The White Indians.

Somewhere in the vast forests that clothe the Amazon valley lives a tribe of White Aboriginal Indians. There has been a good deal of writing on the subject and a wide spread belief amongst the general public of their existence. This belief approaches the definite in Brazil, but it is not till you penetrate far into the Rio Negro and especially the Rio Branco districts that you can actually locate their position. No one had ever seen or visited them, but every one knew these Indians had extensive villages on a little-known tributary of the Trombetas River, called the Dog River, and that the tribe of Indians is known as the Waiwai. One Brazilian Protector of Indians had penetrated a long distance into the forest to the South under the guidance of some Powisianna Indians, but had failed to reach the Waiwai owing to his food supplies running short. He was very definite about the Waiwai being white as the Powisianna definitely had dealings with them, and called them white "como Englez ou Americano".

For some years I had been collecting Balata in the British Guiana forests with the local Indians. Balata is the dried latex of the "Minusops globosa" but is probably best known to the general public as the thin, tough, unelastic covering of the common golf ball. I was in charge of some five thousand square miles of forest, so far away from civilization that it was too costly to operate with the customary skilled bleeders from the coast and the only practical method

of working was to train the Aboriginal Indians in the district, thereby saving a huge bill in transport of men and supplies. I established a training centre at a convenient spot in the forest, collected some twenty, strong, active men of the Wapichanna Tribe and taught them their work. They proved apt pupils and as each man became proficient he was allowed, the following year, to go off on his own with one or two novices, generally a son or close relative, to whom he, in turn, taught the rudiments of the industry. They generally selected a spot in the forests close to their home, or which each regarded as his special hunting ground, and I soon had some fifty camps scattered all through the forests under my control. Though expert workmen, and producing a quality of Balata that became famous as the standard of quality on the London Market, they had absolutely no idea of quantity, and after a few weeks at work they would wonder what on earth the Boss could do with so much. At this point they would sit down contentedly to hunting or merely doing nothing, so it was necessary for me to visit each camp as often as possible to urge them to renewed activity, as quite apart from what I might want to do with so much balata, it meant another five dollar note to themselves for every twenty five pounds produced. These camps I connected with light trails, and during the six months of the rainy season

at which time only, the bleeding of the trees could be done, I was constantly travelling through the forests, half a day WAlking and swimming to the next camp, then sleeping for the night in the rough and ready hut amongst my men.

Interested as I was in the White Indians, I made all enquiries possible about the Waiwai. I was definitely informed that the Waiwai lived in Brazil and probably some hundreds of miles South of the Wapichanna country. A number of Wapichanna had a common point with the Waiwai - trade by barter! As is customary however with most of these Indians, such trade I found was conducted through certain intermediaries who received trade goods from the Wapichanna, went off to trade and returned later, on an indifferent "This year, Next year, Sometime, Never" basis, according to good health, good luck or numerous factors that could influence long distance travel overland.

The Tarumas were a tribe who lived somewhere on the Essequebo about half way to the Waiwai, and they were the go-betweens who were responsible for the little trade in existence. The Wapichanna had no industry established up to now, and only a very small trade in hammocks, and curios with the coast, so that it was only every second or third year that the Tarumas came through. One or two Wapichanna had been through to the Taruma country. These had seen a Waiwai or two, but none as far as I could learn

had ever crossed into Brazil and actually visited their villages.

They had, however, quite a lot of information about the Waiwai, the first and most important point being that though the Waiwai were a pale colour, they were by no means white. The assumption, so common in the Rio Branco and Negro, was explained to me as having arisen through an indifferent knowledge of the Wapichanna language. The well known food "tapioca" is made from the roots of the cassava, which latter is the staple food of every Aboriginal Indian in the forest. The Wapichanna make fairly large quantities either for home use or for sale in the Rio Branco district where it finds a ready market. Tapioca is called "Waiwe" by the Wapichanna, a name known to their tribe when they originally lived far to the West and before they migrated into British Guiana or had even any remote connection with the Waiwai. It is just a mere coincidence that exactly a similar name should apply to a tribe, and the Brazilians jumped to a conclusion that fitted popular imagination. The Waiwe starch of commerce was pure white, and, accordingly, the Waiwai Indians must be equally white. This is probably the real solution of the existence of the so-called White Indians of the Amazon.

This was a very disappointing discovery, yet the Wapichanna had other information about the Waiwai, that made it seem well worth while to pay them a visit if opportunity arose.

They all, men and women alike, wore their hair long. They had a marvellous breed of dogs, and above all, they made cassava graters which were so necessary in Wapichanna life to reduce the roots of that staple vegetable to a pulp. The best specimens of feather work in the district were all made by the Waiwai. They also had various, peculiar customs, and it was a serious offence to vomit (a general tribal accomplishment at a drink) around a Waiwai village, or even to spit (another general habit) because, if a Waiwai took a dislike to anyone, all he had to do was to make a few passes over the vomit and the offender simply faded away. No one in his senses would leave bones or fragments of food around after a meal, and one had to watch that even the ash of a cigarette did not fall to the ground for the same reason. Every visitor to the Waiwais took with him a joint of bamboo tube, carefully stoppered, in which to spit or drop cigarette ashes. They were said to be very fierce and warlike yet with little or no other contacts for trade, the Waiwai might welcome any peaceful visitor if he carried along an axe or two, a few knives, fish hooks, and other articles of ironware of which they stood in such dire need.

A visit to the Waiwai was, I found, rather difficult. It was necessary to arrange for a good interpreter. Fortune favoured me here in that the principal Taruma intermediary and trader had recently taken unto himself a wife from amongst the Wapichanna. I got him into one of my camps as

a workman but finding him no earthly use as a bleeder, I took him as often as possible as guide and carrier in the forests for some months.

I was also at this time collecting spiders and insects for a well-known university and he took a keen interest in what I did, taking a delight in poking around in search of something that might interest me. He soon found that I was far more interested (in his case) if he could produce something new, than in the amount of balata he collected and this grew into a most useful habit that he kept up all his life and which proved of immense value to me in curio hunting amongst strangers.

This man became widely known by the name of "Saik Tau" (Cut brow) due to an unsuccessful amorous adventure when the lady, instead of presenting him with her chaste lips or whatever is the equivalent in Taruma life, hit him a clip across the brow with the business edge of a cutlass - the mark of which he carried all his life. Outraged at such treatment, he moved out to Wapichanna country, where the ladies being more amiable, he settled down for life on the edge of the great forest. He was an expert linguist and spoke Taruma, Waiwai, and Wapichanna with equal facility. He had a strong antipathy to anything approaching hard work, but he became, out and out, the best interpreter I have ever employed.

All balata work in the forests closed down with the cessation of the rainy season, and during the ensuing dry months

I generally went off prospecting or exploring. At the close of my second year with Saik Tau as my personal attendant, I was agreeably surprised when he walked in one day to inform me that a couple of Tarumas had come to visit him and that he proposed to go back with them to visit the Waiwai Indians. "Would I like to come along?" "Oh, Boy, will a duck swim?" was my answer.

A Wapichanna brother-in-law of his was going also. This man was one of my best men, spoke a few words of English and was absolutely devoted to me. Then the Tarumas had left a fine canoe at the landing on a large river some fifty miles distant in the forest. Transport was one of the snags on a visit to the Waiwai, as the greater part of the journey had to be done by canoe or boat. The Wapichanna had no craft on any of the rivers leading to the Waiwai, and it was only when the Taruma came out that an expedition could be arranged.

I had a good idea of what articles were best suited to trade with and inside an hour I had packed a small steel canister with what was necessary. This I handed to Saik Tau while Henry was given my hammock, pyjamas, a spare suit of clothes, a camera and plates, about twenty pounds of salt and a little food. I carried a double barrelled shot gun and ample ammunition. I also saw to it that my two men had serviceable guns and supplies as we would want them, maybe for

self defence, but certainly to supply us with the greater part of our food during the two months or more that must elapse before our return.

It is no joke outfitting for a long journey both in time and distance into the dense Amazonian forests. The moment you leave your base of supplies, you cannot calculate on getting anything beyond a little cassava, if such Indians as may be met with can spare a little from their fields. Visitors in the depth of the jungle are as rare as pearls on the porcine snout, and few Indians produce more food than they and their families can consume. In average years they are on the verge of little, and only in exceptional years when Nature is particularly kind, have they anything to spare. During the lean years, so frequently recurrent through lack of foresight or the vagaries of the weather, the Indian can always keep body and soul together by the proceeds of his cunning, his hook, or his bow and arrows, eked out by a little wild fruit or such edible roots as he may find. This means his entire time must be devoted to hunting, but when on the march with even a couple of men, it is exceedingly difficult to forage sufficient supplies unless with frequent and lengthy halts. No Aboriginal Indian will actually starve in the forests, but the White Man, with his regular hours and good meals, can, as I jolly well know to my sorrow, come within what is a very painful proximity to that unfortunate state, even with a group of faithful Indians.

There are certain supplies a White Man must have; things that the primitive Aboriginals would class as luxuries. This list is small actually: salt to savour food, and soap with which to bathe and wash clothes: yet not too much must be carried, just sufficient on a minimum scale for the journey. "Will one cake of toilet and laundry soap be enough?" Put in too much and you soon pass the amount a single man can conveniently carry. That means enlisting another carrier who will require more food and more supplies - a vicious circle.

Of course if expense is no object you can travel in luxury but such style was far beyond a humble individual like myself, with no sheet anchor such as a grandmotherly government or a benevolent company to depend upon. I always had to make each expedition pay somehow on its own, and I had been "scratching gravel" long enough on my own to know what I was doing, so I decided on a minimum scale of both carriers and supplies.

Three days trek due South across the open savannahs brought us to Saik Tau's village some fifty or sixty miles from my headquarters. Here I found the two Tarumas waiting our arrival. They turned out to be a husband and wife - something I hadn't bargained for, and did not care for. The presence of a woman always upset an expedition. As is only natural, she would invariably keep some titbit of game on one side for the husband - game probably shot by another man, who had his claim

and watchful eye on that same little dainty - and a coolness would spring up at once. It never meant an open rupture, but the camp would be divided. There was the loss of friendliness and co-operation so necessary for the success and comfort of the expedition, and long ago I had put my foot down on any of my men taking their women folk along further than the last point of easy return to their own village, but here I was apparently helpless.

The Tarumas proved to be two shaggy, unkept specimens, far inferior I could see to the type of Indians I had been stationed amongst. They did not appear to have a single Wapichanna word between them, yet they were doing quite a bit of business. One ambition dear to the heart of most Indians and especially the Wapichanna is to have what they call a "Pownar" - a customer or middleman - to whom they give their trade goods and who will some day bring something back as payment although experience shows that that the credit and debit balance is very rarely ever within years of being balanced. The unsophisticated middleman is perfectly honest, but a thousand and one things may throw out his crude calculations and when he returns after the lapse of a year or two, his patron invariably accepts quite unconcernedly whatever may be handed over in payment for his goods even if it is only the most trivial article or an unvarnished empty excuse.

Indian ideas of trade are peculiar. I remember a

woman once laying an empty basket in front of me and asking for a knife as payment for the bañanas it once held. This poor woman was a widow, living some sixty miles away, with no man from whom she could borrow or buy a knife - an article of the most supreme importance in Indian, or forest life in general, so she had packed her basket with bananas for me. Unfortunately she had been delayed on the road, the bananas had ripened, then gone bad and had either been eaten or thrown away. She was perfectly honest and genuine in her motive, and she got her knife, on the principle of what we lose on the swings we make on the roundabouts. Possibly the very next day an Indian would bring me in a beautiful old stone axe for which he would ask a two-penny string of beads for his wife or daughter. The axe was of no earthly use to him. He had probably picked it up while hunting and if the Boss would buy it - well, he was laughing! I also was laughing when I got a couple of dollars for the same axe from one of the various channels at my command.

I had a friend to whom an Indian wanted to sell a dozen chickens. My friend gave him the required trade goods and the Indian left to go home to bring back the chickens. Sure enough, two days later, back came the man, "Boss, I have no fowls from which to rear chickens, but as I see numbers running round your place, if you will give me a cock and a hen I will pay you as soon as I produce the number of chickens I owe you", he explained. My friend was considerably non-plussed as this was a new aspect of business to him, but he gave the Indian the

necessary cock and hen. Almost a year later the Indian came back carrying the dozen chickens and the original cock and hen.

A rare occasion like the present when two Tarumas had arrived gave the Wapichanna a unique opportunity of doing trade on lines they so loved, and it was amusing to see people arriving from quite long distances to lay down articles of barter and asking graters, featherwork or resins in payment. The Taruma may have understood, but he only gave a grunt in reply, and picking up the article given, stowed it away in an already bulging basket. I was very much amused at one Wapichanna woman, for whom the Tarumas seemed to have a peculiar fascination. She stood watching them like a hawk, for fully half an hour, gradually sidling up nearer and nearer to the Taruma wife. Most of the Wapichanna were by this date taking an interest in clothes and it was the fashion for most of them older than the early and middle teens, to wear at least a thin cotton skirt over the customary bead lap. The interested woman was so clad, and suddenly her hand pulled the waist string and her bead lap dropped at her feet. Picking it up she handed it to the Taruma woman, shouted "Grater" and fled from sight. At this time, no self-respecting woman, one frock or six, would dream of going without her bead lap on, as in her own mind she would be absolutely nude, so here was a very elementary struggle against dire necessity and innate modesty. The ridicule and scandal of everybody would fall heavily on her gentle mind, but

her need of a grater was much more pressing.

Inquiries through Saik Tau showed that the Tarumas had left a nice canoe on the Kassikidju River, some 80 or 100 miles away in the forest, and that the Tarumas on the route to the Waiwai had a good stock of food in their fields. We could easily purchase such cassava and vegetables as we would require, and thus the two snags to our expedition I had feared, were removed or lessened. I generally discount the Indians' idea of "plenty" and "a little to spare", so I decided to carry sufficient food to carry us far beyond the Taruma country and impressed a couple of extra hefty carriers to carry more food supplies on the overland journey to the time we were loaded into our canoe, when they would return home again.

We were resting at the very edge of the forest, and as far as I could learn, had a little over a hundred miles to walk to our boat. A Wapichanna will easily walk his 20 to 25 miles per day, even when carrying a 50 lbs load, and my boys said they could make it in four days good going, so off we set, but I soon found I had not taken my new Taruma friends into account. This pair were none too well and in any case were only accustomed to travelling in their own very leisurely way: stopping for long at the smallest excuse, and wanting to camp for the day at the end of a few miles. I tried leading the way with my men, thinking they would at least try to keep in touch with us, but this didn't help matters. Once or twice on each

march, and certainly at every halt for our mid-day meal, or the camp at night, these Tarumas would open their barter basket and lay out every single thing they had received from the Wapichanna, touching over and over again each article in turn and chattering away like two care free children. I found out that this was being done so as to memorise completely the details of each trade to be done, as in every probability it would be some 2 or 3 years before they could even hope to come back. With each halt, my slender stock of food was dwindling and I was none too happy. I could get a good day's work out of most Indians what with a little scolding, "soft sawder", or ridicule - the weak spot of every Indian's mental and moral make up - but these Tarumas were away beyond my capabilities. It was no use flying off the handle as an all round row would probably mean that everybody would disappear in the forest, and the expedition have to be abandoned. I didn't think my own men would leave me, yet I had known other men have it happen. As I was the first white man for a generation or two, to visit the Taruma country, I knew it was most essential to win their confidence, so that when I did enter the tribe proper, I would be reasonably sure of securing food, canoes, and other assistance on our way to the Waiwai.

The most provoking part was the behaviour of my own men. They took these halts with poker-faced stoician.

"To-morrow, the sun will rise" is one of their wise sayings. Then some one had christened the Taruma husband by the name of "Dodu". A score of times a day, one of my men would give a long yell, "Ai-i-i-Dodu"; the Taruma would repeat "Dodu" in his guttural tones, and the whole crowd would go into paroxysms of laughter.

It took us more than twice the estimated time to reach our objective, but at last there was the shining river, beneath whose placid surface was sunk, for safety, the Taruma's canoe. We soon hauled it to the surface - a very graceful dug out or corial but so very small it could by no means carry our party and supplies. It would just carry my two boys, our supplies and myself, but what were we to do with Mr. & Mrs. Dodu and their impediments? The only solution was to make a woodskin, so I promptly sent back my extra carriers and we started in. Previous expeditions in a like predicament had combed the river for a mile or so on either bank for suitable bark and a whole day was lost searching for a tree that would supply our need. In later years I was to become expert in woodskin building, but this was my first attempt, so I could so little except watch the men at work, see that they did not sit down too often or too long, and lend a hand where possible. It took us two full days to get that woodskin ready for the road.

In making a woodskin, the two essentials are a tree

of the right size and the proper texture of bark. The Copaiba, from which a valuable medicinal oil is procured, is by far the best and most usual. Having found a suitable bark, the tree must be felled in such a way as not to injure the bark in falling, and also, that when it is down on the ground, the trunk is, for the greater part, quite clear of the ground. Otherwise the trunk has again to be junked or cut, so as to permit it being lifted up on to logs to support the ends in order to facilitate working and getting the cylinder of bark off the tree. The branches generally hold the tree in the desired position (1) although not always, hence the care in felling. Once the tree is down measurements are made along the bole, of the length required and the bark cut through to the bole at the two marks (2). These cuts go right round the circumference of the tree. A strip of bark some 3 to 6 inches wide is now removed along the top of the bole between these cuts (3). As many men as you have axes for, now attack the tree with the heel of the axe, or wooden clubs, hitting good hard blows at varying angles all over the bark. (4) This tends to loosen the bark from the tree, but great care must be taken that each blow is struck square as the sharp edge of the iron may cut the bark and cause a hole. Poles are now cut a couple of feet long and some 3 ins diameter; one end of which is sharpened like a chisel. You now begin working this chisel face underneath the bark all along the bole on the cut already made,

gradually working deeper and deeper until you are as far as you dare go without splitting the bark. A bent pole is best as that fits the bole without forcing the bark out too far. It is rather a tedious job at which great care must be exercised. When the bark is prised clear for as far as you dare venture (the danger of splitting is great) you leave the poles in place and retire for a meal or a rest, and generally on your return you find the tension has slowly sprung the bark perfectly clear even under the bole where you could not reach with either axe heel or chisel pole. You now have a loose cylinder of bark which you slip round the bole till the cut, originally on top, is now directly under the tree. A couple of men now seize the lips of the bark on both sides, which they gently pull apart and slide up and off the bole, when they carry it to a clear level piece of prepared ground and lay it down. You now have a free cylinder of bark (5) which curls inside itself (6) of some 15 to 18 ft long. Five 2" poles of the length you want the width of the wood-skin to be, are cut. The curled-in bark is pulled apart and these pieces of wood inserted at equal distances to keep the cylinder open. About 3 feet from each end you make a cut in the bark until you get to the cambium which must not be severed. These cuts (at both ends and both sides) (7) are made for some distance - a foot maybe - or as may be judged suitable. The two end pieces holding the edges apart are knocked out and the two ends begin to curl in. Lifting pressure is slowly applied

at each end when the extreme ends begin to bend up, the parts at the cut slipping over the main trunk of the cylinder. The idea of this is to form a sloping stem and stern to keep out the water. You have decided which is to be the bow and the sliding front bark must pass to the outside, that at the stern to the inside of the woodskin to prevent water entering, although the unsevered cambium generally makes a watertight joint (8).

This lifting is continued till the extreme points are level with or just above the two sides, when it is lashed into position temporarily. Pliant saplings are now cut and lashed to both sides and right up to the end of both bow and stern: holes having been bored by (9) some sharp implement or by fire, while tough fibrous bushropes form the lashings. The edges are trimmed level and especially both ends (10). A couple of paddles are formed from a round piece of wood (11); a couple of round pieces to serve as seats for the paddlers are laid in the bottom and your woodskin is complete.

Our woodskin when finished was a very poor specimen. It was very inferior bark to begin with and had opened out badly. It was rather lopsided and had a tendency to travel sideways like an irate crab, but it was, <u>just</u>,possible for 2 people to sit in it and float. In a trial spin my two men sank it while making a turn, so I decided Mr. & Mrs. Dodu were to go in it, while my men, myself and all baggage went in the aerial. When everything was all crowded in we had only some half inch

of free board and once when Saik Tau sneezed sideways, we shipped gallons and gallons of water. We had to sit carefully on the balance and every stroke of the paddle made us wobble, but we were soon silently slipping down stream. We soon got accustomed to our tiny craft's idiosyncrasies and made better speed. Dodu and his wife having nothing (food or otherwise) had now perforce to keep up with us as best they could and we made the mouth of the River on the fifth day.

The Taruma.

We were now well into country inhabited solely by Tarumas. The Kassikidju, down which we had travelled, is a combination of two Taruma words: namely, Kassi, those who are dead, and Kidju, the invariable name for a creek or river. The Taruma at various times had had houses and extensive cultivations along this river, but these had all been abandoned years ago. We had seen many places with low secondary forest growth, which clearly indicated human interference, but now so many years ago as to make it hopeless to land in the hope of finding anything that would augment our almost depleted supplies of food.

The Kassikidju, as a river, presented nothing unusual with the exception of the hieroglyphics or "Picture Writings" engraven on the rocks here and there. Such picture writings are common on most rivers especially in the vicinity of rapids and falls. The best of these hieroglyphics represent human beings or various animals. There is little detail of fine lines and a human being may be represented by only  or  , which may be several feet in length. Other writings, apart from animals, may be repetition of spiral lines of various length; large circles up to 2 ft in diameter, or numerous intricate figures that no one to-day can recognise as having any meaning. These hieroglyphics are incised some

¼" to ½" on the face of a hard granite rock and are generally about one inch across the lines of incision. Many figures seem incomplete to the eye, and a sensitive finger is often necessary to trace fuller details of the artists' incomplete work as you can distinctly feel where the lines fade away by comparison with the rougher surface of the untouched rock.

How this "writing" has been done, no one knows. Bearing in mind that the Aborigines of South America had apparently no knowledge of iron or the harder metals, one is left to assume that the work must have been done by patiently rubbing a small stone along the lines of all figures. Many years must have been required by this method to cut these markings to such a depth and size on the granite, gneiss, diorite or diabase rocks unless we assume some state or stage of a much higher civilization previous to the discovery of the continent.

It is equally a puzzle as to who were the actual artists or sculptors who did such writings. Inquiry amongst the Indians of to-day produces the answer that the "Long ago Ones" or ancient peoples were responsible. Certainly no Indians of to-day are doing any writing of a like nature, They still draw crude designs - human or animal - on the walls of their houses with pigment, and in their plaited basketry work are geometrical figures that bear a very close resemblance to these ancient hieroglyphics, but no one works in stone.

One peculiarity of most masses of rock outside the tribe's hunting limits is the dread or fear in which they are held, especially by the youth or man passing that way for the first time. On a journey out to the coast there are scores of rocks that will strike blind any novice if he only as much as glances at it. As a preventative, or palliative, tobacco leaves or hot peppers must be pounded up or crushed in a little water, and this is dropped into each eye. The pain following this is of course excruciating and on a long journey I have had to forbid the practice as the men could not attend to their duties. One mountain is called "The Hill that kills the Eyes", but it was the scene of a pitched tribal battle and there is some excuse in this instance. I have, however, seen many rocks with Picture Writings on them, and in not a single case do I know of one which has an evil reputation. The youngest or rawest novice can look at them without fear of any aftermath. No Kenaima (Evil Spirit) dwells in or around a rock with Picture Writing on it, and although the present generations may not be able to trace the artists, it seems to me that generations ago, the Indians knew who did the work - a peaceable people, probably their own forebears.

One specimen of such writing on the Kassikidju was a representation of a jaguar but was drawn with a square head? Expressing this view to Saik Tau he asked me to go

farther and farther away to the limits at which I could see. The figure was certainly more life like, but still I was prejudiced and would not be convinced.

Some years later I was prospecting with a bunch of Indians in the high forests, many miles from any contact with either civilized or Indian life. We were cutting a trail through the jungle, when we flushed a flock of Trumpet Birds. These birds are generally tough, but being about the size of a small sized fowl are not to be despised as an aid to keeping the pot full. They are rather silly birds and easily brought up quite close by imitating their call. Already, the Indians were calling them, but the jungle was too dense to see more than a few feet, and soon my men were dropping on one knee to peer under the tangle of vine and branch. I was the last in the line, kneeling also on one knee, alongside a fallen trunk of a huge tree, when suddenly I heard a twig snap behind this log. I swung my head around to see if the Trumpet Birds were approaching from behind, when to my amazement, the head of a fine jaguar slowly rose above the log. He had heard the Trumpet Bird call and was also in search of breakfast. We were all as motionless as statues, the Indians intent on the game in front, yet the jaguar sensed something completely new and novel in his experience. Just his head rose clear of the log, his ears laid flat in caution at the strange unknown scent of humans, while his bristling whiskers on either side

of his nose gave at once the idea of a square head.  I watched him for fully a moment before one of my men warned by some Nth sense slowly turned his head to look into two glaring eyes. There was one yell of terror and the jaguar was just a streak of flying colour. I had however seen his square head, yet but for the delineation of some unknown artist carved hundreds of years ago on that lonely rock in the forests, I would never have noticed how true these square lines were to nature. That specimen of picture writing is, by far, the best I have ever seen anywhere.

When we reached the mouth of the Kassikidju our supply of food was completely exhausted and it was necessary to make for the nearest Taruma encampment for fresh supplies, so we turned down the Essequebo River. Dodu said his village was near by and some hours of paddling brought us to a landing at which lay a single small corial. The Taruma husband and wife promptly shouldered their possessions and left for the village some half mile inland and I sent Saik Tau along with them to order food and to bring out sufficient for dinner, while Henry and I mounted guard over our belongings. It was just dusk when Saik Tau returned with one cake of bread - just enough for our dinner - and a whole list of misfortunes.

Almost immediately Dodu and his wife had left for the Wapichanna country, messengers had arrived with an invita-

tion for the entire Taruma Tribe to go over into Brazil to pay a long visit to the Waiwai and to do as much trade as possible. Some three weeks ago, the whole tribe - men, women, children, dogs and pets - had started up river. One woman had been too sick to travel and she, together with a husband and a son of some ten years, were the only people left behind. This woman was recovering and the husband was urging her to start also "to get in on the fun", but she was still too feeble to get up and bake any bread for our expedition.

Both Dodu and his wife had developed a cold en route and Saik Tau reported them as both having fever now and equally unable to do any bread making. Further, the cassava supplies were very low and the Taruma had carried with them more or less everything that was about ripe and ready for eating. This left us in rather a quandary, as food we must have, to go forward to the Waiwai or even back whence we had come. I sent Saik Tau back to the village next day with orders to get his people out working somehow and to rustle something in the way of food. Two days of waiting produced just enough to keep us going and a surplus of 2 cakes of bread and some 5 lbs of yams.

It was no use lingering at this village, so I decided to move on and preferably in the direction of the Waiwai. Half way as we now were to our objective, we'd be equally

hungry going back as forward. As we might as well be hung for a sheep as a lamb, the sooner we were on the road or rather on the river the better, a decision heartily endorsed by Henry who had just had a most unenviable night with Kenaima.

Just actually what Kenaima is, is difficult to say and certainly no Indian can tell you. It is an Evil Spirit of kinds that may assume a tangible and concrete form or it may be some abstract idea as nebulous as the spirals in Orion. Yet whatever form it may assume, it is a Something, which never leaves the Indian free from fear for very long at any time. When I say fear, I do not mean fear as it is applied to actual danger to life or limb in the every day life of the jungle. Physically, all Indians are brave, but it is a moral or mental fear of some dread influence outside physical conception, that, ever lurking to catch the unwary, may in a second, launch some unseen and even unfelt blow that will culminate in death. When it assumes a definite tangible form - that of a man - it is generally some medicine man - Piaiman - who either takes the credit of some one's death through miraculous methods, or as often as not, on whom some other jealous piaiman has cast the blame for reasons of his own. In this form the Kenaima can be dealt with and is the cause of most of the murders amongst Indians, on the principle of an eye for an eye. Very few deaths - except those from smallpox and accident - are believed to be natural. It is the work of Kenaima, invi-

sible or otherwise, and whenever a medicine man begins to take the credit for death, or has the blame cast on him by others, it is only a matter of time before he meets a violent death.

But it is when Kenaima assumes an invisible, demoniacal essence that constant nightmarish fear falls on the Indian, a fear that makes him bar his door at the close of day, that induces him to recognise its presence in every unusual sound at night, and which, even by day, compels him to walk in company with someone - even a little child - as a protection and preventative.

In modern civilized life there is few of us without fear - not physical fear, but a mental dread of something. Why must one throw split salt over the left shoulder, and why the horror of many people of anything connected with the number 13? I don't know what are the fears of childhood to-day, but when I was small, there was a Black Dog, the Man of the Moon, the Bogey Man, and above all, an ever watchful Devil of superhuman ability waiting to catch the child who strayed from the narrow way as set by the straight-laced grown ups. There was also the fear of the dark and many other forms of the mysterious, so terribly real to the mind of the child. No two children have the same fears; they all differ. One fears this, and another fears that, and yet no child can explain its peculiar fear and what form it assumes in its

mind. Education, the logic of reason, and the modern analysis of all phenomena to-day show the growing child the futility of such fears in many cases, but nearly always, carefully hidden from view, there remains some latent secret dread in most minds.

In comparison, look at the Indian child of the forests! From its first consciousness of life it has the dreaded Kenaima and its dire possibilities ever before it. By night, a mother hushes her fretful baby by the threat that Kenaima will hear it. As the child grows older, it hears its elders telling of this death and that long lingering illness all due to Kenaima. Many a night it has lain beside a trembling mother or father who has heard some peculiar and unknown noise outside the house. Each child as it grows, naturally tends to fear one aspect of Kenaima more than another, but as amongst our own children all are slightly different. This is the reason why no two grown Indians have exactly the same conception of what Kenaima is, and cannot tell you just what it is. Again they can no more describe their fear and the form it assumes in their mind, than can our own child, hence the impossibility of arriving at a clear conception of what constitutes Kenaima. Schools they have none, and though they have a certain philosophy, this comes later in life with responsibility and deals generally with the basic principles of living and man's

attitude to his follows. Thus the fear of youth continues, unmodified by education, reasoning or analysis. In fact, it rather increases than otherwise with age, as each youth arrives at the time when the younger ones look to him for oral teaching.

Amongst the Wapichanna there is one sound that invariably presages a Kenaima in the vicinity. It is the call of something in the night. What makes this call I have never found but most Indians attribute it to one of the various species of the Nightjar family of birds. Certainly it moves from place to place fairly rapidly over either water or land indifferently and must be made by something in flight. The Nightjar may be flushed amongst its rocky home by day yet the Indian shows no fear of it. Another variety that flits around the Indian huts in the last dwindling moments of dusk is eagerly hunted and shot by many who consider its flesh a delicacy. Let one issue the dreaded call however and it is enough to enforce instant silence in the most hilarious gathering.

In speaking of this peculiar sound emitted by some not very well known cause I refer to the special dread, fear, or Kenaima of the Wapichanna Tribe. Other tribes have no fear of this sound at all and certain tribes do not believe in Kenaima. Each tribe has some peculiar sound, however, the origin of which is obscure or unknown, generally at night,

and which, when heard, causes great fear. Even those tribes who profess not to believe in Kenaima have sounds that will make them lie awake for hours with some form of arm; bow and arrow, club or knife; in hand ready for defence. Every Tribe fears the supernatural in some form, it varies from tribe to tribe, and I have yet to meet the one who is completely free from the mental dread or fear of something which even their acute powers of observation has not been able to diagnose satisfactorily.

Henry and I had been lying maybe an hour or so after darkness had fallen on that last night at the Taruma landing when, down stream, we heard the dreaded call. I thought Henry was asleep but a sibilant "Kenaima" showed he was awake. This meant no more to me than the name of the latest ultra ray in science and I was almost asleep when Henry touched me. The bird or whatever it is had passed on up river and was now coming back. I heard its call just above us and then below after passing. Henry was assured that the Kenaima had sensed us in passing up and was now in search of victims, but again I went asleep. As usual I was awake with the first faint streaks of pearly dawn, to find Henry sitting on guard, open eyed and trembling, with my double barrel gun at full cock across his knee. In answer to my inquiries I found he had not slept one wink, but had sat up the whole night guarding me, - if you please - from some danger I knew did not exist and of which

Henry had not the most elementary conception. "You are my "Pownar" and the Boss of our entire tribe. How could I, on my return, explain matters if a Kenaima caught you when in my charge?" was his way of putting it. I put full marks to his credit in my mental ledger as his good deed for the week if not for the whole trip.

It did not take many minutes that morning to load up our corial and we were just starting when I found the Taruma husband and son of the sick inmate of the village were coming with us. The father knew the hilarious time he would have if only he could get to the Waiwai country along with the rest of his tribe. His wife was improving now and Providence had sent Mr. & Mrs. Dodu back, sick themselves it is true, but they'd be grand company for each other. I very much demurred at his accompanying us in view of our most inadequate supplies of food and the fact that he had next to none for himself but go he would. He got his own corial ready, and promising me he would not expect any help from us, in fact he optimistically showed how he might be of considerable help to ourselves, and we left it at that and got a start.

Coming down the Kassikidju I had been steering our corial, Saik Tau pulling a paddle in the bow and Henry amidships baling water whenever any slopped in over the side. Quite a few times on the fine open broad river Saik Tau had requested me to go right close in against the bank on one side or the other and although I had done as he wished to some

extent, he had often favoured me with a glare over his shoulder that I know meant something - probably some vague fear - but with almost no food on board I was working on the definition that a straight line between two given points (two bends of the river in our case) was the quickest approach to new supplies of food, so did not bother to investigate or interrogate.

When we started up river, Saik Tau took the steering paddle while I did the baling, and I found him creeping along so close to the land at points as to interfere with progress. Soon after passing beyond the mouth of the Kassikidju, he ran the boat on a bank and jumped out. Here I found a large trail cut through the bush and Saik Tau said we had to carry our corials and supplies overland to some point higher up. With a deep, broad river in front of us I told him this was pure tommy-rot, even though I saw the Tarumas already en route for the Waiwai had gone overland, so I put Henry to steer and continued by river. In half an hour we saw where the Taruma had re-launched their boats and I calculated it would have taken us half a day to have used that portage. We passed some half dozen maybe of similar portages, none of which presented the least difficulty by river, but I could see by the ashy pale faces of our Taruma friends that something was wrong and that it was only fear of me that kept them to the river.

Most Indians populate deep pools on every river with fabulous monsters such as a jaguar, antbear, or other animals with enormous strength and peculiar powers. I was subse-

quently to learn that the Tarumas had such a creature in quite twenty deep pools in their territory and which was known by the name of Wanamari. This creature had a huge body, the size and shape of which differed according to the various descriptions, but all accounts about its head and hair coincided. Such head was practically human and the hair, long and flowing, was enough to hide the face and shoulders and all parts of the body to the waist or more. The ignorant voyager would drift alongside what appeared to be a black floating mass of tangled forest wreckage until a pair of iron-strong arms shot out, seized the traveller and disappeared with him in the depths below. At other times when balked of human prey, the Wanamari would attack a passing canoe even if close alongside the bank, seize a good looking youth or maiden and disappear. The creature might be either male or female but whichever it was, it always seized a victim of the opposite sex for its prey. On fine moonlight nights the Wanamari had a habit of sliding out on a rock and singing in a voice equal to that of the best tribal vocalist. Deep down in the bottom of the river, the Wanamari had a lovely house, much finer and better than any of the Indians to which the victim was carried. The victims were installed there purely for sexual intercourse but on no account were they ever allowed to return to the surface or to their tribe.

Most of the pools so inhabited were places where the

creature had been seen in good time to allow escape but there were some three or four pools where a definite seizure had been known to occur, but were the accounts so given, wholly trustworthy? In practically every river of the great Amazon Forest we find vast numbers of electric eels, varying in size from a youngster of, say, a foot in length to the monster of some six feet long and six inches diameter. I have experimented with a baby one and got a real sharp electric shock for my trouble, but I have never dared monkey with a really large fellow as all Indians say they can either kill by a discharge or at least cause unconsciousness.

There are many unexplained deaths on all these forest rivers from drowning which I unhesitatingly attribute to an attack and shock from an electric eel. One comes readily to mind - the disappearance of a man I knew well, popularly known as Jack. Jack was an exceedingly powerful swimmer and absolutely fearless either by land or water. He was located up one of those forest rivers, and decided one afternoon to pay a visit across the river - some 400 yds wide and which he often used to cross by swimming. This day however he chose to go over by corial and took with him as assistant one of the men working under him. Once across the river they lingered and it was about 9.30 p.m. when Jack and his companion stepped into their boat and left. In a few moments the boat grounded on the home shore. The man in the bow

jumped ashore, when to his horror, he found Jack had disappeared. An alarm was raised, every possible boat put out to search, but Jack has never been seen since. A very strict investigation was held, but with no success. Jack was very popular with those under him and with all the neighbours. A drink or two was admitted, but every one swore Jack had not been drunk. His companion admitted having felt the boat rock and that for about half way over the river he had been steering by the bow, but attached no importance to the movement, nor had he any cause for wishing to do Jack any harm. A fight in crossing was ruled out as Jack was far the bigger and stronger man, as also the fact that any struggle would have sunk the tiny corial when both would have had to swim for it. Investigation of Jack's books and correspondence showed no cause for worry: he was doing well financially, yet he mysteriously disappeared for ever, by no known cause and for no known reason, a lamentably lame explanation which was all that could be sent to his relatives outside. My own opinion is that Jack, in paddling over, dipped his lower hand in the water and that an irate electric eel touched him with a discharge that knocked him unconscious, whereupon he slumped over the side and was drowned. The river was swift flowing and a few hundred yards lower down intercepted by a mass of boulders amongst which the body could become entangled and held indefinitely.

There are times when the electric eel will charge at anything that disturbs them. As a rule they deposit their young in a hole in a muddy bank or a secluded spot amongst the boulders of the bed or side of the river. The parents guard this nest until the young can fend for themselves and at such a time are exceedingly fierce as I have seen my boys test out by poking a long dry pole into the water in the vicinity, when the eels would at once rush up and discharge their current against the offender. The pole being dry did not of course convey current to the Indian and he remained safe.

During the hundreds of years the Tarumas have occupied the Upper Essequebo in which are thousands and thousands of these eels, it is quite within the bounds of possibility that one or two may have been shocked when they dipped a hand in the river on a sizzlingly hot day while travelling about in their corials. If the brute was large enough the Indian, knocked unconscious, would naturally fall sideways into the water without even a cry and be drowned before consciousness returned. The other Indians, scared to death, would see the hand of the dread Waramari in the occurrence and would pull away from the scene to secure their own safety.

The Warramari of the Taruma is practically the "Mermaid" of the ancient mariner, but it is strange to find that this myth amongst an inland people who are isolated from the coast by chain after chain of huge cataracts, absolutely impossible to their frail corials and who have no known connection or

trade except overland with the adjacent tribes.

I met a similar sort of myth in the Rio Branco in Brazil but in this case it was a fabulous jaguar who had a similar home and surroundings in the depth of a well known pool.

A batch of students from the Colleges in Manaos returned to the Rio Branco to spend the long vacation in their own homes. As arranged, they all met at the mouth of the Uraricoiera River on a certain day to board the steamer next morning which was to carry them back to the City. Towards evening they all indulged in a bath in the river. They were all excellent swimmers but one youth suddenly disappeared and has never again been seen. This youth was the only son of highly respected and well educated parents - the father being a retired Captain of the Army. Naturally they were heart broken, and used every means to recover their son, if not alive, at least his body for descent interment. They called in a local Medicine man - a Macussi Indian piaiman - and this man, amongst other wonderful things, promised to go down into the depth of the pool in Spirit and search for the youth. A seance was arranged one evening and after a few hours of gibberish and tricks the Piaiman informed the parents he had been under the pool, had talked with the captor and actually met their lost son. An enormous jaguar had caught the boy and carried him down to a lovely house far grander and larger than any in the district. He had spoken with the lad who had

said he was well in health, perfectly happy and well cared for and that his parents must not grieve or worry.

Of course the Piaiman had to be well paid for this information and he was given a house to live in as the mother wanted frequent news of the lad. Seances were conducted twice or thrice a week at which additional news were doled out regarding the lad's welfare - each of course paid for either in cash or kind. Then the mother grew impatient and must see her son and she demanded that the Piaiman effect his release. Of course that could be done but it would require a very large payment! These seances were kept going for many weeks without any tangible results - if we except the Piaiman's steadily increasing demand - but eventually commonsense overcame credulity and the imposter Piaiman was kicked out - he had carefully sent his baggage on ahead!!

Yarns by the River-side.

Our two new Taruma adherents were not much to look at. The boy can be promptly dismissed as he was not of an age to be of much use except as an onlooker, which he sure was. The father was a short, squat and rather fat Indian. He had an almost circular face, like a full moon, and almost as equally indefinite features. His hair stuck out at right angles everywhere to the plane of his head and he really was a first class oversize golliwog. He was known even in the most chaste society circles by the name of Mabba Tiu (Mabba - Bee, and Tiu - Penis) but as he was to save my life before the sun set, I became more than convinced that a rose would smell just as sweet under any other name and that appearances are often deceptive. He and his boy gave no trouble. They had only enough food with them to have served for a meal for two sparrows, but with true aboriginal stoicism he took a drink of creek water when meal time came round and carried on with a smile. His baggage was the lowest limit; a string hammock - weight about 1 lb - in which father and son slept together, and a small square basket in which he carried everything he possessed, either for personal use, adornment or trade when he got amongst the Waiwai. Their dress was equally scanty, being confined to a cotton string round the waist, through which, fore and aft, they had strung a dirty piece of cloth as a lap.

Beads or ornament they had none, and their outfit would have been dear at half a crown.

About 9 a.m. we came in sight of an Indian settlement, but when we were within a couple of hundred yards of the landing, we found a handful of dried grass and leaves, tied to a prominent branch of a tree - an infallible sign on any river that the landing and settlement is tabu. We crossed the river in respect to the custom, and noted a little higher up river a similar sign to warn any possible down river travellers.

These tabu signs generally mean that the death of a prominent person has occurred in the village, which has been abandoned. Disregard of the tabu sign may lead to some very gruesome findings and sights. If a child or unimportant person dies, they are buried in the forests somewhere, and though the house may be vacated for some weeks or even months, no tabu sign is hung up, as the owners will come back to live there again. Should a prominent man or woman die, a shallow grave is dug under the hammock in which rests the dead person. Two people, armed with sharp knives or cutlasses, station themselves at each end of the hammock and on an agreed signal simultaneously slash the supporting ropes, when the body drops into the grave. A little earth may be thrown over the body, or it may only have a couple of palm leaves as a covering, or again it may be left just as it fell, uncovered. In some cases the body is just

left in the hammock. Rarely - very rarely - the sick person may be abandoned before death takes place, but in all such cases, hope of recovery has been abandoned, and lingering coma of several days' duration has worn out and the nerves or the patience and better feelings of the other inmates.

One of my very first experiences amongst the Savannah Indians was the sight of a house, in the approach to which had been placed the usual tabu sign. I made some enquiries and found the house belonged to an Indian who had a large family. Their eldest son, not long entered manhood - probably 17 to 20 years of age - fell sick. They called in several of the tribal medicine men and did all they could for the boy without any results. His malady seemed of a long lingering nature, as he was ill for some months. In the end unconsciousness or coma set in. Every member of the family plied the sick youth with something to drink or eat as is usual, and getting no response, decided the sick man must die. After about a week of this, the father decided to leave the place, so orders were given to pack up everything and abandon the house. Before going, the father and mother lowered the youth's hammock to within an inch or so of the ground. Then they placed a gourd full of water on one side of the boy within easy reach of his hand, and a little pile of cassava bread on his other side. They blocked up the doors, hung up the tabu signs, and left the district. It was over a year before the father passed that way again, when he lit a match and burned the house to the ground. The

father and mother were most highly respected Indians and I have spent many agreeable hours listening to the father's stories of experiences, his myths and oral traditions, of which he possessed a unique collection. He told me of his son's death as I outline it, and though it was years afterwards, he broke down and sobbed like a child. Truly it is wise to give full respect to the Indian tabu sign!

Paddling along, I was able to shoot a small bush-hog in mid afternoon which we put in Mabba Tiu's corial as he had practically no load. About 4.30 p.m. we came to an Indian settlement, uninhabited of course, as everybody had gone off to visit the Waiwai. It was early to go into camp, but the site was so ideal that we decided to spend the night there, principally on the chance of rooting up something to stave off hunger on the journey ahead.

The settlement consisted of three small, circular, bee-hive houses built about 100 yds from the river. A lovely drive about 30 feet wide had been cut from the river to the houses and this was now a carpet of green grass. The landing itself was a series of flat rocks, level with the forest bank and jutting some way out into the river. The river, now fairly dry and some 12 or 15 ft below these rocks, formed a deep black pool in front, while on one side was a tiny bay in which floated our two corials. A series of steps cut in the perpendicular earthern bank at the same place, made access to the river and

corials fairly easy.

Mabba Tiu and his boy, on landing, were given the job of making a big fire and preparing the hog for cooking. A bush hog is covered with a dense growth of bristles which must be removed before it is prepared for food. The head is cut off, the entrails removed and the carcass divided into four quarters. Each part is then held over a bright flaming fire till all the bristles are singed or burned off, when every part of skin while still hot is carefully scraped with a sharp knife to remove all dirt, etc., just as is done with the pig of civilization, after which it is cut up into convenient junks for boiling in a pot or roasting on a wooden spit over the fire.

Leaving Mabba Tiu busy on this job, the rest of us carried our belongings up to the settlement, tied up the hammocks and went off through the large field just behind, to investigate the food possibilities. The settlement was quite new however. It belonged to the people from the "tabu village" and had only been planted a few months, and nothing was as yet far enough advanced to be of any use as food. I felt a good bath was indicated, so leaving my two boys to do a scrounge in their own way, made off to the landing.

I soon chose a nice rock and began undressing. I had just got to that unenviable position with a damp clinging shirt when the head is imprisoned, when I heard a violent erup-

tion of Taruma language. Emerging, I found old Mabba Tiu gesticulating violently and talking excitedly. However, I wanted a bath badly and was on the point of jumping off my rock when the old boy jumped over and seized my arm in a veritable vice. He pointed to the water, swung his free hand around in circles and kept up a rapid fire of "Inja, inja, inja". I scarcely knew any Taruma, but I did know that "Inja" meant "No" or "Not". The negative in most aboriginal languages may take on any shade of meaning according to the tone in which it is uttered and as the old boy's tone indicated a very decided negative I thought it best to wait a little. Still dancing like a cat on hot bricks, he let out his tribal yell, and presently Saik Tau came tearing down to us. "Boss, you mustn't bathe there" he yelled. "And why can't I bathe where I jolly well please?" I enquired. "Snakes, snakes, camoodie", was his answer. "Your grandmother's spinster aunt", I retorted, and gazing carefully all around enquired "Where are the snakes?" "Where have you been washing that hog? inquired Saik Tau of the other Taruma. "Right there", was the reply, as he pointed to another and slightly lower rock within a few feet of me. Grabbing the entrails, Saik Tau advanced and flung them in the water at our feet. They had scarcely struck the river when the head of a huge camoodi or boa constrictor appeared, and in a second, his body was wound in several circles round the offal. Just a tick too late, a second camoodi appeared, when

he started to wrap himself round the first one. Two agitated heads and frantic tails lashed the water for a moment or so, then the squirming mass sank slowly from view. I then realised the cause of the old Indian's excitement, and shuddered to think what would have happened to me had I dived off that rock! Our new recruit had of course seen the cameodies when washing the hog meat and knew what would happen if I bathed at practically the same spot. I was then shown the bathing pool proper - a shallow basin amongst the rocks on one side, with a tiny channel on two sides to allow a steady flow of clean, pure, river water.

A wild hog is rather more than sufficient for 5 people at normal times, but we'd been on short commons for some time now, and I knew that my men were really hungry. Further, when food is plentiful, I knew the Indians' capacity of almost unlimited gorging on occasions. The hog was mine by reason of my having shot it, and therefore I could have withheld it completely or divided it as I liked amongst my men, but I felt sure in such a lonely river, game would not be shy and a fresh supply would be shot as we went along. After his having practically saved my life, I invited Mabba Tiu and his boy to join us at dinner, and in half an hour, practically all the hog was eaten. What remained was put back on the fire to boil till about 9 p.m., when after a 3 hours' rest, my boys turned to for a second feed. When I woke in the morning, every bit of hog meat had disappeared, except a few bones which had been so gnawed and sucked that no self respecting dog would have

wagged a tail at them.

Saik Tau told me that the Taruma, by preference, built their home alongside a pool that contained a camoodi or two. The Taruma did not be believe in Kenaima like the Wapichanna. Only two broken paths led into their territory, one from the Waiwai, the other from the Wapichan country, and as both roads had to finish over water, no danger could arrive overland. The camoodies were looked on as natural protectors by water, as all offal from game, scales of fish, etc., were thrown in the river and the boas would naturally protect those who were so kind to them. There is very little offal from any game, when a hungry crowd of Indians and a more ravenous crowd of dogs have finished with it, however large, and I am afraid the boas' share would not keep him alive very long, if he depended more on the dole than his own exertions, yet I have seen the Tarumas, in a generous mood, throw a fair sized piece of game to their so-called protectors.

I was in later years to make a number of journeys to or through the Taruma country, and it was only then that I learnt the respect and even reverence accorded to the camoodi by every Taruma in the country. I made two or three journeys down the Kuduwini, about 50 miles to the North, a river parallel to the Kassikidju, and also a branch of the Essequebo. It crawls slowly along a large, flat, nearly level basin, and winds and twists around in a way that makes for double the time taken on the Kassikidju. It is very deep and sluggish, rarely showing any per-

ceptible current and therefore an ideal home for the water variety of boa constrictor. On one occasion, I was making an economic survey of the adjacent forests for a Dutch Company and had with me only some half dozen Taruma boys. I was determined to shoot a large camoodie if I came across one, and when an opportunity occurred, I picked up my gun, whereupon Saik Tau turned round in the corial, dropped on his knees before me, and seizing the muzzle of my gun, deliberately refused to let me fire, begging me in real earnest not even to attempt to kill one, lest the hordes that infest that river should retaliate and kill the Taruma.

He told me a story of how the chief at the present time was elected to the position. I came to know this chief well; his name was "Bush Deer"; an old, almost doddering gentleman, who must have been over 70 years of age. When "Bush Deer" was quite a young man, the tribe was ruled by a man who through age was losing his personality, virility and possibly his powers of observation. In any case, a big tribal fish poisoning was staged by the old ma, which, in spite of all the customary performances and ritual, proved a complete failure. "Bush Deer" stepped out and ordered the whole tribe to retire into the forest. He enjoined complete abstinence from food, sexual intercourse, hunting and killing of any game, until he had secured the consent of the camoodi to a new poisoning match. For two nights and a day he was said to have spent his whole time

offering gifts to the aggrieved snake and begging assent to try again successfully. On the morning of the third day, "Bush Deer" summoned the tribe and gave orders just how and where the poisoning was to be done. The results were the biggest bag of fish in the memory of any Taruma, and this was accepted as an indisputable fact of the favour the youth had found with the camoodi. The old chief promptly vacated the chieftainship, and "Bush Deer" reigned indisputed in his stead, a post he must have held for close on 50 years until his death somewhere around 1910.

In 1913, I was conducting a scientific expedition down the Kuduwini River to the Waiwai, accompanied by about 20 of my Wapichanna boys and of course, my interpreter Saik Tau, and a younger brother. The white men in the party were very keen to kill one or two of these huge boas, which we met at every bend and turn of the river. I always respect the traditions, prejudices and even fads of the Indians, but as the men were Wapichanna, I didn't see why a snake or two should not be shot. Two fairly big snakes were shot in succession whereupon my boys pulled into the bank and told me that, out of deference to Taruma opinion or prejudice, if a single other camoodi was shot, they would abandon the expedition and go home overland through the forest. Needless to say there were no snakes shot, but that is the only instance in well over 20 years' continuous contact with and employment of aboriginals that a single Indian threatened to leave me. It was all the

more strange in that my Wapichanna boys when at home shot on sight every camoodi that they met. I have frequently been along the Kuduwini River by land on its upper reaches with Wapichanna and seen them come racing back to me with the news of a huge boa lying basking somewhere, and a request to come and shoot it. The Wapichanna love to make belts, bags, and other ornaments of the skin of the water camoodi, yet here they were prepared to abandon me in the forest out of deference to opinions held by another tribe in whose territory they now were travelling. Their attitude gave me a new side light on their innate courtesy and desire to please.

On one occasion I travelled up the Kuduwini River in a small corial during the dry season, somewhere around February. This would appear to be the breeding season, and practically the whole way up the 150 miles of navigable water, every available sloping bank held two or more of these huge snakes. I must have passed hundreds, huge monsters of 20 feet or more and stout in proportion. These were found always near gnarled tree roots amongst which they deposit their eggs and lie up on guard. I hated passing these brutes, as undoubtedly they are exceedingly powerful and dangerous. I have lost many valuable dogs through them. Crossing the savannahs, a dog suffers badly both from direct heat from above, and radiation from the ground, and consequently they race ahead to a water hole and plunge in.

Most dogs soon develop the greatest respect in

entering water. If you are bathing, and lie quiet as a dog approaches the side and then give a flirt with the hand, it is amusing to watch the stoutest hearted dog beat a hasty retreat in abject terror. A burning thirst and intense exhaustion makes him forget the danger; he rushes into the water for relief, when before he even knows what is happening the camoodi has thrown coil after coil round his body and he is crushed to a pulp. Time after time, I have heard a yelp, rushed up to discharge a shot in the boa's head, but invariably too late.

The Indians all declare if a snake attacks you, the only defence is to grab the brute by the eyes and force a thumb and fingers into each socket. I have only known one man to be attacked - a Brazilian friend of mine. He was entering a river when a boa seized his thigh in its mouth, the favourite position before beginning its encircling movement. He saw the snake as it struck, immediately caught it by the eyes and lived to tell the tale. I have had fully grown cattle killed by boas. Once, in Taruma country, we found half a dead snake lying in the forest close to water and my boys after reading the spoor reconstructed the story. A tapir on entering the river had been seized, but for some reason the snake had not got a correct hold. The tapir dashed back into the forest, when the boa began to wave his tail to and fro in the hopes of finding an anchor. Presently, he hooked round a tree, but the tapir weighing 1000 lbs or so, was in terrified motion and the sudden

jar broke the snake in two. I give you their deductions as they gave them to me. I certainly saw one half of a putrefying snake and the tracks of a desperate tapir nearby.

I was one day in Savannah country, hunting jaguars and on circling a small lake for spoor, I found tracks of a bull coming out of the water, indicating great terror and the desperate need of haste. Following up the deep imprints of the hoofs for some 50 yds, I came across a dead cameodi of some 20 ft in length. The tragedy was easily reconstructed. The animal had gone to drink, when the reptile fastened on the bull's head, and proceeded to coil round his head and neck, but he must have made a mistake in calculation. The bull was now tearing over the savannah, the snake coiling and somehow missing the mark. In one of his lunges forward the bull had put a forefoot on a part of the snake as its body hit the ground. The snake must have had a coil over the point of the bull's sharp horn at that instant. For a small part of a second, the bull's hoof pinned the snake stationary underfoot but the bull's head kept going with the result that the horn entered the snake's body and ripped a two foot tear in the reptile, when he had dropped in agony and died. The bull escaped.

There are marvellous stories of the great length of these reptiles. There is one in a public institution in Brazil almost 50 ft long but it is two skins beautifully sewn together. An enterprising journalist in the Madeira Mamorrea

District on the borders of Bolivia found one of a little over 70 ft in length. Unfortunately he had no preservative, and the distance to civilization too far for him to bring out a single bone or the skin of the reptile. However in a book he wrote, he describes his catch, backed by a photo of the track made by the snake when progressing over a sand-bank. It was unfortunate for the gentleman's veracity that I met the man who rolled the barrel of beer across that sand-bank prior to the photograph being taken!

The average big camoodi runs between 18 to 24 feet in length. I have shot many that would fit into these measurements. A few exceptions run to 25 or even 30 ft but I have only killed one that scaled the last length. Mind you, on the same principle as the angler's lost fish, I've seen some whoppers, almost the length of Fleet Street, but I did not shoot these - out of deference to Indian prejudice!

We took five days to ascend the Essequebo, during which time we never had a square meal, except when we ate that hog. We stopped to hunt here and there at approved points as indicated by our Tarumas, but never once were we successful. We set night-lines and fished assiduously with very little results. I found it was no use fishing while going against the current for the fish all fled before the agitation of the water from our paddles in breasting the stream. We had to stay quiet for some half hour and then drift noiselessly,

motionlessly down stream when we could land a number of nice six inch fish. In this way, we would drift down a mile or two, and had just so much more river to cover again. This would prolong our journey indefinitely and so we gave it up. We had divided our food equally amongst all hands. Originally, we had only enough supplies for one day, so we were not getting fat on the trip. How I blessed my thoughtlessness in allowing that hog to be entirely devoured in one evening, but it wasn't any use crying over spilt milk. Fortunately, we had plenty of water and didn't spare it.

The Essequebo was gradually growing smaller and becoming a creek in place of a river. Eventually, we entered a tributary on the east bank and after half a day's paddling, we arrived at a landing at which were tied up some 40 corials - the fleet in which the Tarumas had ascended the river. We ate the very last crumbs of food, packed up our loads and slept, to be in readiness for an early start overland in the early hours of the morning.

These Taruma corials were articles of grace and beauty, equal to any I have ever seen anywhere on the tidal parts of the many rivers that end in the Atlantic, and where, with easy access to every variety of tool, education and progress and strict supervision by experienced builders, one naturally expects the best. The Taruma boats were far ahead of those of any of the other inland aborigines that I have met, yet the tribe was completely isolated from education, supervision or

progress. The Taruma had very few implements of iron, yet their craft had every minute detail as found in the corials made by the Arawaks - the best corial builders of British Guiana.

In making a corial or dugout, the Taruma fell a tree, and junk out a section of the trunk of the length required. They strip off the bark and the white outer sap wood. As a rule, it is left to season for a year or two, and they may just fell it and leave the bark and white wood to rot off. The hard inner wood is then cut down for about one fourth along the top of the log to a level line. A groove an inch or two deep may be also cut along this squared part and a fire started. The women and children can keep the fire going, while the man is away hunting or doing other duties. After considerable charring has commenced the fire is put out and the brittle burned part dug away. More fire is applied, and again more digging out of the burned parts. These operations continue alternately until they get a deep hollow dug to the shape they require. Towards the close of these operations the man attends to the burning himself, as the charring may not have been equal, whereupon he directs the fire by blowing through a wooden tube. Once he has got the inside of the craft made to his fancy, he shapes the outside - bow and stern - with axe and cutlass and the corial is launched. Few of them try to spread the beam much, as such an operation is uncertain. It may cause a split or upset the balance.

Such axes or cutlasses as the Taruma possessed naturally became blunted very quickly. I have examined these tools and it is a little short of marvellous how they fashioned their corials with them. The general rock of their country is either granite or gneiss which is of no use in sharpening tools, but they knew of an outcrop of schistose rock which answered the purpose. Periodical excursions were made to this deposit when an allround supply was brought back. Practically every hut had a piece of this rock, and it was instructive to see a man sitting with one, patiently rubbing an axe on it for a whole day or more to get an edge back on the blunt tool.

Sometimes, a corial develops a hole, through a fault in the wood. The Indian then gets a fine bamboo tube and by selecting a certain, peculiar, heat-producing quality of wood, he, by a skilful application of the breath through the tube, burns a hole through the corial. After making 4 or 5 holes about the size of an ordinary lead pencil, he fits a piece of timber to cover the whole, and using selected lianas or bushrope lashes it securely by passing the slender liana through these holes. Thus you get a craft with not a scrap of iron in it.

These craft have no seats to accommodate passengers but every Taruma man, boy, and most of the women have a carved stool for use in the house. If they have no stool, the

carapace of the land turtle is used. These they carry along with them. They place them in the corial in a suitable position, pick up their paddle and are off. I found every married man in the tribe had a corial as also practically every boy over 12 years of age. The Taruma seldom go far afield in the forests. The river is at once their main source of livelihood and their highway. I have never seen two villages even if only a mile apart, connected by a path. They live largely on fish caught either by hook or bow and arrow. They therefore must have plenty of corials as every man has to support his wife and children, while the youth cannot very well get married, unless he possesses the necessary corial in which to move about, and with which to provide food.

One would naturally think a corial must be of considerable value, but I had no difficulty in buying one or two when I wanted them. The price was invariably a new axe, and once a knife extra was asked for. It was pathetic to see the joy and delight of the lucky salesman as he fondled his brand new shining axe fresh from its oiled wrapper. All axes, till my first excursion, had come via the Wapichanna in barter, and had as often as not, seen good hard service already, or at best through careless handling and neglect had long since gone red with rust.

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 eventually, 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 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 dammably trying to the blood pressure and vocabulary than to be noosed 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-all-ness.

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 wandering 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. 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 "outsize" 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 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 but it is 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, 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 bitten 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 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 nearby 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 Waiwai 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 are 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 they 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 spirit".

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 accompanies 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 piaiman, 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 piaiman's dog, some of the pellets even reaching the piaiman himself, who had solemnly declared he would send Kenaima to kill me. Word had then 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 piaman 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 piaiman'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 con-

versation - which may exterd for a half of an hour or more - 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, who are old friends, or comparative strangers who know the language, 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 response 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 irrestible. 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, and race 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 uncleanliness 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 vio-

lently 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 well known "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 immoveable, 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 or 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 had 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, through these same boots, 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 crashed 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 huts quite 50 feet above our heads. Not a bushrope hung from its branches. There was no other nearby tree 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 huts, 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 nd 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 Essequebo 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 rribes, in cocoa bearing forest country.

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 ½" 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 slightly 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 till 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 plantain 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 plantain 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 "turu". 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, 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 Indians'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.