

In the Forests and Jungle.

We were awake with the sparrows next morning. There was nothing to eat, but each of my men asked for a teaspoonful of salt which they promptly dissolved in a small calabash of water and drank. I don't know, if in their opinion, the salt added to the palatability of the cool river water or supplied more vitamins and nutriment as required by the human body, but acting on their advice I tried it myself, without any noticeable diminution of the definitely annoying twinges of pain under my belt. We did have tobacco and after a good smoke (all round) we shouldered our various loads and set off through the forest.

Just how far it was to the Waiwai country, I had no idea. Saik Tau had been there repeatedly and his list of sleeping camps varied from something in the teens to a number quite beyond his knowledge of arithmetic, which actually was only accurate while he confined his calculations to his combined fingers and toes. Most unsophisticated Indians travel very slowly. They may start off at sun up, but they dawdle along; the men in front stepping as gingerly as a cat on hot bricks so as not to make the least noise, or attract the notice of any game by rapid motion; the women in the rear with the babies, the baggage and the dogs. Everything is noted en route, stops made to collect even the smallest and most uninviting fruits, while edible roots are dug up, and game shot.

After doing some three to five miles, a nice flowing creek is met and it is time for breakfast, or, failing an adequate supply of food, it is an excellent place to hunt. It is almost a cinch that some of the women are overloaded and feel tired, or one may have stepped on a thorn and it is hurting. Any excuse will serve and they go into camp for the night. Thus in unknown forest country you never know just what distance is meant by a day's walk to camp. I was once crossing between two rivers during the dry season, and the men

assured me that no water would be met on the journey, but it could be done in a day - early start, good walking and a late arrival. We started just as soon as we could see the trail in the forest. I put a good man I knew well in front, with myself next. We stopped for a couple of smokes only during the day, yet it was quite dark (7 p.m.) when we made the river. Some of my men got in at 10 p.m. by the help of a flaming resin torch, but three couldn't make it and joined us next morning rather late.

Often you make camp in a couple of hours of travel and you fret and fume, "Why can't we make the next stage?". I was once heading for the source of the Oyapok, the boundary between Brazil and French Guiana. Actually, I was on the small branches of some of the tributaries of the Trombetas and about due South of the source of the Courantyne River, when I came to an Indian village at which I found a matter of 40 - 50 visiting Indians, whose home was somewhere considerably nearer to my objective. I had to spend a week in the village getting hold of a few necessary words of their language and acquiring their confidence. When we eventually started, I found the first camp little over three miles away, and after breakfast, I jollied the old chief into doing a second stage before night, making not more than ten miles all told on a rather winding path. With a fair amount of banter, flattery, and a judicious present of a few fish hooks, I got my caravan to do a double stage the second day, possibly another 10 miles at most, but the third morning "Nothing doing". The old chief lay rolled in his hammock and gravely explained how we had overshot the customary daily stage of travel by his tribe, and that he had left his shadow behind and he must wait till it caught up to him! Wait we did, too, for a whole day and two nights, till his beastly "shadow" arrived and he was fit again.

Nothing can be more annoying to the man from overseas

than this habit of leisurely travel, yet why shouldn't the Indian travel as slowly as he likes? From time immemorial has not his tribe taken a certain time to do a certain journey? He must miss nothing that will add to the generally slender supplies of food he has with him, or something that will tickle his palate, or that of those dependent on him. It may be a fruit in season or just a few berries, but nature is not too bountiful in these forests, so why should he deny himself any pleasure, when he knows quite well that even with luck it will be a full year before the season of bearing for that particular fruit comes round again. Many of these fruits scarcely deserve the name. One is composed of a tough skin with a hard stone inside, but there is a pronounced flavour that the Indian loves, so he climbs the tree, throws down the fruit and sits contentedly sucking for half an hour, to the white man's bewilderment and annoyance.

The Indian has no train to catch, and if he did have, would not that same train run to-morrow, or next week, or next year? Actually he is heading for home, where, once back, he knows there are many arrears of work to be done. A visit means a holiday with other people to do the worrying, cooking and providing. He does not pay cash as does his civilized prototype for his entertainment, or his board and lodging, but he does bring along something to barter, or in payment for goods received. At the worst, he brings in news from outside; information as to the health of other villagers, the tale of birth, marriage and death, or at least, the stirring tale of success in the hunt or adventure in the forest. A visit is a holiday to be kept going to the last possible moment. He has had, and is having a most enjoyable time, and he doesn't want to get back to harness any faster than is necessary. "Amanhana", he says, "To-morrow the sun will rise"!

Once we got on the road we weren't wasting time. We had no food, and though we were on the 'qui vive' for anything in the line of game, I wasn't prepared to spend half a day hunting for something which would probably elude us eventually. The men were perfectly contented to go ahead. I had given the orders with quite lucid explanations and these they were prepared to carry out.

We were travelling over country that was about dead flat, with dense bush and jungle on either side which narrowed the view to a variable distance of a foot or so, to some 5 or 6 yards at points of less growth. Ahead of us lay a winding, narrow trail, cut or rather cleared, for it was a recognised route used once or twice a year, by the Tarumas ahead. It was just wide enough to give clearance to the passage of the human person, - a tunnel, some 18 inches wide and 4 feet high, cut through the tropical tangle of sapling, branch and vine. The ground was littered with dead branches, debris, and tangled lianas or bushrope over which ^{we} you stepped carefully to avoid a fall. The roof was low, a mass of cut branches, and more bush ropes.

Walking such a trail is by no means easy. You've got to keep one eye glued on the ground to note where to place your next step, so that you don't put your foot in a hole, hit it against a projecting stump or dead branch, or catch your toe in a tough string-like vine which would send you sprawling. You've got to keep one eye on the roof, where you meet almost identical dangers, dead branches, cut stumps and bushropes, all of which you have to dodge and duck, otherwise you are in trouble from broken skin on the brow, face, or body, and I don't know anything more humiliating or so damnably trying to the blood pressure and vocabulary than to be ~~nosed~~ nosed round the neck by a thin, almost invisible, bushrope or vine, which has sufficient strength to bring you up all standing (at the best) and which has to be cut before you can proceed. I know one such vine, a tiny red thread,

no thicker than an ordinary crochet thread which possesses almost supernatural strength, which I have blessed often and long and whose guile and apparent innocence has torn the bubble of many a tenderfoot's sense of importance and know-allness.

Not only have you to watch your head and your feet so to speak, but you've got to watch the sides of your tunnel also for such small things as horrible stinging ants, a wasp's nest, or a colony of ticks waiting for a passing victim on whom to attach themselves, or a wander wasp may cross your path, who bears a sting that will lay you up for 24 hours with acute pain and a high temperature. It is a safe bet that everything that moves, and a good many which don't move, in the Amazon forests, either sting or bite severely to the detriment of human comfort and patience. I have only enumerated a few, but there are dozens of others ranging from snakes to scorpions.

Women are the beasts of burden amongst the Indians and on one expedition in unknown forest, I had allowed some of the men to bring their women folks as they would carry the regulation 70 lbs load and leave the men free for line cutting. Amongst them was a bride of a few days standing who on top of the load she was paid to carry had added every possible thing she thought would add to the comfort or importance of her lord and master. We struck a bamboo reef some miles across and these girls would spend hours in a camp knowing they could catch us up in an hour at the most, as the cutting was slow work. At one spot we got into a veritable tangle, the only alternative to retracing our steps being to pass between two saplings not more than a foot apart. These saplings for some unknown reason had dozens of huge black ants climbing up and down their stems. Their sting is most painful and they are dreaded and feared by both beast and man. By careful going we all slithered safely between the trees without mishap or rousing the ire of the ants. The

last man, before coming through, half severed a convenient branch and bent it before the danger so that the women coming behind would note the obstruction. They would know it was put there for some reason; would spot the bad ants, and act accordingly with every care to pass them safely. The first women to come up did this and passed safely. Unfortunately they did not set the danger signal in passing and the little bride, who had lingered longer in the camp, came barging along later, head bent down under her enormous load, and struck both trees with the basket on her back, when dozens of ants promptly dropped from above and stung her all over the body and face. Half an hour later she staggered up to where we were making a new camp with her face swollen beyond recognition and in dreadful agony. We could do little to relieve her and we feared she would die. Alternate applications of mud and hot fomentations were applied and towards evening she began to feel some improvement. She ran a high temperature and was confined to her hammock for a couple of days, although it was fully a week before she was fit enough for the road again.

Then the European wears clothes, which can be torn to shreds by the careless or ignorant traveller, against thorns or points of wood, and there are buttons that go West if the cloth is strong enough to resist a tear. The modern zip hadn't been invented in my day, and part of my travelling kit was a good "housewife" with a fair number of spare buttons "on which to sew the odd shirt or a spare pair of pants", as an Irishman with me once remarked. The naked Indian slithers through a tight place in the trail without inconvenience. His sensitive skin notifies a receptive brain of every touch and contact on his body, and he moves accordingly, without even glancing down, but the clothes of civilization seem specially made so as to catch everything possible and thus impede progress.

Then a careful watch has to be kept for any possible game on the ground, amongst the branches, or overhead.

Vigilance can mean just the difference between a full pot or an empty stomach. I could safely leave this last to my men but being generally the person with the lightest load and the most dependable gun, I was supposed to be ready at short notice to shoot anything that we met, on the mere raising of a silent rigid finger. There has been many a day in the forests when I wondered if the game was worth the candle, and many more days when I envied the humble fly its many faceted eye.

Of all the types of jungle in the Amazon forest, the bamboo reef is the one that is most feared and hated by even the most expert and competent bushman. Bamboo is an "outsized" in grass which may reach 50 or more feet in the air, when it curves over in graceful arches. At each joint begins a branch which again breaks into a twig at each joint, and over all, grows the long grass leaf, turned straight to the sky to catch the sunlight or moisture. Seen from a distance, such as the deck of a comfortable steamer, bamboo is a thing of beauty; the drooping feathery arches appear so graceful and lovely; the colour is much lighter and more vivid green than the tree leaves, and affords a striking change from the customary monotonous dark green of the surrounding forest, but the eulogies of the passing tripper are more than counterbalanced by the language, "both lurid and free", of those whose duty calls on them to pass through on foot amongst the bamboo where it grows.

Each bamboo joint apart from being the potential starting point of a branch grows a nasty spike ready at a touch to tear the clothes of the careless, or rip a nasty scratch along the limbs or body. This spike is exceeding hard and durable, so if the parent stems die and drop and rot, it rests on the ground long afterwards waiting for some unwary foot to step on it. One steps gingerly in most parts of the forest, but doubly so in bamboo jungle.

Bamboo often grows in isolated clumps where it is of

little danger or inconvenience, but it can also grow in reefs, when it may be the predominant form of vegetation for miles.

When cutting a line through unknown forest, the first intimation that the bushman has of the existence of a reef is a sudden lightening of the dense forest's overhead foliage some short distance ahead, and in another 20 yards ~~ahead~~ he meets the bamboo. He generally has some objective and is cutting a line in a certain direction. Now comes the conundrum! In which direction does the reef run? He may have struck it at its end, or broadside on, or at an angle. Across the reef is naturally that of least distance and distressingly hard work for the men, so a convenient tree is climbed and observations made. Even then there have been occasions when either from the size of the reef or the contour of the country, no cessation of the bamboo has been visible and one had to plunge ahead trusting largely to good luck and hoping the line of march was the shortest way across.

Bamboo grows in circular clumps of from 2 to 20 feet in diameter. A space of a couple of feet to as many yards separates these clumps. Unless at a vast expense of hard work, time and money, it is impossible to cut a straight line through bamboo, and the general way is to evade the clumps, following a winding path through the empty spaces, and deviating to either side, yet keeping fairly true to the original direction. Even the spaces between the clumps are all cluttered up and choked with debris, broken stems and branches of decayed and dead bamboo, and a road must be cleared. Bamboo is exceedingly hard and has very definite lines of cleavage, and great care has to be used in wielding the cutlass, the bushman's one implement and means of forcing a passage. An unskilful blow may be deflected in any direction and the arm come in sweeping contact with a spike jutting out from a joint, the result being a badly punctured arm or a nasty ragged scratch some inches long with the blood gushing, and which means a resorting to the expedition's slender stock of bandages etc.,

to say nothing of a man out of commission for, maybe, days. There is the danger of bad pricks in the soles of the feet. Shoes wear out in the bush as elsewhere, and with the nearest shop a good 400 miles away, one is often reduced to going barefoot. The Indians never wear shoes, of course, and it is so easy to step on a concealed spike. I don't think I ever passed through a bamboo reef without having several men injured.

In cutting a line in untouched forest, speed depends largely on whether the forest is definitely forest with fairly little undergrowth, or whether it is jungle, when the forest floor is covered with a tangle of bushrope and saplings. Starting ahead at sun up with three cutlassmen, work proceeds at cutting a trail to about 11 a.m. when a halt is called for an hour or so for breakfast and a rest at a convenient creek or waterhole. After the halt, work is pushed ahead until about 3 p.m. when a return to the base camp is commenced, which you will reach about 4.30 or 5 p.m. indicating, at a walking rate of 2 M.P.H., that you have blazed a possible trail of 3 to 4 miles. In bamboo jungle, I have made only half a mile to a mile per day and that distance only through changing the cutters every hour or so as they became tired or got injured.

However we made good time and soon passed an abandoned camp and then another and another. Saik Tau, reading the signs, was getting more and more excited at each as he could tell just how many stages ahead were his tribe and relatives, until "Boss, they left here this morning, the ashes are still hot". This was very cheering news as almost to a certainty the Taruma would have food with them or at least game shot that day.

We had been negotiating a most difficult piece of tangle-foot scrub jungle and were just getting clear, with the forest slightly more open, when we heard a dog bark somewhere. Immediately Saik Tau snapped, "Back to back and sit down", and emitted his long tribal yell. Mabba Tiu at once rushed up

and placed his back against some one; we did the same and sat down on our heels with the small boy in the centre. Quick as the manoeuvre had been, we were already surrounded by a mob of some 12 or 15 madly barking irate dogs, which rushed up to within a few feet and held us at bay.

This idea of sitting down back to back was a novelty to me and on asking the reason, Saik Tau explained that had we continued standing some of these fierce dogs would have rushed in, no matter how good our defence, and would have bit our legs, but when squatting down back to back they meet the eyes more on a level with their own, will not rush to attack, and on circling round, always find another pair of eyes meeting theirs. Certainly his plan worked, and no dog rushed us although they were pretty near it at times. In answer to Saik Tau's yell, there had been quite a response from just ahead, and in a few seconds, a dozen men, boys and women were dashing towards us through the jungle all armed with a stick or a leash. Each party grabbed his own dogs, slipped on the leashes and tore them away. In a few moments they were securely tied to a number of trees, protesting at the very top pitch of their voices, and we were amongst the Tarumas!

These people were Saik Tau's own tribe and many of them his immediate relations, and we were perfectly certain our worries over food supplies were now at an end, but here we were sadly disappointed. The tribe had not had good crops of their staple foods. The rains had been exceptionally heavy and as a result, the roots of the cassava, as very frequently happens, had gone bad. The Waiwai invitation had come before the crop had recovered, and consequently they had had to commence their journey with hopelessly inadequate supplies. To make matters worse, since starting overland, they had not met any game; the tribe had had to split into groups to forage the better and we had struck the rear party. They had not a single thing to offer us in the way of food. The men had fanned out hunting from the last camp with no success, and as a party had left

their present camp that morning, they were not hopeful of much luck during the afternoon in the vicinity of their sleeping place. If we pushed ahead to the next party, it would be much the same, as the tribe was strung right out some distance into the near-by range of mountains which formed the boundary between British Guiana and Brazil.

Further inquiries however produced the information that at right angles to our line of march there had been a large settlement, which, although abandoned some time ago, would almost certainly have something still growing in the fields which would give us a little food. The sun had not long passed overhead and as this offered the best prospects, we set off as soon as possible. We reached the settlement after a march of some three miles, a huge communal house backed by large clearings which had been fields, but were now a wilderness of weeds and rank growth of forest seedlings fully six feet high, but whose extent gave us great hope of finding something, if only a bunch of bananas. We dumped our loads in the shade and I offered to mount guard while the others had a look round. Being now in completely alien territory, Henry, with his Kenaima, or evil spirit complex at concert pitch, refused to leave me, as he must be there to protect me from these invisible enemies, so Saik Tau and our two Taruma satellites set off to see what they could find.

Naturally there are many strange and peculiar sights and sounds in the colossal forests that clothe most of the Guianas and also the great Amazon valley, many thousands of square miles of which is completely terra incognita to man except for a few of these wandering children of the forest, the Aboriginal Indians. Acute as is the observation of these indigenous people, there are many phenomena of nature which they know, but have not the necessary powers of reasoning to disentangle cause and effect. There are quite a few sounds about which, either from their infrequency, or

the difficulty of ocular observation of the reason, the Indians are completely ignorant. There are also in such a huge area many germs and parasites that may attack man, and cause long and wasting disease and probably death. Anything outside the sphere of actual observation is classed under the supernatural, and thus you find all kinds of witches and warlocks in existence, generally under the generic title of "Kenaima", which more or less is just "evil spirits". A kenaima can be either definite and visible, when it can be met with force and repelled, or abstract and invisible, against which there is little to be done, except never to be alone for a moment, as such spirits will rarely trouble a person, even if only accompanied by a small child. Hence Henry's reason for not wishing to leave me alone, although he had a more cogent reason to his way of reasoning.

When I entered the Wapichanna tribe, I found they considered the Macussi tribe as their deadly enemies. Long long ago there had been actual warfare between the tribes, and the dreaded Carib had also come from the North via Macussi country in search of slaves to supply the demand on the coast. For some unknown reason, no traders had ever settled permanently amongst the Macussi, whilst there were always one or two amongst the Wapichanna which led to some jealousy and augmented the bad feeling. The Wapichanna were more or less in constant work and drawing good wages; the Macussi were idle and keen for work or trade to provide the few necessities of life which they must have.

Keeping the tribes carefully separated, I had begun to employ some thirty Macussi men in their own section of the country. The trouble was paying them off, and finally it was arranged that on a certain day of the year, these Macussi could come to my station by a certain route to get paid off. Of course every man brought all his family and many of his

near relations both male and female, and as a rule some hundred people would arrive at sun-up to be paid off that day and start back for home, - a day rather grudgingly given and considerably dreaded by the Wapichanna, who kept carefully away both from my station and the route, until the coast was clear. Another regulation of my own was that every Macussi must leave his dogs at the last camp, or at least keep them strictly on the leash, as I had a few pigs and sheep around, which the strange dogs thought were some new form of game to be chased and, if possible, worried.

Amongst the crowd who came along on one occasion was an old plaman, who with growing years of knowledge and success was especially dreaded by everybody, and he had a dog on the leash. Almost immediately he had started back for home, he unleashed the dog. I heard loud shouting and rushed out to find his dog chasing my sheep, on which I grabbed my gun and fired a shot at the dog. The brute was too far away for the pellets to do more than sting him a bit and make him desist from his little nefarious games. The Macussi cleared like frightened rabbits and I paid no more attention to the matter.

Within a week I had to start on one of my periodic inspections of work in the forests, a matter of several weeks of tramping in the high forests. For some reason I cannot now remember, I went alone, depending on getting some of my workmen to guide me along such trails as I was unacquainted with. I had never found my men so ready to guide me, in fact I had guides with me on trails where there was no need to have them, but each camp had some very valid excuse - (a visit for some reason or other) - as to why some person should go along, and if they cared to carry my camp-kit, I was delighted. It gradually dawned on me however, that not for a single moment on any account was I allowed to be out of someone's sight and observation. There are various functions of nature that no one likes to do in the public view and

constant unremitting surveillance can be most embarrassing and annoying. In vain I fumed and fretted and stormed. I would catch a so-called spy and question him with no result. They would simply stand silent, heads held down in apparent shame, and in vain I cudgelled my brain as to what on earth I had done. Eventually I came round to Henry's house - my present guide, where I must perforce stay the night. Henry was out in the forest on my arrival, but I hung up my hammock and made myself comfortable. I went a short distance into the forest when, rather to my dismay, I discovered that my host's two daughters, aged 15 and 16, were quietly following me. Had one girl come alone, ulterior motives might have been imputed to her simple mind, but the fact that there were two, put aside any such idea and showed there was some other definite idea behind things. This was the first time I had been shadowed by females. So far I had found men in every camp; here there were only women in the house!

I charged back on these two maids and demanded to know what the dickens they meant by it, and their answer was the downcast head of shyness or shame, and complete silence. Later that evening, over the usual smoke and a calabash of native beer, I demanded the truth from Henry. For long he was silent, but eventually he told me that I had shot a plaiman's dog, some of the pellets even reaching the plaiman himself, who had solemnly declared he would send Kenaima to kill me. Word had then been passed round the Wapichan tribe, that on no account was I to be let out of someone's sight in future.

About two months after the incident, the unfortunate plaiman inadvertently stepped into line between a well trained gun and a nebulous spot on the horizon, by which act he received in his body some two ounces of cut up wire nails and other oddments of iron such as are supposed to be most efficacious against the supernatural. The gun was fired by

a Macussi about a hundred miles beyond Wapichan territory. The Macussi tribe danced before the Lord with great rejoicing, and the Wapichanna heaved great sighs of relief, as for years this man had been credited with sending a number of very powerful Kenaima, and that would now cease it was hoped. In those now remote days, the Wapichanna thought there was only one good Macussi - a dead one ! Even after his death, I was kept constantly under surveillance just in case the plaiman's spirit might catch me alone, and it was close on a year before the tribe thought things were safe enough to stop their watchful, and often annoying, care of me.

We had only been sitting a matter of ten minutes when we saw Saik Tau returning, accompanied by a strange Indian and a small boy of maybe eleven years. The newcomer was a fairly young man, light skinned in hue, as are most forest Indians, but well covered over his whole body with some red pigment. He had a lithe swing and step that betokened perfect health, and a knowledge of his own ability and environment. His features were regular and of a very pleasing cast, but it was his hair that drew the attention. This was jet black, well oiled, beautifully parted and combed, and not a single hair was out of place. It was uncut, worn long and ending in a queue at the back, the end of which was stuck in an ornamental tube hanging down to the level of the waist and I knew that before me stood my first Waiwai Indian.

Our new Indian promptly entered into conversation with my boy, Henry, speaking, of course, his own Waiwai language, while Henry spoke Wapichan. Neither knew a word of the other's language but that didn't matter. They were following habitual tribal custom which meant everything. This custom can be rather amusing at times. Two men meet who belong to different tribes; one man knows only his own language; the other is bilingual and knows the other's language perfectly, yet during the introductory opening of conversation - which may extend for a quarter of an hour - each must only use his

own mother tongue, even if the other fellow doesn't understand a word that is said. I had one "headman" who prided himself that in his home he spoke pure Atarod, a language of which I had no knowledge. He however also spoke Wapichan perfectly, of which I had a fair working knowledge. This old rascal used to turn up each year at the beginning of the rainy season to begin a period of several months' work under me, as captain and steersman of my river launch, and during my first half hour's interview with him, he would not speak one word of anything except his mother language. I always had to search around for something to raise a laugh when he would probably break out into broken English. Once the canons had been duly observed, he eschewed completely both English and his own language and only conversed in the language I knew.

The Waiwai and Henry had about 10 minutes of this sort of stuff when they mutually called a halt. The Waiwai swung round, stamped a foot on the ground, raised his right arm shoulder high and dropped his hand in my direction signifying his intention of speaking to me. This, I have found a very general custom amongst the forest Indians, even when speaking to visitors or comparative strangers who know the language, and are old friends, but universally the custom when wishing to attract the attention of complete strangers who may or may not know the language of their host.

Having drawn my attention, the Waiwai, as an inhabitant of that section of the forest, and as owner of the clearing and field in which we stood, was in consequence our host and spoke first. I knew the rule and custom of - what I might call - the Indian "welcome ritual", and made my responses and statements accordingly, but as we weren't getting much, if any, forrader, I called Saik Tau into play as interpreter, as I wanted information. Through him I soon learned our "host" was the Chief of the Waiwai tribe, Kiwinik by name, and that he had come to his old field and home to see what he could

find in the way of foodstuffs to supplement the supplies available at his new location in preparation for the visit of the Taruma tribe. His women folks and carriers had already started back and he himself was just on the point of following, when Saik Tau, an old friend and the principal trader of the country had appeared, and now he must hasten to join them.

On my part, I told him I was by way of being quite a chief in my own right, although the tribe over which I held sway was far far away. I had been intrigued by description of tales of the Waiwai culture and workmanship, and had come on a peaceful visit to see for myself. I had brought along a fair amount of things for trade and barter. I wanted badly to get a good cassava grater and no doubt he would be able to pick out something he fancied from amongst what I had brought along.

Meanwhile I had opened my stock of trade goods and began showing them to the chief - beautiful steel-blue fish hooks, shining knives and scissors that would cut - things that would make the eyes glisten of most of the Indians of my acquaintance, but this man stood haughty and supercilious, without a trace of interest in his expression. If anything, I thought he was considerably bored, yet I must somehow arouse some feeling in this chief favourable to our expedition, for so much depended on my ultimate welcome into his tribe or otherwise. Beads of all colours, at that time in great request by other tribes to trade with the Waiwai - in many cases, left him cold. Matches, gunpowder, pins, files - nothing seemed to interest him. Then I remembered a separate package made up for Mabba Tiu to carry, containing four brand new, shining axes. I drew one out and took off the outer paper and then the customary oil-paper inside, and at once he was sitting down on his heels, his face wreathed in a charming smile and his eyes flashing with fire. At

that instant, I knew my entrance to the Waiwai tribe was safe and assured as far as its chief went. I passed the axe across to him. He took it slowly and carefully, staring at the reflection of his face in its clear polished surface, and as is the universal custom of the Indians, feeling the keenness of its edge against the nail of his thumb. He knew what an axe was, but never had he seen a clean, brand new one and he laid it on his knee and fondled it to some crooning bits of song, much as a mother would a baby. "Kiwinik", I said, "have you a good cassava grater in your house? If so, that axe is yours, when I sit before the door of your home in exchange for it, but it must be a grater amongst graters", and Kiwinik answered "Yah" in consent.

When I got to know this chief better, some years after this incident, he told me he would never forget the day I first opened those trade goods to his view, and how he could not believe that so much of desperately necessary articles were to be placed at his disposal for barter.

I repacked my things while the chief was bidding good-bye to my boys, reserving a few fish hooks, a nice knife, a small file and such like as gifts. Presently it was my turn for the good-bye ceremony, when I handed him the various articles saying "We are very hungry and you say you have food in plenty. This I give you for cassava bread, and that for bananas or yams, and this other for something - anything - that will fill the belly. You say there are mountains ahead. You must stride over these as the shadow of yonder cloud passes over the land, collect the food we want and return to meet us on the way, for remember a hungry man is an angry man, and I, a great chief away to the far North. - (I knew the ground I now stood on and was getting quite cock a hoop) - "I, who have come so far to see you; I, who have crossed the big river over which no bird you know can fly (the ocean); I, the Son of the Sun, feel many twinges

that are far from pleasant, beneath my belt, and if these are not satisfied, I may arrive at your village in a vastly different mood from that in which you have found me".

Kiwinik agreed to do this, and having given us full permission to use anything we could find in his old house or clearing, took his departure.

Even by European standards Kiwinik was a handsome man, tall as Indians go, active as a cat, lithe and muscular, and when his face lit up in a smile he was irresistible. How I envied his aplomb, his courtesy, his manners, and his command of himself. Here he had met a member of a strange tribe and a man of a completely different colour and nationality, yet his behaviour had been that of the aristocrat born to position and command. Even from my own standards he had made no mistake, he had given me greetings of welcome, had satisfied himself of my peaceful intentions, had consented that I enter his exclusive tribe, and now was speeding over the mountains ahead to bring food and supplies to myself and exhausted men. Not for a moment had he been embarrassed or awkward and the only sign I could see of any emotion on his face was a slight twitch of his nose now and again.

It is a peculiar fact that most races possess a peculiar smell, an odour that is exuded as unconsciously as the perfume emitted by the rose. Each race is more or less ignorant of its own peculiar smell although deeply sensitive to that given off by other races. Without much strain on the memory, most of us can conjure up the peculiar smell of stranger races, much of which we put down at once to bodily uncleanness and a poverty-stricken acquaintance with the use of clean water and soap. We English, of course, with our daily bath, a plentiful use of soap, bath salts, and other adjuncts to cleanliness, can not smell other than sweetly and we resent the dreadful insinuation that we do otherwise. Yet that we smell abominably in the nostrils of some other races, is a

fact. The European in the forests bathes at least twice a day, if not as the ingrained result of piety and cleanliness, at least as a means of washing off the multitudinous ticks and various other parasites brushed off the leaves and branches in passing, which in an hour or two will have sunk their teeth, or whatever they hang on by, in the skin of a tasty host, thereby causing the most intolerable itch. Yet I have often been asked by Indians why we smell so vilely. I had already bathed twice that day, yet I knew that unconsciously to me, the unknown aroma of my race was perfuming the air. With the towering forests some 200 feet above our heads only gentle, swirling, twisting gusts of breeze could reach us on the floor of that clearing, and it was such a gust wafting Kiwinik-ward that, carrying this new, unknown, and disagreeable (probably nauseating) smell to his senses, caused his nose to twitch in abhorrence and disgust.

The innate courtesy of the Aboriginal Indians is such that they will never give much visible sign of their dislike, and one has to become on very friendly terms with them before they will admit that they notice such a peculiarity, and it is only when you know how things affect them that you are aware of the small evidences such as the twitching of Kiwinik's nose.

The Indians show evidence of the presence of a disagreeable smell in another way and that is in the form of very audibly clearing the throat and spitting violently. There are none so ill-mannered as to do this in front of a person who emits a disagreeable odour, but I have seen such expression used time and again quite openly in the presence of some offensive smell, other than from some near-by person.

The Indians are all passionately fond of the perfumes as manufactured in civilization and sold everywhere. I have had to put a fantastic price on small bottles of perfume, so

as to discourage its sale in preference to something, not only cheaper, but much more useful to them in life. Yet I know of the most exquisite perfumes in the forests that will immediately start a whole line of passing Indians spitting like so many Kilkenny cats. There is one in particular, that I am certain would be a world's "best seller" if captured and put in a bottle; a scent that other Europeans with me have invariably remarked on how exquisite it appeared to them, yet the moment it reached his nostrils, every Indian would violently hawk and spit for the next ten minutes. The origin of these scents is often unknown. Probably they are given out high above the forest floor by various flowers on tree or vine. The Indians could never tell me just why such an agreeable and pleasant scent to me, should be so much disliked by themselves.

The Waiwai chief was scarcely out of sight when my Taruma boys were away to see what they could find in the way of food. Hunger is said to be good sauce, and it is also a good incentive to exertion at times, and I knew I didn't need to encourage them in the good work. About an hour later they turned up again, having found absolutely nothing edible except two hands of plantains. These are a very coarse type of banana, running to a foot in length and some two inches in diameter in the larger sizes. They are rarely, if ever, exported to Europe, but they form quite a place in the vegetable food of tropical South America, and can be eaten raw or cooked in various ways. Prolonged search by my three Tarumas had only been rewarded by their finding one single plantain tree in bearing, and that had only been spared by Kiwinik & Co. by its still being in flower. The banana tree takes a couple of weeks to finish flowering. The first flowers wither at the top of the stem and another set comes into blossom further down the stack and so on. As each set of flowers withers, fruit begins to set into the wellknown

"hands" of the fruit; at first, tiny immature things that resemble green stubs of pencils more than bananas. This was the stage at which our plantains had arrived and so we had only two hands of immature green fruit about the size of the little finger. However, we soon had them in the pot boiling. When cooked, they looked anything but appetising. The water had gone black and the fruit itself was a blackish sort of mess, but we'd had no food all day, and it was soon divided into 5 portions and eaten. We were far from satisfied, for the small boy could have eaten the lot, and now there was nothing for it but to curl up in our hammocks and forget our hunger in sleep.

Bright and early next morning, we took the trail along which we had seen the Waiwai chief disappear. We had had no breakfast so every one was anxiously on the look out for game of any description or a forest tree in fruit. It was getting along towards 9 a.m. when Saik Tau - in front - stopped dead in his tracks with a sharp "Listen".

It is astounding how quickly an Indian can stop, even if pursuing game at top speed, if a sound or a sight strikes his senses. Time and time again I have butted into the back of an Indian, who suddenly stopped because of some sound, generally of game which has moved and made a noise. I would probably hear the sound myself, but my brain was too slow to register the cause and give the command to stop. Many a time I have seen an Indian converted into a tense statue with a foot arrested in the motion of the stride, or a hand and arm uplifted in the stroke of a knife cutting a branch. He will stand immovable, scarcely even breathing, till he locates the sound properly and accurately as to both cause and direction.

I remember, some years later, in surveying a certain forest area, I had sent out two men to open a line on one bank of a river, while I was doing the same with other men on

the opposite bank. This saved time, as I could walk the lines much faster than they could be cut, and doubled the area I could go over in a given time. These two men were cutting away when the last man suddenly said "Hist !" The first man promptly stopped with one foot extended, just as it was almost touching the ground in front. The second man then said "Step back for your life". The order was slowly, cautiously, obeyed whereupon the leading Indian said that if the extended foot had touched the ground he would have trodden on a very deadly snake lying across his line of travel. That was one of the very rare occasions when I knew an Indian miss seeing something in his path that might have meant his death. I mention this as showing the speed that the Indian brain can work at when necessary. Most people would have been prepared to stop, but not to arrest the foot actually in motion. They would have finished the stride and been bitten.

In travelling through the forest there is a perfect battery of sound all the time. Leaves are dropping, dead branches and twigs falling, and scores of other sounds peculiar to the forest, yet for none of these, will the Indian stop, but let a small deer jump up from the shelter she has slept in, and the Indian mind recognises the sound amongst the babel of useless, meaningless noises.

Nine times out of ten, the Indian, on the instant, knows not only what game has made the sound, but the exact distance and direction of it. Let the tiny deer, however, make only a convulsive jump to her feet and stand still as often happens, or the motion of the air deflect the direction of the sound to the ear and, statuesque, the Indian awaits a further movement sound to be absolutely certain. It has to be actually seen, however, before one can understand just how acute and sensitive is the co-ordination of the senses, the brain, and the body of these primitive people, when such impulses as hunger sharpen their wits.

Snakes often take on the surrounding colour of their

environment to a considerable degree and are very hard to spot, which, whilst I remark on the Indian's acute observation of his surroundings, reminds me of an instance, when no less than ten Indians passed a danger that might have struck death to any one of them. I had been crossing savannah country all morning with some twelve carriers. It had been unusually hot. We were thirsty and our eyes ached from the glare of earth, sky and infinite distance. A dark line of green told of a welcome creek ahead and we pushed on. Most savannah creeks are bordered with a line of scrub or forest, which may only be a few feet in width to a mile or more. On this particular creek there was high forest of some 20 yds in depth, through which we quickly passed to pitch our loads in the dry sandy bed of the creek, and gulp down cup after cup of cool, deliciously refreshing water from a pool. My Indian captain in charge of the carriers had lingered behind a little with a companion. He arrived some five moments later and on swinging off his load inquired, "Who killed the snake?" Of course, no one had killed any snake and he got a few sarcastic remarks on his poor imagination and inferior eyesight. "Come and see", he said, and off we went with him. Proceeding cautiously, we saw, not more than a few yards from the edge of the creek bank, a huge diamond backed rattle snake, lying stretched across the very path we had all passed along only a few moments before. It was lying perfectly still, and might have been dead - (actually it was sound asleep the Indians said) but a blow on its head from the machette of my captain soon dispersed any such illusion, when the reptile curled round and round itself in its death agony. To this day I cannot explain why these Indians all missed seeing that snake, unless it was because their eyesight after the hours of savannah glare had not got the new focus in the gloom of the dense bush along the creek. They were much ashamed of themselves, I remember, as they

realised how close to extreme danger they and I had been. But for the fact that in the forest each man steps carefully in the footsteps of the man ahead of him, someone must have stepped on the snake and been struck.

This habit of stepping in the other man's footsteps is general amongst Indians, especially in the forest. The Indians of the forest have no shoes, although in sharp rocky country they may make sandals from palm leaves or even from the hide of the tapir, but as a rule, they go barefooted. The leader of a gang of Indians is invariably a man of keen observation, and on him devolves the duty of putting his foot down on a safe piece of ground, which has no thorns or anything that will injure the foot, nor any small branches or twigs that will snap with a sharp report and startle game along the line of march. The next man knows he is safe to step in such tracks and so on down the whole line.

At no time will an Indian step on anything but the solid earth in walking through the forest. A branch of 5 or 6 inches diameter lies across the path and offers a safe footing. There are no thorns on it, and it is just the right distance to complete a step, but the Indian knows it might snap, or is practically certain it would make a rustling noise against the surrounding leaves under pressure from the human foot. They must walk soundlessly as ghosts and a man-made noise means incompetence on the part of the person who causes it, and affords great amusement and a source of much good-natured chaff and ridicule (the Indian's soft spot) to all the others. I was once trekking across the open country walking barefooted as often happened, and had with me a European who was wearing a pair of heavy boots which had iron plates on the heels. I had a forest Indian in the lead, myself second, and the European behind me. Every now and again the leading man would stop dead, or would jump for his life and turn round. After some miles, he asked to be changed and I put a new man in front. Later, I learned these

iron-shod heels were the trouble. Walking across soft sand they of course made no noise, but if we met gravel, a sharp ringing sound was given out, whereupon the poor leader, hearing such a peculiar and unknown sound for the first time in his life, would jump a foot in the air in sheer fright, owing to his acute Kenaima complex. While in the country the European was the subject of much mirth and ridicule to the Indians which, since he never learned the language, was like water on a duck's back.

On Saik Tau's order to listen, we had all promptly halted. Cautiously I whispered "What?", but a hand went up to command silence. He stood staring vacantly directly overhead, turning his head from side to side, and none of us knew just what he meant. We stood thus for quite a while, when he broke into his guttural laugh and shouted, "I knew it! I hear a Brazil-nut tree". Down went his load in the middle of the trail, and he promptly disappeared in a dense patch of Jungle. A few moments later we heard him shout, "Come, it is a fine tree and laden with nuts". We dumped our loads also, and, scrambling through a tangle of vines, found our guide, some 50 yards from the trail, standing at the foot of a large tree on whose branches we could see numbers of six inch diameter balls that held the nuts, so well known in the world outside.

I soon learned that to hear a Brazil-nut tree was neither a trick nor a stroke of imagination. These trees have long lanceolate leaves of fully a foot in length and some three inches across. They present a large area to any motion of the air, and a puff of wind causes a decided rustling, with a peculiar sound that is characteristic of that tree and no other. We had been passing along, when such a puff of the early morning breeze had caused a momentary rustling which had caught my boy's ear, but not long enough for him to be sure of the true direction. In a 10 or 15 mile steady

breeze the sound is quite distinct and can be detected quite a distance away. There are a few other trees - the "Andiroba" for instance - which can be located by the distinctive rustling of the leaves in the breeze, but the nut tree is the most useful. In later years I became quite expert in noting these trees, when we were on the march.

For some reason this tree was standing all alone. Some monarch of the forest must, in fairly recent years, have fallen to the ground, carrying with it in a tangle of steel strong vines, every other tree within a radius of some 30 or 40 feet. The gap was one mass of bushrope and vine, out of which shot our tree with a stately bole of some 3 ft diameter with its wide spreading crown and pendant nuts quite 50 feet above our heads. Not a bushrope hung from its branches. There was no other nearby which a man could climb and scrambling along a projecting branch, get a foothold on our nut tree. The bole was much too stout to be climbed by any means at our command, so, although I was very much averse to the idea, there was nothing for it but to get out an axe and fell the tree. This the men promptly did, but it was quite an hour of work before the tree crashed down on the ground. We were very hungry and had with every stroke of the axe been visualising a meal of some sorts off the nuts, but we were hopelessly disappointed, as we found the nuts were still very immature, an unformed mess inside the shell, with a peculiarly nasty taste that not one of us - not even the Taruma who aren't very squeamish - would touch.

There was nothing for it but to pick up our loads and continue our journey. In crossing some of the creeks on our line, I noticed a number of trees along their banks which were carrying numbers of red and yellow pods of a fair size which were quite unknown to me and also to my Wapichan boy. The Tarumas knew them well, although I cannot remember the name they gave to them. I thought they were very like cocoa

trees, but the Tarumas assured me they were not good to eat. At a certain age they said they were rather sweet and could be eaten, but so many who had tried eating them, had subsequently suffered from "bellyache" that they would on no account touch them. In later years, I learned these were actually indigenous wild cocoa - *Theobroma cacao* - from which all the chocolate and cocoa of civilization is made. It does not exist except in very small numbers amongst the Macussi or Wapichanna, but it is to be met with in quantity on the higher Essequibo of British Guiana and even on the branch creeks, to a point where they become mere swamps. South of British Guiana, I have met it in large quantities on every branch and streamlet of the Trombetas River, yet I have never met any Indian who made any use of it, either as a food or a beverage, and I have a nodding acquaintance with at least some half dozen different tribes.

Here we were, struggling along as hungry as the proverbial hunters - we had eaten practically nothing for two days; were on the march all day and carrying heavy loads at that - and there right before our eyes, were numbers of ripe pods that with due knowledge, we could have converted into a most nourishing beverage, which while it might not have completely assuaged hunger, would certainly have supplied the necessary nutriment until we found more solid food. I cannot understand why these Indians in the cocoa bearing districts, have never discovered its palatability and nutritive qualities. They do make a cocoa beverage of which they are extraordinarily fond, but they invariably use the seeds of some three or four varieties of palms. No man can deny that these forest Indians possess the most acute observation on everything in nature, the doings, life and characteristics of both flora and fauna. There are dozens of commodities that have become world wide necessities, which were originally found to be in daily use by the

Aboriginal Indians of America, yet here was a case, where the local Indians were totally ignorant of a tree growing wild in great profusion before their eyes, and which would have gone far to augment their meagre supplies. Countless millions of these pods must drop every year to sink beneath the water below, or lie rotting on the bank. I have explained its preparation and use to them, but, up to my last visit amongst these people, have never seen any of them make the least use of cocoa.

Every forest tribe makes a so-called cocoa from two different palms (the ripe berries only being used), both of which are known in Demerara as "Turu". One has small round berries of about $\frac{1}{8}$ " diameter but the one which is by far the most esteemed, has a much bigger berry - at least three or four times as large and with a bitter flavour. When the Indian has located a tree in fruit, he looks around for a tree that has a tough fibrous bark, of which there are quite a number of varieties in the forests, one of which is sure to be fairly handy. The boy gets a strip of this bark about 4 ft long and 2 ins wide and twists it into a crude rope. He then ties the ends, thus forming a ring into which he puts his bare feet, leans against the palm tree and tests the bark rope between his feet to see if it is the correct length to fit the bole of the tree. Any necessary adjustment is now made and he is ready for the climb. This rope into which he has put his feet, must rest on the tree and allow the soles of his feet to grip the trunk almost, but not more than half way round the circumference. He reaches up the tree as far as he can with his hands and arms, gets a good hold and then draws up his feet and the rope as high as is convenient. Taking a hold of the tree with the soles of the feet, he can stand up, and holding with one hand for balance, can do anything he likes with the free hand, but, generally, reaching high up again he goes on repeating the process til he reaches

the fruit he is climbing for. He sidles round the tree now till he is in the position he thinks is best, frees the right arm and draws his machette from his belt. He inserts his arm deep amongst the long streamers which carry the berries and works them well on to his forearm, when with a couple of expert slashes he severs the parent stem from which these spring. As the heavy weight is suddenly transferred to his shoulder, he must on the instant again grasp the tree with both hands, and even then, the most expert climber slides a foot or two down the trunk, owing to the sudden change of balance, and such a slide can be very painful on the feet and other parts of the body against the tree. Once he has adjusted balance, he reverses the climbing operations and soon is on terra firma again. It might be thought, "Why not let the bunch of fruit drop", but a drop of some 50 ft scatters the hard nut-like berries everywhere for yards around, and the labour of collecting the single berries is such as to make the game not worth the candle.

The collecting or cutting of such palm fruits is always a very dangerous business. The tree must only be climbed when the trunk is thoroughly dry. If it is at all wet no Indian will attempt it from the danger of a deadly slip at the moment he takes the weight of the fruit. A good bunch of fruit may weigh 50 lbs or over and this dropping suddenly on his arm, with the pull all to one side, calls for considerable skill and nerve. Fatal accidents are fairly common when the man fails to adjust his balance and is precipitated on the ground some 50 to 80 feet below. Falling this distance through a tangle of branches and vines and striking the debris strewn floor of the forest with great force, a man rarely escapes with his life from such an adventure. I have never seen an accident happen, but I have seen men who came down with badly burned limbs due to the friction of the skin against the trunk in attempts to save themselves, when through being

a split second too late in regaining a proper grip of the tree, they had been forced into a 10 or 20 ft slide. In my working camps I have had quite a few men killed by such accidents.

While the Indian is up the tree his companion is busy making a large criss-cross bed of wild plaintain leaves on which the bunch of fruit is thrown. Someone of the party now jumps on the bunch and stamping all over it with his feet, breaks the majority of the berries off the dozens and dozens of 3 ft long strings on which they grow. The hand is used to complete the severing of such as have escaped the feet, the stem is heaved aside, and you have a thousand or more berries lying in a compact heap on the plaintain leaf bed, from which they can be easily and quickly scooped into baskets for transport to the home or the camp.

At this stage the berries are most uninviting. They are about as hard as the shell of a nut, and the strongest jaws and sharpest teeth can do nothing more than break into an infinitesimally thin cover which is most insipid and feels like so much grit. Arriving at home, a large pot full of water is put on the fire and heated. Considerable skill is required to know the exact degree of heat required in the water, as if too cold it will not cook the berries. If on the other hand the water is too hot, it will overcook the berries, in which case they are completely useless and must be thrown away. The berries are thrown into the pot at approximately atmosphere temperature, and success depends on the heat of the water after these cold berries have been thrown into the pot. You will see an old lady flirting a finger into the heating water, with one eye scrutinizing the heap of waiting berries, and working out a rather difficult and abstruse mental calculation in calories. The temperature of the water being judged, the pot is whisked off the fire and the berries are quickly slumped in as much in a bunch as is possible, so as

to get heat applied equally to all. Then they are covered with a plaited mat of sorts and left to soak. At the end of half an hour or so they are tested by squeezing with the hand, when, if the thin outer covering pulps up easily under pressure, they are ready. A calabashful is dipped out with some of the water and the whole macerated by hand until the pulp has entirely left the centre nuts. These nuts are now thrown away as of no further use. Some handfuls of new nuts are lifted from the pot to the calabash and maceration continues until the person in charge thinks she has enough. The mixture can now be drunk without further preparation, but as a rule, it is put through a fine mesh sieve. It may then be diluted to suit the fancy. cassava meal may be added to give further nourishment if the party is hungry and the whole is then drunk. The beverage has the same colour as cocoa, and it is highly nutritious, but the taste is quite different. This taste however is most agreeable to practically every one and I have never met any one who actually disliked the beverage. When sugar cane is abundant, several joints may be squeezed into a bowlful; while in touch with civilization, a spoonful of sugar may be added. Personally, I prefer it plain without addition of any kind, except a spoonful of cassava meal.

Away from their homes, such as a mere sleeping camp on the bank of a stream on a forced march, the procedure described has to be modified. On such a trek, only a small earthenware pot sufficient for the minimum needs of the party is carried; too small for the cooking of food and the preparing of "tuku". The Indians never pass supplies of food, and if these palm nuts are brought into camp, a fire is lit, and such pot as they have is filled to the brim with water and put on to boil. The men then cut four forked pieces of wood about four feet long. These are driven into the ground for about a foot, saplings are cut to place in

the upturned forks to form roughly a 3 ft square; the whole being securely lashed with bushrope or fibrous bark. Leaves of the wild plantain - nearly always available alongside a creek - are cut and laid across this square. Gentle pressure by hand is put on these leaves so as to cause a depression or rough sort of basin inside such a square. More leaves are laid criss-cross at every angle, so that no crevice is left without having underneath the flat leaf of another layer. In this way they soon have a basin that will hold quite a lot of water with only a tiny drip of escaping water at the most. Cold water from the creek is now dipped up by calabash and thrown into the receptacle which at once shows if it is fairly water tight. A rough calculation has now to be made as to the right amount of cold water to have in the basin. Satisfactorily solved, the water on the fire and, now boiling, is poured in also. Tests are made by the hand and if it is found to be too hot, more cold water is added, but if too cold more water must be boiled till the correct temperature is arrived at. Then, of course, the berries are quickly thrown in and the cooking and preparation is exactly the same as around their homes. When the berries are thrown, the level of the water rises in the basin and I have often admired the Indian's judgment of the exact quantity necessary to cover the berries without any overflow. Just a little on the low side, the basin could have held a few more pounds of berries, but there is rarely an overflow and a consequent waste of time and energy. While the berries are cooking, the pot is back on the fire to cook the evening meal, even if, due to the absence of any game, it is only plain water, flavoured with a little salt, and made almost hair-raisingly hot by the liberal addition of red peppers, without which, in some form or other, no self-respecting Indian ever travels. Once the meal is over the cooking pot is washed out, the berries crushed, and a drink of "turu" (cocoa) handed round. When the berries are cooked, such as are not required for

immediate use, can be left to stand for some time if kept completely covered by the water in which they are soaked. Those left over at night are perfectly good next morning and are used up, when a sort of porridge is generally made by boiling the prepared cocoa beverage with cassava meal or other thickening matter. Twelve to fifteen hours are about the limit of time which the berries can be kept sweet after cooking. After that, they become rancid and sour and begin to ferment, when they are no longer palatable and have to be thrown away.

The use and making of this "cocoa" beverage is universal by all the Indians of my acquaintance. There is, however, another variety which is considered a delicacy by many of the Brazilians living along the Amazon river and its branches. This is made in much the same way from the nuts of the Manicole palm. It forms a beverage of a rich yellow colour, but it needs a good application of sugar to make its taste agreeable to my palate. I have tried it repeatedly when made by Indians who have become "civilizados" and have adopted much of the language and customs of Brazil. I have never seen this palm used in such a manner by any of those Indians who have had little or no contact with civilization. Personally the beverage never appealed to me.

In the Mountains.

After a journey of some hours we came out on a well beaten trail, that along which the Tarumas were travelling, and the indications plainly showed they had passed that way in the early morning, and that if we pushed on, we would catch up to them in an hour or two at the most, with their leisurely way of trekking.

Almost immediately, we struck the foothills of the range that forms the southern boundary between the Guianas and Brazil, and began climbing. An Indian rarely thinks of zig-zagging up a hill to ease the climb. He will make his way, no matter how steep the slope, in as straight a line as possible in the direction of his objective. Of course, anything will deflect him to the right or left of a straight line. Apart from the impossibility of the average human being walking unaided in a straight line, the Indian has come to recognise that the conservation of energy plays an important part in every day life, and chooses the line of least resistance in many of his acts. In cutting a way through the forest, he winds around, following such line through the tangled jungle as will give him the least work in cutting a passageway. Such a deviation may be gradual, and only amount to a foot or two, but in the case of a rock or other obstruction, it may be quite considerable. The original line is the best and most direct. Over a cutting of any length in the forest, in a week or two at the most, a tree will crash across the path causing a new obstruction. The next person to walk that road, decides at a glance whether to debouch to the right or left, as the easiest and most convenient way past. Generally he swings off at right angles, and hacks a semi-circular route round the obstruction. Nobody ever thinks of modifying these sudden swerves at a later date, and naturally they increase in number every year, until, on an old road, the pathway twists and twines around, in a way that would give any good sized snake a backache. This constitutes one of the

worst difficulties to a man from the outside world following the trail accurately. The Indian reads the trail much as his European compeer reads a book, noting every letter, dot and comma, but not so the white man. He blunders on along the opening in front as far as possible till the trail peters out, or he is right up against the obstruction; then he has to go back searching to right and left for the new passage. The Indian, also looking ahead, notes out of the tail of his eye a bent twig, a cut branch, or just a mere imprint of feet on the leaves on the ground, and without a suspicion of a pause or doubt, swings into the deviation and continues the march at ordinary speed. On many of the little used cross country roads connecting remote tribes, few, if any, white men could ever find their way, as their powers of observation are so poor that they would get completely lost. On this account I never send a white man anywhere in the forest without a guide. I must have walked thousands of miles along such roads, but it is my invariable practice to carry a guide, and I make him go in front so as to ensure better speed and accuracy. This is not always as easy as it sounds. The principal man, or leader of the expedition, must always go first to show such wandering people as they may meet, exactly who is in charge, and especially so on reaching a village, as the inhabitants automatically know to whom to pay the greatest courtesy, and offer their customary hospitality of drink, food and a resting place.

Many a time, an Indian has refused to take the lead in front of me when acting guide, as he considered I was the leader. In such cases I have walked some way into the forest when I have easily found an excuse for his going first. Then he has gone ahead to within sight of the next house where he has motioned me ahead.

As you enter the clearing in which stands a house, you give a rather loudly spoken salutation, "Are you there?", even if members of the household are in full view. The head man of the

village replies and comes to welcome you. He must converse at first only with the leader, and while doing so, some female relative approaches with a calabash or gourd of native beer, which etiquette decrees must be handed to the leader. Your retinue has stopped behind you in single file, in the same order as they have walked the line, but none speaks, or is offered drink or food.

The leader accepts the proffered drink, puts it to his lips for a sip, and silently passes it on to the next man in the line. Another and another gourd of beer may appear. Meanwhile you go on talking, and if you speak the language, the welcome may continue for half an hour or more. As the drink goes down the line of carriers, each one must drink just his share and no more, and presently the gourd returns to the leader with his share left. He must then finish the drink, and calling for the person who originally gave it, hand the empty vessel to her. If more than one gourd has been given out, each one must be handed to the woman who gave it.

On the arrival of a party in a village, it is a foregone conclusion that they must be thirsty, hence the drink handed round as soon as possible. Also the party must be hungry, so while being welcomed and having a drink, another set of females is placing before the leader such food as the house has at its command. When everything is properly set out, one woman will say "Food is served", then if the conversation is not ended, the party addressing the visitors will stop and say, "Eat your food". The leader then says, "Let us eat", whereupon every member of the party squats down round the food and helps himself. When the party has cleaned up all the food, or is completely satisfied, which but rarely happens, the leader calls for the women to remove the pots and remnants. A further supply of drink is brought out and conversation becomes general.

Etiquette differs very little amongst the various tribes I have visited, but the above shows the importance given to the

first man who walks with a line of porters. Thus Saik Tau, as my leading man, always came in for considerable attention, under, one might almost say, false colours, yet he never became the least bit conceited or bumptious. Being leader can have its drawbacks, as for instance, if one is passing through a succession of villages situated closely together. On such occasions, there is no time to become either thirsty or hungry between supplies. In the case of food, one can take a bite and say, "I am finished", but to return drink from any cause whatever is one of the worst insults any one can hand to Aboriginal hospitality. Every drop of drink must be consumed, except about a spoonful of dregs, which is thrown away on the ground. Now if the carriers are not thirsty and the calabashes return to the leader almost untouched, it is his job to finish them off, and as he himself is not the least thirsty, he is obliged to coax some one to "try again", and eventually has to force what is left down his own throat until his stomach revolts and he regurgitates everything. Facility in vomiting is a habit, and also a gift with the Indian, causing little more inconvenience to him than spitting does to us, and there have been times when forced to take the lead of a party, I have been between a very deep blue sea and an equally black devil, by being faced with the choice of agony or offending my kind well-meaning hosts. No ! I walk second in line all the time, and let him who will, have the glory of threading the maze of an obscure Indian trail, and all the extra kudos you like.

The general character of the forests on the mountains is very different from that which clothes the valleys between, and the immense undulating plains which compose the great bulk of the country. Soil deposits on the mountain slopes are much thinner than on the plains below. The torrential rains which are anything from 30" for an average year to a possible double of this amount in exceptional cases, sweep much of the disintegration down into the creeks and plains. Such soil as remains, is all leached much

more, through greater gravitation owing to increased natural drainage. Along the banks of rivers which overflow and deposit silt, you get a jungle which can only be penetrated at a great cost of time, money and labour. This jungle becomes less and less pronounced as you rise in elevation, until on the mountains you begin to meet forest, such as is seen in less tropical countries.

On the mountains, you find the general view becomes enlarged from a few feet on the plains, to ten, twenty or more yards. The tangle of bushrope and vine disappears. The trees are wider spaced and as often happens, are quite different from those below, largely due to the change of conditions. The Indians also have an idea that trees of one species are unfriendly, tolerant or friendly to those of another. Thus tree A may be friendly with B, and if you find either species, it is almost certain the other exists also. Again A may only tolerate C, when you will find one or two of the latter only, but where A is unfriendly with D, you will never find either of these trees in the same vicinity. A knowledge of this affinity or otherwise can be most useful when travelling in unknown forests. Of course you can pass beyond the geographical range of most species of trees, and an Indian who moves beyond such limits is considerably at a loss, but the knowledge of the principle, (I do not know if it is accepted outside), coupled with his acute powers of observation soon places him in a position to put two and two together, even in completely new types of forest and environment.

In any case we found our new mountain forest a very agreeable change from what we had been travelling in, with good visibility on every hand, and a complete absence of jungle, impeding lianas and undergrowth. On the other hand, we knew that the steep slopes were seldom scaled by game, and visibility only gave such as were around a better chance to spot us as we advanced, so we knew there was not much hope of securing a meal on the way. It

was a pleasure to stand upright, however, and to be able to see quite a distance everywhere. The Tarumas were no distance ahead, and we hastened on in the hope of catching them up.

We found, however, several new factors that reduced our proposed speed to that, if not even less, of the jungle behind us. The mountains seemed almost as steep as the side of a house, and the trail led straight up. My men, unaccustomed to anything but undulating country, were soon badly winded and rests were frequent for recovery. We also found it was almost as slippery as ice under foot. The absence of undergrowth gave wind a chance to play on the ground and lick up moisture. There were many breaks in the foliage overhead also, through which poured the beams of a tropical sun, so that the fallen leaves on the ground instead of being moist and flat as on the plains were bone dry, crisp and slippery. In ascending, the danger of slipping badly was not so great, but going down hill resulted in several mishaps, and every now and again, the feet would suddenly slip from below one or other of the party, and the unfortunate person would go slithering and careering on his back downhill, till brought up by a tree or similar object. To make matters worse, the load as carried on the back would come loose and go bumping along behind, till it caught him up. A package of some ten to thirty pounds coming to a sudden stop on top of the head, or amidships, did not tend to good temper in such circumstances, although it provided great laughter and hilarity amongst the others - till their turn came !

We progressed but slowly, and had passed over two mountains each about 1,000 ft above the plains, when on the crest of the last, we scented smoke, and soon saw in the valley beneath, the fires and sleeping camp of the Tarumas. We were in great glee as they would surely have some food and we were all now terribly hungry. Saik Tau gave a hefty yell, then came a reply and much agitated barking of dogs. We quickly slithered down the steep slopes and were soon being welcomed by the Tarumas, whom we found

in camp on the banks of a burbling stream of crystal, almost ice cold water.

Contrary to all tribal rules of etiquette, I quickly cut across the customary rather long-winded ceremonies of welcome, by poking Saik Tau in the ribs and demanding food in a terse and forcible whisper. After some fifteen minutes of continuous talking, he turned to tell me the news. The Tarumas had arrived in camp shortly before mid-day and had only shot two red-howler monkeys en route. These they had promptly skinned and cooked, and they had just finished their only meal for the day when they heard our yell on the crests above. As is natural, they had cleaned up everything. Rather sorrowfully, Saik Tau pointed to a dog or two still gnawing a too hard bone, which was all that was left, and of other supplies they had not one scrap of anything eatable.

This was really bad news. We had had no food to speak of for days and even less on those last two days of strenuous march, so my men were very hungry and exhausted. It was maddening to think that if we had got in earlier we might have got some piece of the game, if only monkey. Beggars, you know, can't be choosers, but how I blessed that Brazil-nut tree, which, if Saik Tau had not listened to its insidious whisper, would have meant our arriving in time for the Taruma meal. I promptly gave orders that all hands, and the cook in camp, scatter up and down the creek in search of food, for the sun was still high enough to allow an hour or so for hunting. We then began making our own camp a few yards upstream, swung our hammocks and made ourselves as comfortable as circumstances would permit.

We had struck the Taruma advance camp, composed of some fifty people of both sexes and all sizes under the leadership of "Bushdeer", the aged chieftain of the tribe. This old gentleman did not go hunting, and he soon made his way to my hammock for a long chat, so beloved by all Indians. He must have been a man of 70 years of age, ^{with} very lean, stooping

shoulders, and that peculiar wrinkling of the skin, especially of the back, that is an infallible sign of extreme old age. He was very gently spoken, with perfect and inoffensive manners, and showed little of that verve and audacity that had made him seize the chieftainship in his younger days. He apologised for giving me such a poor welcome, but, never in all his experience, had he been that way with so little game in evidence. As a rule they fed on the fat of the land until reaching the mountains. His hunters had met with no success, and everyone was now so hungry that he had speeded up on the march and they were already some days ahead of the Waiwai invitation and must arrive before they were expected.

The old chief then produced his "invitation card" from the Waiwai. This was a bunch of raffia strands, stripped from the outside of the young tongue or centre leaf of the Ita palm. One strand for each known person of the Taruma tribe had been delivered by a Waiwai some weeks previously. This strand was in two colours, the upper part in the natural colour of the raffia, the lower part a violet shade after being dipped in some of their own vegetable dyes. As a matter of fact, the whole number of strands had been handed to Bushdeer and on him fell the duty of getting the tribe together and arranging details of the whole journey so that they would arrive on one certain day. Every strand had a number of simple knots tied on it, each of which meant one night's sleep. Bushdeer had not gone to the trouble of distributing the invitations, and had them all tied together like a mosquito whisk and no knots had been untied. He had taken his own particular strand, which he had kept carefully tied to the head of his hammock. He had undone one knot at each camp, and as he was in the lead, would arrive on the actual day he was expected, but for the fact of the tribe being so destitute of food.

So far as I remember, he was to wait till the night when a

certain new moon showed crescent on its first appearance in the West, then, according to the colours, he had so many nights to do certain things - visits to collect his people, the journey by river, and the trip overland - Each morning, on awakening after the new moon - which no Indian ever misses seeing - he had untied a knot on his string. The chief of the Waiwai had a duplicate string and he would undo a knot each morning after his first sight of the new moon. The Waiwai thus knew exactly where the Tarumas were, and in this way, Kiwinik had been able to revisit his old settlement, clean out all available supplies, and start back home again, just a bare one or, at most, two days ahead of the Taruma vanguard. When the last knot was untied, the Waiwai knew the Tarumas would arrive before sundown, and for some days previously there would be great activity in their homes, preparing bread, brewing beer, etc. on the part of the women, while the men would scour the surrounding forests for a plentiful supply of game to ensure full pots/^{and a}heaped barbecue for the arrival of the visitors. The Tarumas also knew that when the last knot was undone, they were expected and all preparations finished for their welcome and entertainment.

I was able to purchase this Waiwai tally or calendar of invitation from the old chief, and it now reposes in a U.S.A. Museum. It was the only one of its kind I have ever seen and must have had three or four dozen knots on it, and while exceedingly simple and elementary, actually showed remarkable skill and ingenuity on the part of both parties. Most Indians keep a tally, generally of a long journey, when each morning they cut a notch in a specially prepared slat of wood somewhat like an ordinary foot long schoolrule. Each notch means a night, or a sleep, with a special notch when any particular thing, such as a huge waterfall, if travelling by river, has been met. On my present journey, both my men were keeping such a diary, cutting a notch every morning in their schoolrule, which would be produced later

in the seclusion of their own homes as an aid to memory in describing the journey to their immediate family.

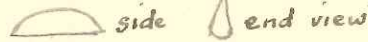
The Waiwai never, to my knowledge, issued another invitation on the same scale or fashion to the Taruma, and I am afraid I was the unconscious cause of its falling into disuse,

All tribes living in the very remote and unknown parts of the forests generally specialize in making some useful article in excess of actual requirements, and these are passed outwards towards civilization through distant friendly tribes, in exchange for some article of iron or steel, which, the march of progress, though slow in their case, has made absolutely essential. The Waiwai specialized in cassava graters to exchange for axes, outlasses, etc., but their neighbours might have more graters on hand than could be paid for, and the demand would be nil. Then news would filter through, that a certain tribe had a market and the wherewithal to pay, and, as in the case of the Taruma, an invitation would be sent out for everybody - old, young, and inbetweens - to come to trade. My caravan turned up with more trade goods than any Waiwai had ever seen in his whole life. I also made periodic visits for a number of years afterwards. The Waiwai sold everything they could make with little delay, and this was the reason why that invitation sent out to Bushdeer was the last of its kind.

A little before sundown, I went to the creek for a bath and found a youngster of some 8 years had just caught a small fish about 3" in length. His mother received the news with great glee as evidence of the boy's promise of becoming an excellent hunter, and at once began removing the scales and entrails with a stone implement. In a minute, the fish was spitted on a small branch, roasted over a fire, and was being devoured, head, bones, and everything, by the hungry kiddie, while the other children and grown-ups also, watched in yearning envy.

On enquiry, my interpreter explained that the Tarumas had

so many calls on their slender stock of iron knives that they rarely had more than one for the man in any family, and that the women did much of their work, such as removing the bark from cassava tubers, with stones chipped to a fine edge on one side. On the present visit, the Tarumas knew it was quite impossible to evade the pressure of Waiwai importunity. A number of their knives had been carefully cached at the landing near their corials and a number of the families in camp now had nothing but stone knives with them. To demonstrate this, Saik Tau took me a little way into the forest, where, over a convenient bole of a fallen tree, four or five women were busy dehairing and scraping off superfluous flesh and fat from the skins of the two monkeys shot earlier in the day. These skins were required to replace some of their worn out drum covers before reaching the Waiwai villages.

I at once opened some of my knives and did a good trade with the women. They were delighted to exchange the stones, and I was soon in possession of some half dozen - all there was in the camp! These stones were all made from the same kind of rock, which, while very hard, could be flaked off under blows from the heel of an axe, or even another stone. Considerable skill was evinced in their preparation, as each had a straight edge for some three to six inches in length. The edge was quite regular and in places sharp enough to cut, when used with a saw-like motion. The back of these stone knives was about an inch thick and fitted the hand comfortably, thus the necessary force could be applied in cutting without hurting the person using it. The face of the knife was in a crescent, and the whole something like:-  side end view

It was no use carrying these knives on to the Waiwai country, so I asked Saik Tau to cache them carefully. This he did in the thatch of a small hut in the camp, which had been built at some time by the Waiwai for protection against rains, and we intended to pick them up on our way back, but we didn't reckon on the remnant of the Tarumas, who were still behind the main body of the tribe.

On our way back, we found every knife gone. Later on I learned that these lagging Tarumas had immediately located the cache and had carried every stone with them to the Waiwai villages. They did not know I had purchased and hidden them; they had not mentioned the fact to me or anyone when they eventually joined me at the villages ahead, and they had no thought of stealing anything. They knew the knives belonged to the tribe, and if the owners had no use for them, well, they had, and that was the end of it. Unfortunately, they all came in for a share of barter in the trade up ahead, and having secured a knife apiece, why carry these stones back home, so they flung them away in the bush, as they could make more at home if ever they needed them. Thus I lost my stone knives - the only time I have ever seen such things in use - nor did they ever make any more. They promised to replace them, but the supply of stone had run short. Such knives could not be made from any and every rock, and the outcrop of the variety used was several days journey from any Taruma village, and what between my forgetfulness and their procrastination, I am yet without my stone knives.

"The shades of night were falling fast", and, believe me, in the forest they fall both fast and early. Though the setting of the sun deviates a little according to the season of the year, the annual mean in the tropics gives us 6 p.m. as the time it dips from sight, and complete darkness follows within half an hour or so. In the dense forest, however, with an overhead canopy of 200 feet of more or less matted greenery, dusk and comparative darkness sets in even before the sun has set. I wouldn't have you think it is so dark that you cannot find the way to your mouth, but at the same time you wouldn't organise a needle threading competition. It is rather a peculiar form of dusk or gloaming, accentuated to, almost, shock, when, through an opening overhead, you glimpse a nearby mountain, or the crown of an extra lofty tree and you realise it is still bathed in sunshine.

One by one the hunters came back to camp. They had shot nothing and had not even a handful of berries or fruit between them, so there was nothing for it, hungry as we were, but again to have a cup of water with a little salt added, in which the Tarumas who rarely have salt, earnestly begged to be included. My boys appeared quite happy, laughing and passing jokes everywhere. The Indians, when opportunity avails, can eat and eat, and gorge to an almost unbelievable extent, but when hunger comes, long protracted hunger as in our present case, they take things quite philosophically and with a cheerfulness and lack of complaint that is amazing. Amongst European bushmen no one is supposed to grumble if he misses a meal or even goes a whole day without a bite of food. This is only on exceptional occasions of course, and here we were now, two full days without food, and I felt most miserable and hungry, and ready to quarrel with my own shadow. The Indians are quite accustomed to fasts of from 24 to 36 hours, and a little extra doesn't worry or bother them, as it would the most hardened white man. I have been on the trek with Indians when we have had nothing to eat for a little over three days and where I was suffering considerably, and doubtless showed it, my men, while admitting they were "very, very hungry", kept on cracking jokes and laughing as if enjoying life.

It was completely dark now with the fireflies stabbing the stygian gloom around the camp, from the rapid twink-twink of a tiny elusive species to the bright steady glare of a big two inch long variety. These lights make one imagine some fairy is having a game with the switches of some lilliputian electrical system, but they are really the cold light produced by a variety of beetle generally known as "click-beetles", from the habit of lying "doggo" when captured, generally upside down in the hollow of the palm, whereupon, slowly drawing themselves up, they release the abdomen with a distinctly audible click. The abdomen jerks back against the skin and the beetle is catapulted into the air to take

flight again immediately, or to alight in a more favourable position. Most Indians have peculiar ideas about these beetles, and those of the Wapichanna come readily to mind, through more intimate association.

The Wapichanna believe the large variety have the power of showing where certain game is to be found. The beetles are often fatally attracted by the bright fires of a camp, and I have seen the men and women jumping around, knocking the beetles aside as they came sailing along to certain death in the blazing fires. The fires are then drawn down for a while, as these beetles only persist for half an hour or so. During that half hour, the large variety can be caught with great ease, then they become wary and soon no lure, not even the bright fire, will attract them, although they may be seen flitting around in the farther distance. The Indians say that once they have had a whiff of smoke, they somehow warn all others of danger.

The small ones, not more than half an inch long, are very hard to capture and do not respond to any lure, but the bigger variety are easily induced to fly directly at any small moving light. The Indian damps down the camp fire, lights a cigarette, and lies down in his hammock. Presently, he notes the bright reddish forehead light of a big beetle, some 40 or so feet away. He takes a quick pull at his cigarette, knocks off the ash, and waves it frantically in circles to keep it brightly aglow. As soon as the beetle sees the moving light, he makes a direct line for it and when within a foot or so, is captured by a sweep of the free hand.

Once a prisoner, the Indian blows gently between the fingers of the hand holding the beetle to ensure its proper obedience, and murmurs the name of one variety of game whose whereabouts he particularly wishes to know. The hand is then unclosed and the beetle soon flies away. The direction of flight is noted carefully as that is the direction in which the hunter must go

to find his game. No two varieties of game must be whispered as that would confuse the beetle and the direction would probably be all wrong. Next morning the hunter takes the route or direction indicated, and may be successful either owing to coincidence or to his firm belief, which will carry him farther afield than is usual. If however, he is completely unsuccessful, there is some very good reason. When blowing and whispering to the beetle, he was perhaps in two minds as to whether to request "wild hog" or "bush cow". The beetle heard the whisper, but also read the mind, and thus receiving the names of two kinds of game became confused and misled the Indian. This is only done once on any one night by the hunter who is in earnest, but the irresponsible youths with no thought of hunting may catch a dozen and ask for the direction of every kind of game they can remember or know.

The women find an actual use for these beetles. When on trek, the camp is strange; things can be mislaid, the fires often go out, and sure as fate, a child will wake up and demand food or a drink of water, which may necessitate a trip to the water hole along an unfamiliar path (a couple of yards probably) which the mother hasn't memorised sufficiently to follow blindfolded. When these large fireflies appear in a strange camp, a woman roots out from her own or a companion's baggage, a clear glass bottle. She takes a glowing piece of wood from the fire, and begins collecting fireflies, all of which are promptly put inside the bottle, for which a piece of dead wood or a rag forms an easy cork. By the time she has got some 30 to 50 beetles captured, the others become wise to the danger, but she has sufficient to give out collectively enough light to see her way around camp or down to the water hole if necessity calls during the night.

I remember cutting a lengthy trail in the forest with Wapichanna boys, three or four of whom took their wives along to assist for the first week or ten days. One of these women, a girl called "Matti", made a point of collecting click beetles -

(they were quite numerous on that trip) -- at every camp, which was of great use as we had no lamp. Their usual light was accentuated by the annoyance and friction of a couple of dozen of their own species squirming around at the bottom of the bottle, which, held close to anything, gave out sufficient light to see what things were. "Matti", in the morning, would pull out the cork and scatter the beetles on the leaves around camp, little, if any the worse from their novel experience, judging by the speed with which they seen hid themselves beneath the leaves.

"Bushdeer" had ordered his womenfolks to collect a quantity of dry firewood for our use during the night. A piece of forest had also been cleared for us so we tied up our hammocks in the form of a triangle, in the centre of which, we, Indian fashion, kept our fire going. The presence of strangers, who did not speak Taruma, and the fact that everybody was more or less hungry somewhat damped the usual laughter and good night ceremonies of camp, but I was restless and calling Saik Tau, went over to where the old chief was lying in his hammock, and spent a couple of hours or more in conversation.

"Bushdeer" informed me that I was not the first white man he had met, although only one or two others of the tribe could say the same. He had gone with a white man "long, long ago" up another branch of the Essequibo and had helped to guide him to the source of the Trombetas, down which the white man (or men) had descended in a woodskin and disappeared.

The chief could not tell me if his tribe had come from elsewhere. He knew they had long occupied the head waters of the Essequibo from a short distance below the Kuduwini Mouth, and, as they were once much more numerous, had had large settlements in every branch of importance also. They were much fewer to-day through death. This loss was not caused by Kenaima as was general in Wapichanna country. Neither he nor his tribe believed very much in these evil spirits although, who knows but what there

might be such things. His people had just sickened and died. He had called the remnants of his tribe together, and had built a large communal house - as did the Waiwais - a little below his present home where we had picked up Mabbatiu, but almost as soon as they had moved into it, a couple of important members of the tribe had died there. Numbers seemed no safeguard against bad fortune and again they had disbanded, so each family now had its house in which was thought to be the best and safest location.

They had always had communication with the Atarod and Wapichanna tribes by way of the Kuduwini and Kassikidju Rivers, as also with the Waiwai tribe over our present route. The route up the Onoru branch of the Essequibo River connecting overland with the Trombetas had long been abandoned, and he did not know if any Indians still remained on that river. He doubted very much if there were. They also used to have communication with the East through a branch of the Essequibo, a short distance above the Kuduwini Mouth. This route also went overland to another river, where people lived, but it was now many years since anyone had visited the Taruma from that direction.

Other routes there were none, although to the West, via the Kamu creek, his hunters had seen evidences of people - a broken branch or a cut sapling ! When pressed as to what lay to the North, the old chief could only mutter, "Bad, bad, dangerous !", beyond which he would not say anything. I knew the river to the North was intercepted by a large number of cataracts and huge falls, which even to-day form an all but effective barrier to every expedition. I also knew the North was the route from which came the dreaded Carib Indians whose appearance meant war, death to many, and slavery to the captured. Any one of these causes might have accounted for Bushdeer's opinion.

In later years, I was to travel through this "dangerous" portion of the Essequibo between the mouths of the Kuduwini and Rupununi Rivers. I descended in a Taruma corial accompanied by

Saik Tau and one other Taruma, and I can vouch for the "danger".

I have never passed over any river that has so many huge cataracts which completely block navigation and provide the most exhaustive expenditure of energy and acute potential danger. We all got safely past these nightmarish drops in the level, but it was only by the skin of our teeth. It would form a splendid opportunity for a Hollywood dare-devil cinema scene, but I would not do it again, not if I were assured of the proverbial pot at the rainbow's end. We found the district completely uninhabited, yet there were signs of a large population at some time or other. There were numerous hieroglyphics on the rocks and stone fish traps everywhere, certainly built by human agency.

At practically all rapids, falls and cataracts, there is found growing under the water, a dense growth of vegetation, whose roots are fastened on the granite and gneiss rock. There is one variety of wild asparagus which, in favourable situations, forms a veritable forest quite knee deep or more, and this vegetation is the home and feeding place of numerous purely vegetable eating fishes, many of which are amongst the delicacies of fish life to the Indian, who will make periodic visits to the falls to shoot them with bows and arrows. The one thing essential for the growth of this vegetation is rapidly flowing water. Rocks where the river flows slowly by, will not have a trace, but it at once appears on the same kind of rock if there is a rapid or fall with swiftly flowing water, and up to a certain point, the more turbulent the water, the denser the growth. All these vegetarian fish feed only by daylight, and as dusk begins to set in, you can see them leaving the feeding grounds for some secluded spot where the water is more or less still, in which to rest and sleep. When the river is in spate any little backwater behind or amongst the rock outcrop, may afford a sleeping place for a couple of these fish. Advantage is taken of this fact by the Indian, who, as soon as he thinks the fish are settled down for the night and

asleep, sallies out with a bundle of palm leaf or resin torches. The fish, exposed to view by the flare, may be chopped with a cutlass or, as is more general, shot by a companion with the bow and arrow.

The great majority of these fish, however, take refuge in the deep pools either above or below the falls. As the level of the river falls during the long dry season, places are exposed where large numbers of fish are in the habit of sleeping, but which, through custom, they are averse to abandon so long as they can gain admission amongst the rocks. To enter such a place with torch and weapon is useless. The Indian could shoot one fish, but the noise of the victim tumbling and thrashing the water in agony would waken and alarm every fish on the feeding ground, whereupon they would all flee for their lives to deep water and safety. Those Indians resident in such a vicinity generations ago must have seen possibilities of a big catch, so they fell to work and built a rough cobble stone wall round the communal sleeping place of the fish, but carefully left an open gate at such points where the water flowed in and out in force, along which path, the fish always approached their sleeping place. When the night, which the Indians judged to be propitious, arrived, it would be an easy matter for them to block the gate quietly after the fish were asleep. When morning broke, the fish would find themselves hemmed in by not only by a wall of stone, but also by a ring of Indians all armed with some weapon to club, cut, shoot and kill. In this way the Indians would ensure a wholesale slaughter, which is what they love, as it means days of gorging and a complete cessation of all work and activity. The gates would be opened afterwards and the trap abandoned for such time as might be required - generally a whole year - for new supplies of fish to adopt it as their sleeping place.

I have never actually seen the Indians use this trap, but I have twice passed such a trap when the Indians had noted the

condition of the river and made arrangements for a return in a month or so when the water level would be such as to ensure success. The first instance was on a forest river (Quitaro) in Wapichanna country, which had been abandoned by the tribe years ago, and up which I was travelling. One of my men was the grandson of an old man - (still alive) - who was the last to abandon the river. We slept one night opposite such a trap into which we saw moving in the deepening dusk, wave after wave in the water as a fine twelve or fifteen pounder "paku" passed along, indicating that a good number of fish were using the spot to sleep in. When we made the village after two days overland trek, I heard the man tell the grandfather about it - the probable number of fish and the suitability of the water level - and heard the old man issue orders for the village to get ready to go and visit the trap as soon as I had gone. The other occasion was in Taruma country. I had left the villages, but was accompanied by some men in a corial who visited such a trap and returned to report on the conditions. I had little food aboard, and no more available; the village was two days up river, so I decided to push on, but I would have liked to see the actual operations.

The Tarumas, I found, had no special culture nor many industries worth speaking of. Most tribes specialise in some handicraft, the products of which they can exchange with other more fortunate tribes for the necessary knives, axes, or other hardware which the slowly percolating advance in outside standards of life and methods makes essential. True, the Taruma made a few graters once in a way, but they would appear for long to have been the intermediaries in tribal trade, and much of their time would be spent slowly traversing the long distances between their various customers with the temporary use of such knives, etc., as they were entrusted with as the reward of their labour. They had a great reputation for hunting dogs, but I found the tribe was almost a complete fish eating people. The rivers in front of

their doors simply teemed with fish, and I cannot recall when I found game figuring to any extent in their menu during any of my various visits.

They are the most expert fishers I have ever met in any part of the forest. They know numbers of special baits and lures that will attract various fish. In European waters success depends largely on long patience and absolute quiet, but not so on these rivers. The Indian smites or agitates the water loudly with the top of his rod in a peculiar manner, generally in imitation of a peculiar fish he wishes to catch. Apprised by the noise that food is available, that particular fish rushes to the spot and is caught. There are two closely allied species of vegetarian fish - paku and cartaback - which, though ordinarily living in the vicinity of rapids and falls, leave their customary locality to ascend to the highest reaches of the rivers and creeks to spawn. At such a time they are both easily caught by using ripe banana as the bait, but you must throw the hook and bait high in the air and allow it to fall on the water with a plop.

On hearing a single plop, a cartaback senses a fruit having fallen in the river. It rushes to the spot, seizes the sinking bait and is promptly caught. If you wish to catch a paku, however, you cast your bait in a similar manner, but as it strikes the water, you must gently but quickly whip your bait up and repeat the sound. On completing a double plop-plop you must keep your bait just below the surface. Before you can describe this performance, if there is a paku within hearing distance, he has grabbed your bait and you are playing him for all you are worth.

A Taruma will ask you what fish you would like, whereupon he will select the correct hook, rod and bait and set off single handed in his corial. In an hour or so he will return to his village with quite a string of just the fish you specified and with scarcely any other fish, although you know there are dozens of other varieties in every pool. When a Taruma goes out fishing in

his corial alone, he shows a mastery over his craft that no other Indians I have met with can emulate. When he reaches his fishing ground, he seats himself in the bow, paddle in one hand and rod in the other. In this manner, he may travel a mile or more, but not for one second is that corial out of control. To keep a corial always going just where you want it, never allowing it to swing out of the parallel with the river bank and to do it entirely with one hand, is a feat of no mean order, and frankly one which I never could do.

Many Indians - especially the Wapichanna and Macussi - believe in the efficacy of a whistle as a lure for fish. They ascend an overhanging tree or branch at a good pool, place themselves in a proper position and promptly begin to whistle gently with the lips. I doubt if this is of any real use except as an incentive to patience until eventually, as must happen, some fish out on the prowl passes underneath. The Taruma adopt the overhanging branch, but not the whistle. They put more faith in a fruit (a Genipapa say) attached to a string, which they throw in the air. At once they place an arrow in position, and are ready to shoot, the second the fruit touches the water. If no fish appears, the fruit is hauled up again by the string and the performance repeated again and again till successful, or they prove there is no fish which eat that fruit in the vicinity.

The Tarumas manufacture a variety of Urali poison which is so common amongst these forest Indians. This poison is generally associated with the blow pipe and a small quantity introduced into the circulation of any warm-blooded creature causes death in a few seconds. The variety made by the Taruma is called Makabur, but it has not the reputation of Urali proper, and there is no demand for it by other tribes. They make it in considerable quantities at a time, by boiling the bark of various trees. Boiling extracts some chemicals from the bark, and after throwing away the fibre, a dark treacly mass is left with which they coat a quantity of

prepared arrow points made from bamboo. These are placed in the air and sun to dry, and after the stuff has become hard and dry, the arrow heads can be stored indefinitely. When hunting, a few of these points are carried in the hunting bag or basket slung over the shoulder, in a small bamboo case, or this last may even be attached to the belt, which always means the Indian is hunting specially for big game such as wild hog. He may even fit a point to an arrow, when, for safety, it is enclosed in a small joint of bamboo. On locating the game, this bamboo tube is pulled off, or a point quickly drawn from its carrier and fitted to a special arrow according to circumstances. When the arrow strikes home, the victim dashes off, but generally only for a short distance. The animal becomes doped and sleepy, gently lies down and is dead.

A friend was once testing out Urali through the blowpipe on an ordinary chicken. He shot three fowls in succession, none of which showed the slightest inconvenience or any inclination to die. He refused to purchase the poison from the Indian, who had come a long distance to his station expressly to trade for a knife. The Indian himself grabbed the blowpipe saying, "Your wife is having a baby", and fired at a passing hen, which in a few seconds lay as dead as the Dodo. My friend bought the poison, but was by no means satisfied with the Indian's explanation of his failure. He killed some of the fowls he had shot at and dissected them, to find in every case, the tiny arrow from the blowpipe embedded amongst the fat around the intestines, where blood circulation was nil or almost so, whereas the arrow fired by the Indian had pierced the fowl's leg where circulation was normal. Everybody parted quite happily over the deal, but my friend had occasion to remember the Indian's prediction, when his wife did present him with a baby some eight months later.

The Tarumas had a large number of fierce dogs, which once on the trail of game were good hunters, but most of them I found were Waiwai bred, if not trained also by that tribe. Eventually these

dogs would go to the Wapichanna (if they lived long enough), but from my experience the reputation for dogs really belonged elsewhere.

Bushdeer told me that the Taruma name of the large river on which his tribe had always lived was Ezekidju or Zekidju, a combination of two words:- Eze or Ze meaning Haiawa Tree, and Kidju, a river or creek. The English name of this river is Essequibo, the Wapichanna call it "Skepi", while others call it Schipu. There has at times been considerable discussion amongst English people as to the actual meaning of Essequibo. It is often found that place names, though completely different amongst the different tribes, have the same meaning:- the name of some prominent feature such as a preponderance of certain trees, etc, for which naturally the different tribes have their own peculiar names. "Ske" in Wapichanna means "to wash" and the Essequibo has been said to be the "place of washing", although "Kire" is the invariable termination to indicate the place for any particular purpose.

This argument is backed up by a custom of the Wapichanna. When they descend the milky Rupununi and enter the almost inky black Essequibo, all those making the trip for the first time must at once dive overboard to ensure good luck, health and success while travelling on the larger river. The line of demarcation between the different colours of water at the junction is very pronounced. As it comes nearer, such youths or men as are making their first trip, strip off their clothes and stand poised in readiness on the seats of the boat. When the boat is well within the dark water - say 12 to 18 ft - "Dive", yells the Captain, and overboard they go. Back they scramble into the boat, hot pepper juice is squeezed into their eyes, they don their clothes, seize their paddles and on they go, cheerfully assured of safety and immunity from sickness on the journey ahead.

It does seem to me that Ezekidju and Essequibo are so closely allied in sound that the name has been adopted from the Taruma.

The Taruma, however, live high up on its sources, cut off by a most difficult, if not, quite, impassable range of falls from the lower reaches. The Haiawa (or Incense) tree grows in vast numbers on the lower reaches of the Essequibo, but only very rarely occurs in Taruma country proper. May not this tribe have lived below and not, as now, above these falls and cataracts? They may have been driven inland by the fierce Caribs or the equally cruel advance of so-called civilization of early European settlers. This idea would fit the name; their idea of "bad and danger" lower down the river, their myth of the Wanamari (practically the story of the Mermaid), and would also account for their superior skill in corial building.

Long ere we concluded our talk, the camp fires had dwindled to a glow during the first sleep of the Indians which is, at once, the longest and the soundest for the night. Our talk in low gentle tones disturbed no one, and quietly bidding Bushdeer good-night, Saik Tau and I crept quietly to our hammocks. Saik Tau, tired almost to exhaustion with the day's work and lack of food, would be sound asleep as "his head touched the pillow", except that a pillow is a luxury unknown to his race. I must admit to a gnawing tummyache and sleep did not come readily, so I turned to and fro rather fussily and noisily for some time. Suddenly I felt something touch me, a warm something, almost human on my bare arm. Swinging suddenly round I could just barely make out in the gentle glow of the dying embers, a dusky form, and there by my side stood an Indian woman, clad in the customarily accepted costume of Eve.

It is practically unknown for Indians to become familiar or forward on a first meeting, especially these so-called "wild" tribes who retreat before the advance guard of civilization. All have an innate respect or dread of complete strangers, especially if the newcomer belongs to an alien colour or race. These inoffensive people have been subjected to every disgrace and

indignity imaginable since the days when the Spaniards discovered the marvellous civilization and the gold of the Incas, to the present day, when they are branded with the soubriquet of Makaka (Monkey) over the whole of Brazil and far beyond, which term if applied to a civilized person means the lowest possible term of degradation and depravity and is, not infrequently, the signal for a "free for all" with knives and guns.

Through successive generations, for centuries of the worst imaginable treatment at the hands of all and sundry, such small tribes, generally living in the inaccessible sources of rivers and fastnesses of the colossal Amazon forests, who alone have escaped civilization, have developed an instinct and reserve, and are exceedingly wary and careful when strangers appear, even if accompanied with a wellknown neighbour as a guide. In many places this instinct or reserve, generally toned down to gentle acceptance, may take the form of active resistance and complete annihilation of the visitors. Amongst such tribes however as have remained within reach of, or in constant contact with civilization, we find the world wide habit of absorbing the vices, but not the virtues of the dominant race, and amongst these we meet every degree of immorality, immodesty and vice.

Amongst those tribes away in the jungle, the head of the house goes out to speak to the stranger, while the others stand peering from away back in the deep unlit gloom of the hut. The stranger gives no offence; it becomes necessary to hand round the customary hospitality peculiar to the tribe, but who will do it? I have heard many heated arguments over who must go, and have seen an old grannie made to do it, simply because she was old, had no husband, and her children were grown up, so if harm befel her, it would be no great loss to the tribe. I have known the men to scold and rage before a wife, and especially a young daughter, ^{before she} would pick up a gourd, fill it with beer, and go forth to face something she considered dangerous. With downcast eyes and every evidence of

fear, the woman would, almost blindly, push the calabash into the hands of the stranger and bolt for her hole and safety, like a rabbit. This reserve can be extremely annoying at times as I know very well, such as when I might happen to strike a village with all the men absent at the moment, and I wanted food, a shelter for the night or merely directions as to the path leading to the village. Even where I was known and could speak the language fairly well, if I were alone and sometimes even with a boy, I have been refused even the slightest assistance, or as frequently happened, to my intense amusement, an old woman would be thrust out to answer the questions I asked, or point out the road ahead.

At night especially, no woman will come within a mile of where the stranger is sleeping, if she can possibly help it. Such reserve will break down faster with an Indian with a grip of their language as he, at least, has the same trend of thought and habit. This is especially so if the stranger is a "good mixer" as we term it, one who passes up a joke or two and thus raises a laugh all round. After years of association and residence amongst the Wapichanna, I found this reserve operating quite strongly in these villages with which I had little contact, probably only a visit once a year or so, and I have known white men who, with every good intention possible, were never able to get beneath this barrier of reserve, which made their work or progress almost impossible.

Naturally I was aghast at being disturbed by the touch of a human hand - such a thing simply "isn't done" in Indian circles, and above all to find a woman bending over me. As I moved and sat up, I noticed in the red glare of the fire, that just behind her stood the brown, motionless form of a man also. Almost immediately, something piping hot and slightly sticky was thrust into my hands, and the pair promptly and silently vanished into the dark. Then to my intense surprise Saik Tau, whom I had thought was sound asleep, hissed, in their peculiar penetrating whisper, an explanation. The woman was his elder sister and she had baked a

tiny cake of cassava bread, which I was now gingerly fiddling from one hand to the other. This woman had brought along some cassava with her for the journey, but she had been either more provident or secretive, and she had been eking out her store of meal most carefully for her husband and children. At Saik Tau's request she had scraped up her very last handful of meal, and had baked it surreptitiously, for every one of her tribe thought she was equally as destitute as themselves, and it would have been a scandal had they known of her slender supply. At once she would have been branded as "miserly" - (Malenyan of the Wapichanna) which is the greatest sin in Indian law and custom. She had waited till we were abed, had cooked the bread in an ordinary pot, and true to custom, had come to present me with the food she had cooked. It was a very tiny cake, not any larger or thicker than a very lean crumpet. I was ravenously hungry, but small as it was, although it was far from satisfying my appetite, it did allay to some extent the worst pangs, so that I could sleep. The kindly action however hit a soft spot in my anatomy and I was deeply grateful. In the years to come I was to pay handsomely for that same crumpet.

Gratitude is a virtue very, very rarely, if ever, found amongst Indians. Amongst themselves they do not practise it, and when I went amongst these aboriginals at first, I was disappointed in many ways. When I did something particularly useful or helpful to an Indian, I concluded that such person would at least have reason to think favourably of me, and would respond by allowing me to have first call on his spare time as a workman, whereas he would be the first to enter the employment of the other fellow. Equally, they will do you some particularly useful favour and will disappear without expecting gratitude in any way. For a definite service, of course, they expect something in payment, whereupon the thing is ended. Food and drink are given generously, if they have it, to the stranger within their gates, without a thought of gratitude

or reward in return. They may, and often do, give the passer-by enough food to carry with him to supply the next meal on the journey, without expecting either thanks or reward. If they pass your camp and ask for food for their trip, you must not expect a single word of thanks even. In no Indian language at my command is there any word or expression by which one can register thanks.

The absence of thanks at all times, and their apparent lack of gratitude has caused much annoyance to people of the outside world and is chief cause of the Indian being branded as mean, treacherous, ungrateful, and a dozen other derogatory names. There are frequent reasons for these views, according to our light, education and laws. Suppose from any cause - there are plenty that jump to the mind - death, illness, lack of food, etc - an outside party decides to adopt an Indian child, either girl or boy. No opposition will be put up by the parents or guardians. You will be allowed to rear, clothe, feed and educate such child on any scale you choose, and for years you may not have a visit of any of the child's relatives except once a year or so when some one passing your vicinity may drop in casually. Just as soon as such child grows big enough to be of use to the tribe - a boy strong enough to act as companion to a father, uncle or cousin, the girl able to help in the field and household, and definitely when she arrives at puberty - you find all manner of relatives arriving to claim the adopted child. According to the tribal laws of relationship, nearly every member of the tribe can claim to be a near relative either on the father's or mother's side, or the marriage laws in the same way can give a claim to nearly all, that the child is the destined husband or wife for some party in each household. If the adopted child lives within reach of its tribe, argument is useless, as eventually the call of the wilds, and the prospects of freedom from irksome tasks and restraints, will overcome any sense of gratitude you may have drilled into the child's mind, and you wake up to find the child has gone in the

night. Naturally those who have brought up the child are furious, and every bad name imaginable attributed to the Indians for ever afterwards.

Let us try however, to get the Indian's attitude. When the child is taken over they are not quite so apathetic as they look, in fact, they are often glad and pleased, as a small child eats much food which is often none too plentiful. If the father is dead, who will provide game to feed? If the mother is dead, who will care for it, and any child up to six years old is a direct responsibility. The Indians have their own methods of obtaining news, and though they rarely appear, they know how the child is progressing. Once a child is eight years of age, it becomes of use to its tribe; if a boy, it can accompany the father while hunting, run short messages etc; if a girl, she can do small chores and help in household duties. The Indian knows this and if the party who adopted such a child is not putting it to work, they must be crazy fools. The Indian does not reckon in dollars and cents, but he realises the child is an expense at this young age and so he still keeps clear of the party who adopted it. By the time the child is twelve years of age, it must have more than paid for its keep through work of various kinds. Not only that, but the Indian may reckon it out that such a child has more than paid for all it has cost its foster parents. Then comes a demand for the child to be returned to the tribe, and the guardians are lucky if they are not faced with a demand for payment for the privilege of having reared it. I have known of several cases of children adopted as infants, who were demanded, after years of care, at ages of thirteen to fifteen, to be handed back, together with a large list of trade goods as the reward for years of rearing and feeding. Of course such a demand is an outrage, and won't be paid, and the Indian goes home equally outraged at the robbery committed at his expense.

Fully ninety nine per cent of the population of the world

accept as an extra Commandment that "it is more blessed to give than to receive", and about the same percentage are completely convinced that "the giving" must come entirely from the other fellow, and that "the receiving" applies only to the individual concerned. It is quite a surprise to find the Indian thinks on exactly the same lines. Neither party understands the reasons for a line of conduct as stated above, and both part bad friends if not in actual hatred. The Indian retires to his silent forest and is lost, but the guardians of the child, in dispute, publish in newspaper and magazine exaggerated accounts of the treachery and ungratefulness of all Indians.

Take again the case of an Indian "sick unto death", or severely injured. Some educated person happens along and after weeks of attention and nursing brings him back to health. The Indian in his own way knows the debt he owes for such care, but this goes no farther than paying whatever the nurse may demand (if within his power) for the medicines and attention. "When the devil was sick, etc", but gratitude, oh, no!

Many of our ideas are wrong in dealing with primitive people. We have been taught that by writing a word or two on a wooden chip of the gift of a useless empty sardine tin, the savage (sic) will bow down before us as to a god, and ever after be our faithful slave, dog-like in his docility and his attachment, and show abject misery if his god disappears from his view for a moment or two. I always side-step when any signs of these attachments begin. The chances are that the gentle savage has found a joint in your armour, to his very considerable gain for such time as he can put the comether over you, whereas he, with his tongue in his cheek, reckons you are a softy and is ready to hop it for his forests the moment you swing the searchlight on his actions.

If we would only drop these preconceived ideas and ideals in dealing with the savage, it would be much better for both and in the case of the South American aboriginal Indian, we forget or

conveniently ignore the fact that the White Man's lust for treasure, gold, power, or cheap labour has shattered their every form of government and social progress, and driven the last remnants of family life to the untrodden depths of the forest in antipathy. We should make some allowances for this long persecution, and look for the good (by no means small) left amongst these Indians but, far too often, it is a case of "give a dog a bad name and hang it" - through misunderstanding.

A day's march nearer - - - - food!

Next morning, a drink of cool water as morning tea, and a smoke by way of food, and we were ready for the road - as I thought! Saik Tau had dug out an unattached nephew; Mabba Tiu had done the same, but now one had to be found for Henry. This brainwave was to the effect that if these youths came along with us, each would carry his respective uncle's load, and leave him free to shoot any game we met, with a better opportunity of success. It did not matter two hoots to me how many came along, as we had no food, and the betting on finding any game en route did not offer anything to gamble on, so the loads were re-arranged, packed on the youths' backs and off we set.

Saik Tau in front, myself next, and Henry behind, all armed with guns, took the lead, our eyes roaming ahead and on both sides in search of some game. Some old sage has said that there is a connection between the early bird and the early worm, but after topping a few stiff hills, I was in a quandary as to which species we belonged to, as we neither met a bird, a worm, nor a single blessed thing to shoot.

Around 9 a.m. we were following up a valley, and came to a reef of low prickly palms, the majority of which were bearing fruit, bunches of nice red nuts, about an inch in diameter. At once the Tarumas raised a shout that these berries were edible. Down went the loads by the side of the trail, out came every man's machete, and in a few moments they had collected quite a pile of nuts. Palm nuts are generally as hard as bone, but these we had gathered proved to be edible but - only just. I was as hungry as a hunter and managed to reduce some half dozen to such a degree of fineness as allowed me to swallow them, but I soon gave up the contest in despair, and sat enviously watching my boys wolfing them down as fast as they could free them from the outside rind or sheath, and they had a good feed.

We moved on, travelling over very trying country; up hill and

down dale. I soon began to have a sickly feeling which, although loath to admit it even to myself, kept getting decidedly worse. We'd been going for about an hour and were climbing steeply along a narrow ledge with just room to walk in single file; a steep towering mountain on one side, and a sheer precipice on the other, with a glittering stream noisily jumping seaward at the foot. I was now feeling really ill and prayed that that horrible ledge would soon end. I just managed to reach the top, when I sat down in the trail, making an excuse that I wanted to have a smoke. I had scarcely seated myself when my stomach revolted, and I vomited as I think I have never vomited before, - or since. When I recovered somewhat and had wiped the tears from my eyes, I looked along the line of my boys to see what they thought of my weakness. To my intense surprise I found every/one of them doing exactly what I had done. It was quite ten minutes before we could check up on matters, and then I found they had all been feeling decidedly unwell for the last mile or so, but that none of them had dared to show it for fear of becoming objects of ridicule, through showing weakness.

When an Indian is in "his cups", and drinking heavily of his native beer, the ability to vomit seems about as easy to him as breathing to the average European, but on this occasion, they were visibly distressed, and when the paroxysm was over, their eyes were full of tears - something I have never seen before in an Indian. There were eight of us, all hale and hearty fellows, and we certainly looked ridiculous, sitting in a line and all sick. We all registered relief at once, and moved along to the stream for a drink, where we decided the cause of the trouble was the red nuts eaten an hour earlier. The Tarumas admitted they had never eaten these nuts before in quantity. When out hunting, a man might cut one open and eat it to help ease the pangs of hunger until he got home. They had all done this at times and never felt any ill effects, so they thought they were quite safe

to eat as many as they liked on this occasion. Judging from what I suffered, I felt grateful that I had only eaten six in place of the sixty nuts apiece (or more) that my men ate, otherwise it doesn't bear thinking what the results would have been.

After a short rest to recover, we continued on our way. The Tarumas had been lagging behind during the morning so we left them in charge of Mabba Tiu with strict injunctions that on no account were they to camp by themselves, but however slowly they travelled they must continue till they joined us again at some creek ahead, or at our camp for the night.

We pushed on ahead on the outlook for game, but with no success. When the westering sun showed it was nearing 2 p.m. we were steadily climbing a very steep mountain. Presently we heard a peculiar roar, and we all froze in our tracks. For some minutes there was absolute silence, then another short guttural roar. Saik Tau located the noise as coming from a red howler monkey, and, - "I've never heard one roar like that before. There is some mischief afloat", said my guide. Again came the roar, this time much nearer, and presently we saw a huge male "howler" scampering along the tree tops some distance below us. Off we all raced to head him off, as, though not the chosen food of the gods exactly, these monkeys are constantly eaten by all Indians, and at certain seasons of the year when they become very fat, are consistently hunted and considered a delicacy.

There is one snag in shooting them and that is their possession of a prehensile tail. This organ is fully two feet long and when the animal is in motion it is generally held aloft with a six inch curl at the end, very much like an artist's shepherd's crook. It is extremely sensitive and serves as another hand. It slithers caressingly along the passing foliage, but should the monkey slip, it immediately grasps whatever it may touch and so restores balance. Even when the monkey is shot, this organ seems to retain its functions, and will grasp the

branch beneath the dying animal's feet and hold him suspended in the air. It does not release its hold even after death, although a strong breeze causing the tree to sway may break its hold. Often I have seen a monkey shot dead, and have to be abandoned as the tree could not be climbed and there was no wind. Not infrequently the grip holds good until putrefaction sets in, when the body drops to be eaten by the carrion crows and other scavengers. The Indians always prefer to shoot these monkeys on trees which they note are climbable, as the chances are against the monkey falling in any case. I have seen an Indian climb a tree, and have to wriggle along branches and lianos quite a distance until he could violently shake the branch on which the animal hung.

As we raced through the forest, I knew all this from previous experience, and so waited my chance. Presently I caught him racing along a thick bare branch and I promptly fired, an ideal broadside shot. He slumped dead on the branch, slithered over earthwards, but that wretched tail caught the branch, and there he hung suspended nearly 200 feet up in the air, very much like a hare in a butcher's shop at home. There was no breeze in that valley and the tree on which he hung could not possibly be scaled, so we sat down to see if something would happen to break that prehensile grip.

Presently, we heard a prolonged swish, and a fine Harpy Eagle dived through a hole in the leafy forest canopy, dug his talons into our monkey and swept it away, without a pause, through another opening a little lower down. The force of the eagle striking his talons home, broke the grip of the tail, and away went our chance of dinner. It was all done before you could say "Jack Robinson", and not one of us had time to lift a gun and fire.

Now we had an explanation of that peculiar roar. The eagle had been hunting the monkey on the tree tops and every time he swooped to strike, the monkey would roar in sheer terror, though the roar was peculiar and strange, and something remained

unexplained. I have often watched the unequal combat between an eagle and a monkey. The eagle in the air swoops round and round on outspread wings; the monkey huddles in a clump of dense foliage, but the eagle can go on swooping indefinitely whereas the monkey now alone - his companions having fled - either wants a companion or seeks better shelter. Sooner or later the eagle gets his chance. There is a quick nose dive and the monkey is caught. The older monkeys try a different plan. Instead of looking for a place to hide they make for a prominent bare branch which apparently offers absolutely no shelter. He deliberately exposes his body above the branch to the attack of the eagle who after a preliminary swoop round, strikes at his victim. The monkey meanwhile waits patiently until the eagle is well on the downward swoop, when, with him only a few feet away, he swings under the branch and the eagle swoops harmlessly past. As the monkey slides under the branch, he utters the most appalling roars of terror. Again and again, the eagle swoops without success, the monkey dodging under the branch just a fraction of a second ahead of the gleaming talons. Should the monkey duck too early, the eagle can change his course a little and catch his victim under the branch. After a time, the eagle, growing weary of his fruitless swoops, may clear off and leave the monkey alone. I have seen this happen more than once but never could decide whether the eagle cleared off in disgust or weariness, or because he sensed my presence.

Silently we bowed our heads in reverence to whatever gods provide eagles with a free meal, but deep in our throats there were weird mutterings in a number of languages, as we watched that eagle flap his way across the narrow valley with his heavy burden, and up the adjacent mountain along which we had come, expecting him at every moment to go up in a puff of smoke, but I reluctantly came to the conclusion that he must be an asbestos variety. Faster and faster flapped his wearying wings; nearer and nearer he came to the tree tops in exhaustion, until about half a mile away

he alighted gracefully in a tallish tree and that was that.

Almost immediately, from high up on the mountain above us, came the clear ringing "Aha he-ei-i-i" yell of an Indian. Saik Tau jumped to his feet, cupped his hands round his mouth and yodelled an answer. Again came the yell and yet again, each time slightly different, and then our guide, his eyes sparkling with new hope and vigour, said "Come on, that is Kiwinik and Food". What a difference now in our speed and feelings! All morning Saik Tau had been grumbling at the steep grades of each mountain, and it had only been by the judicious application of ridicule, scolding or flattery that we had got along so far. Now he was off uphill like an antelope, and I was hard put to it to keep up with the rascal, especially as the remaining climb was both long and very steep, and my slippery shoes more than once sent me sprawling.

At length we topped the crest, and there on a nice level clear spot in the forest, sat our Waiwai chief with some 3 or 4 baskets in a line across the path, before him. Some yards behind him we saw 4 or 5 Indians standing on the "qui vive", heavily armed, but with the ends of their long bows resting on the ground in an attitude more of peace than war.

As we came close, Kiwinik rose gracefully to his feet, stepped to one side and said, "Come and eat". None of us required a second invitation and my boys at once began tearing off the lashings and coverings from the baskets. We found one basket full of dried meat (barbecued), mostly bush hog, tapir and birds. Another basket was full of fruit, melons, pineapple, and passion flower fruit. The largest basket held a great quantity of cassava bread. The last basket held two large gourds of native beer. Everything was already cooked and we were soon busy.

With true Indian courtesy, Saik Tau asked Kiwinik and his men to join us. The Chief stepped up and sat down with us, but his men paid no attention beyond gradually sitting down one by one as their curiosity and fear subsided. I was probably the

first white man they had ever seen, and naturally their feelings were a bit mixed. Conversation became general, and we learned our friends had just reached the mountain top when they heard a gun fired in the valley below. Knowing that, whatever the result of the shot, we would be busy for a few moments, either picking up our game or racing to get another chance to shoot, they had waited a few moments in quietness. Then as nothing more was heard, Kiwinik had signalled us and got our reply. He told us how he had slept with his carriers the night he left us, and how he alone made his village late at night on the next day. He had collected food and men, and started back next morning, and here he was. His father was coming behind with more supplies and carriers, and if we pushed on we would probably find these at a nice creek at the foot of the mountain on which we now sat.

After a good square meal (and how good everything tasted!) we were sitting chatting and smoking when our Taruma carriers rolled up. They were invited to make free of such food as we had left, and, as we proposed to move on as Kiwinik had suggested, my two men, Saik Tau and Henry, began to open the baggage to get out what was necessary in the camp ahead for themselves and me, as it would be fully an hour later before the carriers would catch us up. On opening one of the packs, we were surprised to find a large, red howler monkey which had been shot somehow, and we asked for an explanation. Then they told us how they had been coming along the trail, but halted when they heard our gunshot. Almost immediately, a Harpy Eagle with a "howler" in its grip had perched on a branch a short distance away. One of the boys had promptly fired an arrow at the eagle, which, although it had found its mark, did no serious damage. The eagle had flown off with the arrow but had dropped the monkey which they secured and had brought along. There was no doubt about its being our monkey, as investigation showed the wounds from my gun. The animal proved to be in a very emaciated condition, due to the presence of numbers of mosquito

worms - a species of warble. One of these we found on the animal's "Adam's Apple", which, probably due to the monkey clawing at it with its hands to relieve the irritation and pain, had developed into an abscess. This, in all probability, affected the vocal cords and fully accounted for the peculiarity in his roar when the eagle attacked, and which we had been unable to understand. He was so lean and poor that I told the Tarumas to throw the body away, but, probably on the "waste not, want not" theory, I noticed the boys roasting the least affected portions of the animal later that evening.

The Waiwai led the way downhill, and in an hour or so, we came to a lovely creek, a few yards before which we found a spot that had been cleared by some one for our use as a camp. On the far side of the creek we could catch glimpses of smoke, and heard the usual noise of a considerable number of people in camp. Now and again we caught glimpses of red bodies flitting through the trees, and we had the feeling that though we were not seeing much, many pairs of eyes were watching us. This was the camp of the Chief's father and his carriers, and almost as we arrived, Kiwinik moved over also with his own men.

A bath was indicated, so, while my men made fire, hung the hammocks and did various other chores, I went off downstream. On my return I found Kiwinik had arrived back in our camp with a fresh supply of food and an intimation that his father would come over to meet me a little before sunset. I had had a fair meal only a short time before, still I felt I could do with some more to top off with, as I knew once my men got to the food, there would be nothing left, which proved true, just as soon as my lagging carriers came along.

The sun was well below the tops of the trees and the dusk of evening was rapidly falling, when Kiwinik arrived in our camp accompanied by his father, whom he promptly introduced. A few slinking figures took up a position along the edge of the cleared

ground of our camp, presumably half a dozen warriors who either were to form a guard to the Chiefs or had come along out of curiosity to see the sights.

I was well versed in the Indian etiquette necessary on meeting strangers, a routine speech that varies but little amongst any of the Indian tribes, who have little or no contact with civilization. As the visitor; I produced my credentials, - my passport and other documents, so to speak. I told the Ex-Chief who I was, where I came from and for what purpose I was visiting the Waiwai, the old man squatting by the fire grunting monosyllabic replies. I spoke quite a while and then he replied. To my great relief he bade me welcome. He would receive me in his village - some three days march ahead - and he would be glad to do any trade in reason if I had the articles of barter that the tribe was so much in need of.

Saik Tau had been kept busy interpreting, but once I had got consent to enter the country, both he and Henry had to go through approximately the same ceremony, recounting more or less just what I had said, and the interview lasted fully a couple of hours in all.

Kiwinik had received a supply of native beer from the crouching attendants in the background, and had passed around a calabash of drink from time to time. His father had rolled up some half dozen cigarettes and handed one to each of us, so that their general demeanour was far from hostile, and so far, I had seen nothing to be afraid of, or cause alarm.

The Waiwai cigarette is made of home grown tobacco and the laminated bark of a forest tree, as is usual amongst all Indians, but differed greatly in length. It was at least one foot long and the bark was held from unrolling by at least two slender threads stripped with the nail from the bark and then wound twice round the cigarette. The two ends were twisted parallel to each other between the thumb and forefinger, and they twirled up into a knot on being released.

The Waiwai were very careful in their method of smoking. There were only very gentle and limited movements of the hand that held the cigarette - only sufficient to bring it into contact with the lips or to move it some inches away to allow space for freedom of speech, or to exhale the smoke from nostril or mouth. I noticed the burning end of the cigarette was kept carefully upright when away from the mouth and soon almost an inch of ash was being carefully balanced on the end. Then the cigarette was gently lowered till the ash was opposite the mouth when the smoker put out his tongue and tipped the free ash on to it. The tongue was immediately withdrawn and the ash swallowed. I found out later that this was their invariable custom, and that probably due to the heat of the cigarette, every smoker's tongue was deeply stained, much as you notice the fingers of many habitual smokers at home. This stain was a dark brown, almost black mark, about the size of a halfpenny, situated in the centre of the tongue a short distance from the tip. Every Waiwai smokes from boyhood, and I have never seen a tongue without its stain caused by the ash of cigarettes. Also I have never seen a Waiwai, even at a binge or drinking party, so careless of cigarette ash as to drop it on the ground.

The reason for this extreme care is that an enemy might find such ash, and use supernatural means to the detriment or death of the smoker. All Waiwais are brothers and friends, and on no account would harm any one, but they attribute great supernatural powers to various tribes around them, particularly the Shelew Tribe who reside roughly a moon's journey due South, and who knows but that precaution or prevention is better than "beg pardon", even in the case of a Waiwai.

We were given instructions as to where we were to camp on the journey ahead and various directions generally. Finally our visitors said "Good-night", and moved over to their own camp. Our hammocks were already slung up, Saik Tau and Henry on either side of me, within easy touching distance, while our Taruma

porters were slung at strategic points around us. This was mostly Henry's work, who evidently was none too sure that our welcome was genuine, and he wasn't taking any risks, probably more on his own account than mine. We stoked up the fire to last some hours, turned in, and were soon sound asleep after a hard fatiguing day.