COCK OF THE ROCK

Tuminkar (He who makes) - God - had been busy making the Birds. There are many birds, each with its difference in form, shape or size, so it meant much work, thus there was not enough time to finish them completely. They were told what foods they were to eat and were ordered to play around, or search for what food they could find until He was ready to give them their different colourings - the one thing that was still lacking. The sun was high in the heavens when the last bird was turned out, and Tuminkar, as soon as he had finished breakfast, began to make paints of every colour and variety: some from the barks or leaves; from fruits, juices and seeds and others again from various coloured clays.

When all was ready He gave the signal for the Birds to assemble before Him. There was quite a large clearing round Tuminkar's house, beyond which stretched the forests as far as the eye of a man could see, to which most of the Birds had retired for shade and in which many of them were flying around having a merry carefree time. In the clearing, however, were some high bare rocks, on one of which was perched the Cock of the Rock, and as he was so near, naturally he was the first to arrive before He-who-makes. Tuminkar picked up a brush made from the fine fibres of a Silkgrass leaf and dipping it into one of the Monkey-pot gourds of paint standing near to hand, began painting Cock of the Rock the most beautiful shades of gold and yellow. Tuminkar looked at the effects produced and when satisfied, added a little thin, dark brown line of colour along the full length of Cock of the Rock's lovely crest near its outer edge as the mark of His handicraft, just as we still put a mark on our graters, or basketry when we make them to distinguish the work of each man of the tribe in case of any dispute arising at some time or other.

Cock of the Rock was then told to go away into the clearing and to spread out his wings in the rapidly declining sun to allow the paints to dry thoroughly before dark. By this time all the other birds had arrived and were standing impatiently around waiting to be painted and made lovely. Amongst these were the Macaws, the Parrots, Powis, Maams, Bush Turkeys, Marudis, Pigeons, Parroquettes, Duraquarras, Carapas, Lovebirds, Tropials, Ducks, Humming Birds - all pressing forward for their colour markings as soon as another bird got its coat - and amongst which, ^{whom} Cock of the Rock fondly hoped his good wife was included, although he had not seen her since he had hurriedly flown in answer to the signal calling everyone to appear to receive their colourings.

Cock of the Rock regained his old position on a high rock and carefully spreading out his wings in the sun, spent a couple of agreeable hours watching the different birds passing on each side of his perch in their varied coats of paint, none of whom to judge of the little he could see of himself, were any more lovely than himself.

Meanwhile Cock of the Rock's colouring had become perfectly dry: the sun was already low low down towards the forests and he was terribly thirsty, so he moved down to a pool of water for a drink. As he did so he was surprised to see his gorgeous colourings reflected in the pool, and, almost forgetting his thirst, stayed for a long time admiring his appearance, as he turned first this side and then that to his mirror.

It was already sunset, but it was also the night of full moon so the sun had already sunk behind the forest bank when Cock of the Rock decided that of all the birds Tuminkar had painted none were half as lovely as he was. In his excitement and pride he began dancing around on the rocks by the pool and he kept capering and dancing in the bright moonlight until he fell down in sheer exhaustion.

Unfortunately Lady Cock of the Rock had, early in the morning, sought the cool shade of some bushes where she had dropped asleep and had not heard the call of Tuminkar. When she awoke it was late afternoon and she had remained hid below her bush watching in admiration the wonderful colourings of her husband. When Cock of the Rock began dancing, she coyly drew near in the shelter of a few straws to watch his ⁶²⁷ skill and flashing colourings in the moonlight, but she took no part in the dance. It was only when Cock of the Rock fainted from fatigue that she rushed out from her hiding place and began to do whatever she could towards restoring him to life again.

The sun was above the forest when Cock of the Rock recovered from the swoon into which he had fallen and he was aghast to find his wife at his side without a spot of colour. He ordered her to go along at once and ask Tuminkar to be painted. He was unable to go with her as he still had a vile headache: his legs were still stiff and weary after his long dance: he was too tired to move and must have a long sleep.

Lady Cock of the Rock arrived to find only Duid outside the house, who, as soon as she spoke, burst out angrily, "Can you not see I am busy? I have all this mess to clean up and have all the paints to scrape out of these gourds so do not bother me." "But I must see He-who-makes", said Lady Cock of the Rock. "Well", bellowed Duid "you won't see him. He is still asleep after his hard work painting all these birds, so go away. Go away, I say." Lady Cock of the Rock stood silently in terror watching Duid scraping paints from the different vessels until in sheer desperation she asked "Could you not paint me, Mr. Duid?" Duid had just finished his work and straightening himself up he looked at the very pathetic little figure in front of him. He did not say a word but seizing a stick began stirring the paints all lying in a heap in a hole he had dug in the ground, then picking up one of the largest brushes lying around he dipped it in the paints and began work.

Cock of the Rock woke around noon to find his wife standing quite close to him with her wings stretched out for the paints to dry, and he nearly fainted again; this time in dismay at his dirty, drab coloured wife who had not a single fleck of any other colour to relieve the monotony. There was nothing they could do, however, as the colours had already dried completely and so she must remain for ever just as we see her today.

Cock of the Rock has always been ashamed of his wife's unattractive appearance, since, as we know, he shuns the forests except near high cliffs and rocks in which to hide when disturbed. We know how they make their home and nests on the faces of overhanging rocks where no other bird can find a resting place and how when they pass over water, which is a mirror to all the beasts and birds and all the world can see his colourless timid wife, there resounds around the rocks and far away across the forests his shriek of dismay and distress - the wellknown call of "Aa - oo - uch."

(The story always finishes with the Cock of the Rock's call - which is somewhat like that of the Peacock at home - when every listener bursts into prolonged roars of laughter).

"He- who- makes"- Tuminkar- God had been busy making the birds. There are many birds, each with its difference in form, shape and size so it meant much work. ^{HE} God thus had not the time to finish each bird completely, but they were told what food they were to eat, and could play around until He was ready to give them their various colourings. Tuminkar then made paints of every colour and variety; some from the bark or leaves of trees, from fruits and seeds and others again from various coloured clays. When all was ready, He gave the call for the birds to assemble before Him. There was quite a clearing round Tuminkar's House, beyond which stretched the forests as far as the eye of a man could see and in which ^{many} most of the birds were flying around and having a merry time. In the clearing however were some high tall rocks, on one of which was perched "Cock of the Rock", and as he was so near naturally he was the first to arrive before "He- who- makes". Tuminkar at once picked up a brush made from the fine fibres of a silkgrass leaf and dipping it in ^a ~~one~~ monkey pot gourds of paint standing nearby began painting Cock of the Rock the most beautiful shades of yellow; ~~all over~~. Tuminkar looked at the work and when satisfied, added a thin little dark brown line of colour along the full length of Cock of the Rock's crest near the outer edge as the mark of His handicraft, ^{just} ~~even~~ as we still put a mark on our graters when we make them to know the work of each man of the tribe.

Cock of the Rock was then told to go away, and spread out his wings in the sun to allow the paints to dry. By this time all the other birds had arrived and were standing impatiently around waiting to be painted and made lovely. There were the Macaws, the Parrots, Powis, Maams, Bush Turkeys, Marudis, Pigeons, Parroquets, Duraquarras, Carapas, Lovebirds, Tropials, Ducks, Humming-Birds-- all the birds waiting and pressing forward for their turn as soon as another bird had received its coat of colour.

It was late afternoon before

being thirsty he moved down to a pool of water for a drink

Meanwhile Cock of the Rock had become dry, and ~~when~~ he saw his lovely colours he began dancing all over the rock on which he stood in excitement, ^{as} ~~and~~ no other bird to his way of thinking was half

It was full moon

on the bare rocky

so pretty. He danced and capered all night in the bright moonlight until he fell down helpless in sheer exhaustion, ~~When~~^{his} his wife who ~~had been coyly hiding behind~~ ^{of vegetation} ~~crept out from~~ behind some tufts where she had been hiding in silent adoration of her wonderful husband, his gorgeous colouring and marvelous dancing ^{rushed out at once} to attend to the needs of her fainting spouse. ~~Even with~~ her administration, it was daybreak when Cock of the Rock recovered from the swoon into which he had fallen and then he discovered to his horror that his wife had not had her feathers painted. She had been so charmed with her husband's appearance that she had forgot all about it. Cock of the Rock was terribly annoyed and scolded his wife until the sun was ~~well up~~ ^{above} ~~over~~ the edge of the forest, then he ordered her to go along and ask Tuminkar to be painted. He was unable to go with her as he still had a vile headache, his legs were still stiff and weary after his long dance and he must rest and sleep for a longer period still.

Lady Cock of the Rock arrived to find only Duid outside the house, who as soon as she spoke to him burst out angrily, "Cant you see I'm busy, I've got all this mess to clean up and have all the paints to scrape out of these gourds, so do not bother me." "But I must see ~~He~~ who makes" said Lady Cock of the Rock. "Well, you wont see Him" ~~bellowed~~ Duid, "He is still asleep after his hard work painting all these birds so go away. Go away, I say," ~~Lady~~ Lady Cock of the Rock stood watching in despair while Duid was scraping paint from the different vessels into a hole in the ground until in sheer desperation she asked, "Could you not ~~paint~~ ^{paint} me, Mr Duid?" Duid had now just finished scraping the paint out of the last gourd, and straightening himself up he looked at the sad little bird. He did not ~~speak~~ ^{say a word} but seizing a stick began stirring the paints all lying in a heap at the bottom of a hole he had dug, then seizing one of the largest brushes lying around he dipped it in the paint and began work.

Cock of the Rock woke to find his wife with outstretched wings standing in the sun for the paints to dry, and he nearly fainted again, this time in dismay at the dirty drab brown coloured wife which had not a single flick of any other colour to relieve the monotony. There was nothing they could do, however, as the colour had already dried.

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and nests on the faces of huge overhanging rocks near which few birds
ever venture and certainly no other bird can find a resting place, ~~nor~~
do they love to be near water, which is the mirror to which the beasts,
birds, and even we men, ^{often} go when we want to see our good looks, as then
the Cock of the Rocks can see what all the world sees a drab brown un-
interesting little wife, and then there resounds round ~~the~~ rocks and
away out into the forests ^{his} ~~their~~ shriek of dismay and distress, - their
well-known call of "Aa-oo-uch".

(The story must finish with the Cock of the Rock's call when
every listener bursts into prolonged roars of laughter)

Bird Nesting (Tarama)

He-who-makes (God) was giving^a lesson to the birds in nest-making.

DAVID (the Devil) was sitting ^{idly} under the shade of a tree near his house busily watching the Birds arriving & some others who were busy collecting materials, twigs, leaves bits of grass & feathers, for the demonstration. Presently Mrs. Carrion Crow, looking very pale & with her two hands pressed close to her side, hobbled up to David, saying, "I'm in awful pain, David, You must help me, I am sure I am going to have a Baby." "A what?" said David in great surprise, "Why! He-who-makes has not yet taught you how to make a nest: & how can you possibly think of having a Baby. You disreputable old SO and SO, clear out of this & leave me alone." Mrs Carrion Crow had been forced to listen because at the moment a terrible pain shot through her whole body but she replied "I am in agony, David, & help me you must, besides what would He-who-makes say to you if I told him the truth & that you are probably the father of —" David sprang up as if he had been stung with an electric rod & he dashed off to a nearby bush & dropping on his knees began to push aside the dead leaves in its shade "Come here Mrs Carrion Crow" he shouted "I've scratched the leaves aside for you Sit down there & the cool earth below will help your pain. Don't move at all & soon you will find a couple of fine babies wriggling under you."

David left her & was walking quietly back to his house when he heard another small voice speaking to him "I'm in awful pain, David, you must help me" Turning round he saw a lady Nightjar very very pale looking & also holding her sides with her hands "What! another!" he shouted "Go over to those rocks there & search for a nice level spot and you can have your Baby there"

David then dashed for his house at top speed. He quickly slammed the door & put up a big wooden bar behind so that no one could come in. He lay down in his hammock pretending to be asleep so that anyone who came knocking got no answer. Here he remained all day & night until he was sure that all the birds had gone away to the forest to do nest-making on their own account. & so it is that the Carrion Crow & the Rock Nightjar make no nests but still rear their Babies as David taught them.

A

WHY THE CARRION CROW MAKES NO NEST.

"Tuminkar was giving lessons to the Birds in building nests. Duid was sitting idly under the shade of a tree some distance away lazily watching the Birds arriving, each carrying the materials for building a nest, such as twigs, leaves, moss, bits of grass or feathers or just plain mud as Cock of the Rock was bringing. It took a long time to teach each bird as every nest had to be different.

The demonstration had not long begun when Mrs. Carrion Crow, looking very pale and with her two hands pressed close to her sides, hobbled up to Duid saying: "I am in awful pain, Duid, you must help me. I am sure I am going to have a baby." "A what!" gasped Duid in surprise. "Why! Tuminkar has not yet taught you how to make a nest and until he does you cannot possibly think of such a thing. You disreputable old So and So, clear out of this and leave me alone."

Mrs. Carrion Crow had been forced to listen to this lecture because at that moment a dreadful pain shot through her whole body, but she replied: "I am in agony and help me you must, Duid. What would He-who-makes^{say} if I told him the truth and that you are probably the father ----" Duid sprang up as if he had been stung with an electric eel and without waiting to hear any more, dashed off to a nearby bush and dropping on his knees began to push aside the dead leaves in its shade. "Come here, Mrs. Carrion Crow", he shouted. "I have scratched the leaves aside for you. Just sit down and the cool earth below will help your pains. Don't move at all and soon you'll find a couple of fine babies wriggling under you."

Duid left her and was walking quietly back to his house when he heard another small voice speaking to him. "I'm in awful pain, Duid, and you must help me." Turning round he saw a Lady Night Jar, very, very pale looking and also holding her sides with her hands. "What! another!!" he shouted, "go over to these

rocks. Search for a nice level spot and you can have your Baby there."

Duid dashed for his house at top speed and he was no sooner inside than he slammed the door, shut and put a large wooden bar behind it so that no one could possibly get in. He curled up in his hammock pretending to be asleep so that any one who came knocking got no answer. He remained in the house on the plea of a headache until he heard that the very last bird had gone away into the forests to make nests of their own.

That is why the Carrion Crow and the Rock Night Jar make no nests but rear their Babies still just as Duid taught them.



Creation Myths of the Wapisiana and Taruma

John Ogilvie

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COLLECTANEA

CREATION MYTHS OF THE WAPISIANA AND TARUMA

BRITISH GUIANA

I

IN the beginning, as my father and his father's father have said, there were two brothers, the one called Tuminikar, the other Duid. Tuminikar (Wap.—“Tum” verb to make, regular tenses—Tuman, Tumini, Tumairum, Tumakakun, etc., etc.) was the Maker. He, it was, who made everything we know, the world in general (Amarad), the beasts, the birds, the fishes and even those people, our first forefathers. Duid made nothing, he generally did what Tuminikar wished him to do, but even these orders he carried out in such a careless, haphazard and untrusty manner as to cause annoyance and shame to Tuminikar. He was such an unreliable person, so really bad in many ways that as you know every really wicked boy in our Tribe whom no one seems able to control or to make conform to our general tribal rule and behaviour, is always called Duid. Tuminikar was altogether good. He created everything, but never did anyone harm. Duid was just the opposite, made nothing and was always up to pranks that got people into trouble. It is Duid who leads you to do wrong, to lie, to steal, to deceive and many other things that lead to the cases that so often come before the Chiefs of our Tribe for remedy or adjustment, so walk very, very warily Ung Takan. You may forget Tuminikar, but do not forget Duid, as in that moment of forgetfulness, he will trip you up and you will have to walk with the downcast eye and with shame on your face. Propitiate Duid; order him away, but forget him not.

Out of nothing, Tuminikar made Man. He just made him, but finding Man was lonely and unhappy by himself, he formed Woman. He made her from the dung of an alligator, but she

proved unpleasant to the Man. He objected to the sickly smell she gave off, so Tuminikar took a small bone from the left forearm of Man, which he formed into a new Woman and gave life to. She proved to be pleasant to Man's every sense; he loved her and soon they had a growing family.

To Duid was given the task of feeding these people. Every morning and evening he appeared with a large basket containing fruits, nuts, and edible tubers, just enough to satisfy all. At that time the people did no work, they played with the children or the animals. They had a common language with all the beasts, the birds and other forms of life, such as a few privileged people today still have.

As the families increased in number they began to become curious as to where Duid got the daily supply of food from. They would question Duid often and long, but to none would he give any indication where he got these foods. Still they remained curious and this led to further enquiry and investigation.

One day two young maidens went for a stroll in the forests, and chanced to meet a very disconsolate flea who was crying bitterly. They stopped to comfort him and ask what the trouble was. The flea told them he always rode on a certain Agouti, but that morning he had lost his balance, had fallen off unknown to his steed, and being so small had got completely lost in the surrounding tangle of leaves, saplings and trees. The Agouti had a well worn road somewhere along which he always raced to a spot where he got an ample supply of food and nuts for himself and family, but in which direction, the flea was in doubt, so the girls hastened home to call assistance to help the poor creature out of his troubles.

They were not long in locating the Agouti's road along which everybody hastened in search of the lost steed. They went on and on till presently they came to an enormous tree on which they saw growing every form of fruit such as Duid brought them each morning and evening. Digging in the ground revealed the yams, sweet potatoes, cassava, and other tubers they were eating daily.

Aha! so this was the source of Duid's supplies. Now was their chance to eat just what each liked best, and as much as each wanted. After satisfying everyone's need, they left for

home, each person carrying as much as possible of what they fancied for the evening meal.

At the customary hour that evening along came Duid with his usual basket of supplies, but everybody simply roared with laughter at him. After teasing him some time they showed Duid the foods they had already got, and told him he need not bring any more, as they could now procure their own just as each liked. Duid was astounded and flinging down his basket on the ground, strode off to inform Tuminikar of what had happened. Very soon Tuminikar appeared before his people saying "What is this you people have done? I am very angry with you and I now go to cut down the tree you found. Every one of you must come now and select such seeds, nuts and roots that you like. These you must plant and so feed yourselves in future."

Tuminikar picked up an axe and set off through the forests to the tree with every person close behind. They quickly arrived and at once Tuminikar began to fell it. With a great crashing noise it fell to the ground. As you all know the axe falls with least effort at about waist height unless when a tree carries buttresses. Then we build a staging, it may even be to the height of two people and there we fell our tree, and it was thus that Tuminikar felled that tree. Long, long ago, the trunk and branches have rotted away and been lost, but the stump remains intact and now forms, as every one knows, the mountain we call Rorawim (Mt. Roraima).

No sooner had the tree fallen than an enormous stream of water gushed from its butt, sweeping nearly every one standing around away to almost certain death in its rushing fury. In fact, all might have gone, but fortunately one man wore suspended round his neck the bill of a large Muscovi Duck, which at once he launched on the flood. Hurriedly he embarked his wife and children, grabbing such seeds and nuts as were within reach, he hurled them into his craft, and jumping in himself, pushed off on the waters just as the whole world was becoming submerged.

The little family floated off in safety in their tiny craft. For many days they drifted hither and thither with no knowledge

as to where they were. At length their boat touched on something and feeling underneath they found they were resting on a rock. The water had begun to take off and soon they were able to get out on to solid land. Day by day, as the floods crept slowly down, they found they were on a mountain top. They would pick up rocks to fling them as far as they could to learn from the sound—plung-ng-ng-ng—when the stone fell in the waters just how deep it was, but to their dismay only deep waters were heard on every side.

At last a small patch of comparatively level land showed up carrying some good soil on which they at once began to plant the seeds and nuts and tubers they had with them. They also built a house as they had to tend the field carefully, as also to wait till the floods completely dried off. Later on the savannahs appeared, broad and undulating, and they were able to come down and walk about, and eventually to leave the mountain entirely to settle on the level plains below.

That mountain is known to all as Siriri (Plantain Mt.) and even to-day, when our supplies of plantain suckers run short from drought or other cause, do not we climb to that first field high up on Siriri to obtain a new supply, as, there, they never die out completely. Around the mountain's foot do not we see the rocks lying scattered all about which these first people flung down to test the depth of the waters of the receding flood.

On your recent visit to the " River Mouth ", Ung Takan, you have seen many new forms of foods that are strange. It may be that seeds were swept away to spring up elsewhere after the flood, it may be that other people were saved also, as, in recent years, strange peoples—the Mikur (Negro), the Paranakarri (English), the Karaiwa (Portuguese)—have come amongst us, and all bring strange new foods. Still though strange to us they were not to those of long ago. Even the white flour (Prum) which tastes so good and is made from some plant that even I do not know, even that and every other you may see once grew on the tree of Rorawin.

UNG TAKAN UNG SUMATINAIRUN
My Grandchild I wish to smoke

" Ung Takan " (My Grandson), when the waters had dried off and the savannahs appeared, gradually becoming clothed with grass and shrubs, the family came down from Siriri, and built houses on the plains. Here they thrived and multiplied and became many until in time, they spread over the whole savannahs and even some went to live in the surrounding forests.

Tuminikar lived with them still. Changed into stone, do not we know, that the cakes of bread he last used and his other possessions, lie due East of the mountain Katambor. He helped his people by example and precept in those days, yet complete happiness or security was not theirs. Various men of huge form and armed with strange weapons came up against them to kill off or carry them away, and they lived in almost constant dread of attack. Many great fights took place, but Tuminikar was there to assist and thus they were always successful.

At length, however, there came up one enormous giant called Baukur, of greater stature and strength than any hitherto. All the people were frightened at his very appearance and ran to hide, leaving Tuminikar alone to fight the ogre. Long and hard they fought; Tuminikar armed with the Shooting Stars; the Giant with the Lightning. For quite a time they were equally matched, but gradually Tuminikar grew tired and was beaten back from hill to hill until, the lightning flashing all over and round him, he was in grave danger of being killed. Tuminikar was now close to the forest behind the mountain of Katambor, and something must be done quickly; even the biggest and straightest shooting star seemed useless against the giant, so as a last resort he seized a huge rock from a nearby hill. Quickly he tore this rock in twain, enclosed his only Son in it and stuck it together again. Taking careful aim he hove the rock at the giant. The aim was true, it struck Baukar low down on his side with such force that he fell to earth in agony from a dislocated hip. Instantly Tuminikar was on him and bound him hand and foot. Picking up the securely bound giant Tuminikar flung him far into the sky, and who does not know the constellation Baukur which to the Paranakarri

(English) from beyond the seas is called Orion. Do not even we to-day see the ropes that bind, do not we see the drooping limb of Baukur that was smashed, as he swings overhead at night. As Baukur rises over the rim of the World a bare hour ahead of the Sun, do not we, who are in the Councils of the Tribe and heads of families, know we have certain duties to attend to—the cutting or gathering of this or the planting of that.

Tuminikar now returned for the rock in which lay enclosed his only son, but, as he tore it open, he found him dead. He, who was the darling of the Tribe; he, whom every bird and animal worshipped was dead. Oh! how we mourned; the long harrowing Hymn of Death was sung for many moons in every hut in the world.

So also mourned the birds and animals, and even to-day does not the Tukan (Toucan) Bird mourn, with his racuous yelping every morning and evening. He was Tuminikar Dan's (Wap : dan meaning child, therefore the Maker's Son) particular pet and he has never forgotten his Kind Master. Has not the grief of years and the rivers of tears which he has shed, dissolved some of the gaudy colours of orange and black, red and green, and left a ring of a faded blue round each eye the width of the nail of a small finger.

Tuminikar took his dead son away and buried him. His heart was heavy and sad so he turned away and went forth from amongst his people and spake no more with them as at the first, but, ere he went he told them that some day he would return and bring with him his only son also.

Just where Tuminikar Dan lies buried we do not exactly know, but we do know that on the way from Katambor to the forest behind the rock rings hollow to even the tread of the careless passerby, and more so to the stamp of the bare foot of the man with knowledge. In my goings to and fro I have often passed that way and I, as every man amongst us, have stamped that rock and stopped to listen to the hollow boo-o-o-om below. Few, to-day, have passed so often as I, and I know a difference in the sound.

That crust of rock and earth that holds Tuminikar Dan in its grip is wearing thin, thinner and thinner with the passing of

every season of planting and reaping. Soon, soon, it may be to-morrow or the day after that rock will give way and Tuminikar Dan come forth to meet his father and to greet us, his people.

Then assuredly shall we live in peace and contentment. Then the sun will no longer burn our crops ; no more will the rivers rise in uncontrollable floods and rot our cassava ; no more will the passing seasons cripple our limbs and dim our eyes and ears ; no longer will Kenaima roam the country in stealth, catching us unaware of his presence, when his arrows pierce our flesh and we are laid up in sickness or more often die. The Kenaima will be bound by Tuminikar even as he bound Baukur, and flung far into space also.

3

Once upon a time before there were any people, there were only Tuminikar¹ and Duid in the world—two brothers who lived together. Tuminikar, the elder, made everything in this world, the birds, the animals and everything. The younger was Duid who tended the fire, cooked the meals and did whatever the elder brother ordered him to do. Duid was most unreliable ; seldom did anything aright—a happy-go-lucky fellow—as even the Duid of the Tribe to-day—likeable and unstable.

In these days the brothers lived largely on fish, and there was one particular pool in which they caught most of their supplies. If Tuminikar was busy, Duid went alone, but if no work was on hand they would both take their rods and tackle and go fishing.

One day both brothers were fishing when Duid got a strange bite on his line. Cautiously he drew up his hook to find, not a fish, but a strange implement which showed it had had constant and quite recent use. They scrutinised it carefully and took it home at night, when Tuminikar hung it up on the wall in his hut. Every day after that, when they went fishing, they brought up something new from the depths of the pool until

¹ I forget now what is the Taruma word for Tuminikar, but their Duid is the same as the Wapichan. I shall use Tuminikar as the name of the " Maker."

Tuminikar decided they were articles that belonged to Woman. They varied the size of their hooks almost every day to suit different sizes of fish, as also the bait to attract them, and thus they got different articles, a fan to-day, a grater to-morrow, a comb the day after, and so on. They kept on fishing and fishing each day, adding some new article to those on the wall of the hut already until they had everything that belongs to Women such as every one uses to-day, even to her hammock; her beads; the paints which she uses to beautify herself with; the sweet smelling pigments so carefully hidden from us with which to make herself more seductive to us; and to ensure the love of any man they wish; even to those things she uses when she is sick according to her custom.

Meanwhile Duid had been making a variety of new hooks and baits, and particularly one from the jawbone of an alligator to which he attached a long new stout line of silkgrass. When he got it finished and was itching to try it out, it so happened Tuminikar was very busy that day, and so he went off alone. He had scarcely seen his new hook disappear in the deep waters of the pool when he felt a mighty tug. This time he had hooked something big, heavy and strong, so he dug his heels in the sand by the pool and pulled with all his strength. Presently there appeared the head, the shoulders, and finally the body of Woman. He drew her clear of the water and stared at her in surprise. Disentangling herself from the hook, the Woman soon stood up when the beautiful curves of her body and her modestly shy glances at her captor stirred some new unknown forces in Duid's mind and body.

Taking her by the hand, he led her by a round-of-way path to his own hut, where he hid her behind a screen, and then lay down himself to rest. Towards evening Tuminikar, having finished his work, came out of his hut and called Duid to bring up their dinner. Duid answered that he had fished all day without success and that he was so tired that he had already lain down for the night.

Next morning Tuminikar shouted "Let us go fishing Duid", but Duid excused himself on some plea or other. That evening Duid again had a very valid excuse from not joining Tuminikar,

and so on for several days. He would be out and do various little jobs around the place, but on no account would he go out of sight of his hut.

Tuminikar began to suspect something behind all this, so on the fourth day he marched straight into Duid's hut, saw the screen which he tore down and found the woman. "So you caught Woman and this is why you do nothing these days" shouted Tuminikar in anger as he aimed a cuff at Duid's head, but already Duid was through the door. Tuminikar gazed long on the lovely form before him, then taking her hand in his he led her out and installed her in his own hut on whose walls already hung her every article either for home or personal use.

Happily they lived together, they loved each other and had children. It is from their children and their children's children that we—the Taruma—are descended.

JOHN OGILVIE

THE CUSTOM OF MAU

AN ACCOUNT OF TRIAL BY ORDEAL OF HOT STONES
WITNESSED IN SOUTH MALAITA

THIS custom was once in general use in the South of Malaita amongst the British Solomons Group. The 40,000 inhabitants have been proselytized by several missions, but owing to the impenetrable nature of the forested bush area, which covers most of the island, there are still 60% pagans left who use and believe in the customs of their ancestors. This custom of Mau is not generally believed to be efficacious but amongst the bushmen of the Koio and Anari sub-districts it is still performed. I heard of one performance of it as recently as last November in Anari.

In former times, it was the recognised native method of finding out whether the accused had done the act he was accused of doing. It was mostly in vogue for larceny, especially of pigs, which on Malaita are preserved to sacrifice to spirits—*akalo*. It was believed by those who used it and was often followed by a confession of guilt. In serious cases, as where