No ... 197

A Day of Rest.

As a general rule, all Indians are awake with the first faint streaks of dawn; many of the headmen actually much earlier, in order to study the stars before sunup, as it is by these, they know the various seasons, the times of rain or dry weather, the times to plough or plant, the times when certain game are at their best; or, migrating with the ripening fruit, are more plentiful; and various other economic factors of forest life or lore, the knowledge of which often spells luxury, or at least relief from the monotony of the rather drab diet of Indian life. These headmen and fathers of families have only speech and actual demonstration with which to transmit such knowledge to their children and youths, and many an hour, I have lain quietly listening just before the dawn to a headman imparting the knowledge of personal experience, as also the oral traditions of his tribe, so many of which centre round the various constellations, probably owing to the fact that an interesting story will help to fix more definitely in the mind some economic and practical fact or happening in forest life.

For instance, the two bright stars that follow in a line a short distance behind the Southern Cross (The Powis) and are often referred to by civilization as the Pointers, were supposed to represent an Indian man and his wife creeping through the forest in the hour before the dawn, each armed with a burning faggot to show them the way over or past obstructions and debris on the ground, as they search for a crowing Powis.

No matter how the seasons vary the Powis birds begin to make love and mate as these stars appear in the pearly East just before the rising sun. At this period and no other, the male bird gives out a booming crow at intervals during the night. The Indians note the sound and direction and an hour or so before sunup creep out with firesticks in their hands, in good time to be directly under the tree on which the powis is perched, before the light is string enough to start the bird off in search of food or a bride. He is easily spotted in the growing light; noiselessly the Indian moves into position, an arrow flies from his bow, and there is a good breakfast for all.

The female Powis is laying now, and in four weeks time her eggs will hatch. Both the mating and hatching seasons coincide with the ripening of certain fruits, a reef of which trees may be a two or three days' trek from the village, and thus they know definitely just when to go, so as to find the delicacy in full maturity.

Only stars far to the South are noted, but as each constellation comes out in the early dawn of day, the cutting of fields, the burning and clearing up of these to be in readiness for the next star which means rain and may come at any time, is the next duty on the aboriginal agenda. These star seasons are rigidly followed, but should nature, as so often happens, stage a change in the weather, the Indian is out of luck, and a period of great scarcity or even famine may ensue. There is an antidote to everything and at such times the Indians take to the forests and live on forest game, roots and various other natural products. Life then is truly hard, and I have met Indians in bands roaming the forests, hungry and emaciated, eating roots that at other times would be despised. Only the fittest and toughest survive, as Nature, even in these enormous forests, is none too b~~eau~~ountiful, but some pull through to begin new fields and cultivation again.

The first duty of all Indians as they awake is to retire some distance into the forest to relieve the calls of Nature. Then, if there is a convenient bathing place, many go for a bath, but in all cases, even if detained in the house by more urgent duties, or sickness, every one must rinse the mouth with fresh water and wash the hands and face, especially the eyes. Tooth brushes are unknown, but the fore-finger is slipped in the mouth in many cases and the teeth scrubbed with the finger.

If, when droughts set in and water has to be brought from a distance, or when the supply on hand has been lowered by the needs of the household during the night and there is only a little water available, a ridiculously small amount can serve for the washing preparations of the day. A man will fill his mouth to the limit with water from a gooby or gourd. He then cups his hands and squirts into them about a tablespoonful of water, with which he deftly moistens his whole hands. A second spoonful is ejected from the mouth, and the hands may be said to be completely washed. Hands cupped again and a third spoonful is conveyed to the eyes which are carefully washed. The forefinger is then inserted between the lips and the teeth are well rubbed. The remaining water in the mouth is then noisily forced in and out between the teeth, the closed lips meanwhile working up and down the teeth. Finally the water is ejected on to the ground and the throat noisily cleared. The more fastidious now throw a spoonful of more water from the gourd into the palm of one hand, when the hands are again washed. The hands are then flirted downwards once or twice with a snap to knock off all drops of surplus water. To remove any remaining moisture the hands are rubbed round on the head and the operation is complete.

The gooby or gourd is the large fruit of a vine or creeper closely allied to the pumpkin, of which every Indian plants some number in the corners of his field. These fruit are not edible. They have a thick, strong outer covering which makes them admirable receptacles for carrying and holding water, and the smaller varieties when cut in two, are used as cups or bowls to hand round drink or various food, such as the porridge of different kinds which is the almost invariable early "morning tea" of the Indians. The inside of these gourds is a whitish sort of pulp, in which lie hundreds of large white seeds. In preparing a gooby for use, one is selected when it has become completely ripe. A hole, never more than one inch diameter, is bored through the rind at some particular point, carefully selected with a view to the gooby's ultimate use, or the peculiar shape of the fruit itself. The gourd is then immersed in stagnant water for quite a time. The inside pulp quickly begins to rot, and every day or two, the Indian shakes out such parts as are sufficiently decayed. At the end of a fortnight or so, all the pulp has gone, when the gooby is removed from the water. A few handfuls of sharp sand and gritty gravel are poured inside which is shaken round and round for a time, thrown out and the operation continued with new sand, till the Indian is satisfied that all the soft part has been washed away and only the rind left. The gourd is then hung up inside the house to season and completely dry out. It may hang for weeks or months before necessity calls for its use, or it is passed over as barter to pay for something more urgently required by the owner. When taken down it is again carefully scoured inside with sand, before it is ready for use.

These gourds or goobys can be grown in quite numerous varieties both in form and size - (see illustration). Each variety breeds true to form from seed and most Indians specialise only in one or two sizes or forms. They pass readily around as barter and are in considerable demand amongst the more distant forest Indians, until the empty "Kerosene tin" or enamelled bucket finds its way amongst them. The inch diameter hole bored into these gourds has been found to be about the most handy size for stopping up with a wisp of grass or a few leaves when full of water, and this eliminates loss of the precious fluid in handling and the joggling on the back of a carrier in a basket, on the short journey to the village, or the long rough hike between water stages of a journey.

The selection of the spot where the hole is bored depends on shape and requirement. If circular, the hole is bored just at one side of the thickened part where the stem of the vine was joined to the fruit. This is the strongest part of the whole receptacle, and only in exceptional cases is this particular part bored, for instance, a peculiar long bottle necked variety. Generally these gourds have an elongated neck of various degrees, and it is found to be much easier to decant water from a hole in the side than at the extreme end. They are constantly being picked up and moved about. With the hole on one side, you can hook a single finger into the hole and pick it up, whereas if the hole is at the extreme end, both hands are required to pick it up, often a considerable nuisance if the second hand is already grasping something also - see illustration.

When water is required in the house, some woman is despatched for a supply, often for several families. She collects the various gourds, packs them in a "quake" or basket, which is carried fish-creel wise from the head by a strap. At the pool she fills each by submerging the whole gourd in the water, carefully stoppering each before repacking in the basket with some leaves or grass although not infrequently each has its own cork already, made from the inner softish part of the stalk of a palm leaf. The Ita Palm is a great favourite for such corks, as the leaf stalk after removing the hard glassy outside has an inch diameter or so of soft fibrous material, tough and fairly resilient, and easily compressible to the required shape.

A woman will often come back with one hundred pounds or more weight on her back, with just as many gourds as her quake when fully extended and carefully laced up its whole length will accommodate. This is often not considered enough, so she hooks one or two fingers of both hands into as many of the small gourds as she can carry.

Indians who are experts at pottery making, may use earthenware vessels for carrying water. These are carried, poised on the head and may be large enough to hold several gallons, but being open mouthed , - ~~a~~ roughly six inches across - have to be very carefully carried to avoid splashing and spilling. The gourd therefore enters into the daily domestic life of all Aboriginal Indians except those near enough to civilisation who have become ashamed of their original tribal customs and habits, and are devoted to the empty tin at sixteen cents a time, but which soon rusts out and develops holes. You will meet these coming up from the water hole squirting water everywhere like a crazy watering can, and much labour is entailed in stopping the leaks with bees-wax and vegetable gums until the necessary money for a new one has been collected.

We had just completed our early cat's wash up in the first pearly grey of dawn, when Kiwinik came out of his house. He carried in one hand his stool to sit on and a fair sized basket with a lid on it. He gave me good morning, Saik Tau interpreting, asked me how I had slept and gave me his own impression of the night, what he had dreamed about and such like. I replied in the same manner. After saluting me he devoted his attentiontto my men. Numerous other headmen had come out, each with his stool and basket, to engage in conversation with some of my party. Saik Tau was now busy on his own with Kiwinik, but one after another each man, invariably pawing the air in my direction to demand or attract attention, took it in turn to engage me in conversation. It didn't matter that they spoke only in Waiwai, of which I knew not one word. Experience had taught me just what they meant and I grunted assent and said "Well, well", or "Is that so?", at the appropriate points. When my turn came to speak, I used Wapichan, a language they had never heard before, but they assented and they "Well, welled" just as freely as I had done. I could have spoken in any language, in fact I often gave them a speech in English, and the whole dialogue appeared exceedingly ridiculous, but Aboriginal convention and etiquette were satisfied and that was everything.

The dawn was now bright enough to see distinctly. Kiwinik opened his basket, took out a bottle containing vegetable oil and a hair comb. The bottle had doubtless come through Wapichanna country via the Tarumas, the oil made by himself and some of his women folks, either from the seeds of palm nuts, Crabwood, or other forest trees; the comb (beautifully made and highly decorated, a most practical substitute for our own article) made from the tough needle like fibres of the trunk of a particular palm, with intricate weaving of silk grass along the centre, while one set of ends was grouped into a three inch slot out into the leg bone of a Trumpet Bird. This bone formed a backing or handle to be grasped in the hand. Each end of the bone projects an inch or two beyond the comb proper and is generally decorated with a ring or tassel of brilliantly coloured small feathers.

Kiwinik soon had every strand of his long black straight hair reaching almost to his waist, beautifully oiled and combed. Dropping the comb and using both hands he swept his hair into a loose pigtail behind. Gripping this tightly in his left hand as far down below his head as possible, he swept it over his left shoulder still holding it tightly. Picking up with his free hand a long string made of silk grass, he began deftly winding it round and round the loose ends of the hair below his other hand. In a second or two, he had it neatly tied up for some four or five inches at the end, into a smart pigtail, which gradually reduced in girth to a fairly fine end. Picking up a hair tube, well decorated with beads and feathers, he inserted the pigtail, gave it a screw round to force it more tightly in, and tossed it over his shoulder. Out came the tiny mirror. "Did it hang correctly and give an equal appearance from all angles?" Kiwinik was as vain and pernickety as any budding belle, but it apparently appeared perfectly satisfactory at the very first attempt.

Kiwinik next picked out an old knife worn down to about one inch of blade from his vanity box. With his little two by two inch mirror, he minutely scrutinised every part of his face, in search of anything in the way of even a tiny hair. The eyebrows received special attention, as also the upper lip and the chin. As each little hair was noted, the blade of his knife was brought up till the edge just touched the root, then the fleshy side of the thumb was placed on the hair against the knife and it was forcibly torn or tugged out.

Most of the Waiwais were very particular in this habit of removing all hairs from the body except those on the head, and whenever they were sitting idle or in conversation, you saw a knife and thumb busy on the leg, arm, or other part. On a subsequent visit I had another white man with me. It was decided to stage a big hunt to provide game for our next stage of travel and every man and boy turned out. I went out with the Chief and a couple of other men, but my white friend had to be left in camp as he was rather weak and shaky from a recent dose of malaria. It so happened that this halt had been made at a scene of operations, where a new large field was being cut instead of the usual village, with proper facilities for housing strangers. There was only a few shelters in which the Waiwais were camping, and no place where my party could find accommodation, so a spot was cleared on the opposite bank of the adjacent creek only a few yards away. I was now on most friendly terms with the tribe, and my friend could be left in safety. On my return I met him vastly excited and voluble. It appeared that some of the more successful hunters had come in a few hours earlier. My friend was lying covered up in his hammock when he heard voices alongside. Unrolling his hammock to see what it was, he found a young hunter and his wife sitting some twelve feet away on the other bank of the creek, stripped to the buff in readiness for a bath, but, at the moment, both were quite unconcernedly plucking out every tiny public hair they could find.

Kiwinik was soon satisfied with the hairless condition of his face and laid out a number of bamboo stoppered tubes containing various coloured paints and pigments. These colours were generally red, white, black, yellow, and a light blue.

The red for smearing over the body generally is made from the ripe seeds of the Anatto or Bixa Orelano, mixed either with water or oil according to supplies.

The red pigment for use on the face is made by collecting large quantities of certain forest creepers with big circular leaves and vigorously boiling these in a large pot. When cooked enough the leaves are thrown away. The Indian meanwhile has been out in the forest cutting a number of tiny leaved shrubs, which he now plunges into the reddish liquid in the pot. Contact with these small green leaves at once causes precipitation of the ~~red~~ brown particles in solution. The brew is allowed to settle, and finally the water is carefully decanted. This leaves a layer of bright red matter at the bottom of the pot which is now put out into the air and sun for complete evaporation of all water and moisture. In a day or two you have a cake some half inch thick of a bright red, rather crumbly material. This is now cut into pieces about one inch square and two such squares fit a tiny box little bigger than a match box made from the young white fronds of certain palms. A lid made from the same material is slipped over, and the Indian now has an article of barter that will always find a purchaser.

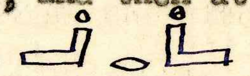
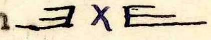
It is only the selected squares, perfect in form and hardness that can be sold in the crude, but all round the edges there is a lot of waste due to the round sweep of the pot, and also to careless cutting. This is in the form of a very fine powder to lumps like a pea. These are all easily reduced by a circular motion of the thumb to something closely allied to the rouge of civilization. Vegetable oil is now added carefully, and the whole stirred and whipped to a homogenous paste. This must not be too stiff or too liquid and when the desired consistency has been obtained, it is filled into bamboo joints about threequarters of an inch diameter and not more than four inches long. A stopper or cork is cut to fit the tube, and in most cases the cork has a long slender sliver of wood or bamboo inserted in the centre, just long enough not to quite touch the bottom of the tube when the cork is forced home. This sliver of wood when the cork is withdrawn is covered with the paint and can at once be applied to the face to form the geometric figures or straight lines as may be fancied by the user.

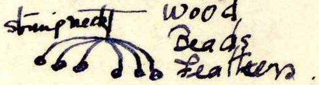
These tubes of paint can be readily sold also, chiefly locally, while the boxed block form is more popular for long distance trade, as there is a danger of the tube form being surreptitiously reduced by every Tom, Dick and Harriette on the journey.

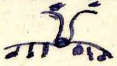
I do not know the botanical names of the plants employed in the manufacture of this particular paint. I have seen the large vine leaves hanging dry in many houses, strung on a thin liano, looking like a huge garland, all ready for the day when the Indian finds time to boil them. The resultant colour is a much better red than Anatto, and in both forms finds a ready sale amongst all Indians residing outside the influences of civilization. The articles asked in exchange are small, generally a half dozen small hooks, a few pins, or may be a couple of boxes of matches.

The black paint is made from soot mixed with oil to the consistency of a paste, but it is not any and every form of soot that will give the deep black of the connoisseur. Certain palm leaves, one or two barks of trees, and certain nuts are those in use generally, but the most prized is the soot made by burning the skin of sugar cane. A small fire is begun with the particular article decided on. A large pot is inverted over the fire and often a tiny hole or two knocked in the bottom to allow part of the smoke to find an exit, although a completely whole pot is used equally commonly. The smoke fills the pot but is kept steadily moving by the heat of the fire and escapes at the holes or round the sides. The fire is kept going for hours, often days, until enough soot has deposited when it is carefully collected and mixed with oil. This paint is generally put into a particular circular palm nut after the kernel has been removed. It is much scarcer than red, and a much less quantity is sold for the same price as red, but there is not the same demand for black. Few of the tribes to the North (by far the wealthiest) use black, although a few may possess a nutful as a curiosity, and it is only sold to Indians living in Brazil or for use by the Waiwai themselves.

White pigment is made from Kaolin (Tabatinga), a valuable clay found in small nodular deposits at long distances apart. Yellow and blue are also made from clays. Selected clay is mashed up in a pot with water, and the coloured mixture decanted into another, when it is allowed to settle, after which the clear water is again tipped out. The precipitation is allowed to dry to a powder when it is mixed with oil and put in tubes. These clay colours are generally used to decorate the main motif itself in the forms of a thin line as an edging, or a line of dots outside the contour. They bring out the designs more prominently and show up the different colours more vividly by contrast.

Kiwinik sat calmly chatting away, mirror in one hand, and a paint stick in the other. In a quarter of an hour he had completed quite an intricate pattern. Beginning with black just below the eyes, he formed three quarter inch marks down to the level of just above the corner of the mouth, and then at right angles towards each other, something like  Cutting the edges straight with a knife, he traced a yellow line along each about 1/12 in. wide. Then he carefully spaced white dots just a short distance away to correspond with the design. With a finger he next ran a semi-circle of red round the middle of the brow, the ends of which extended round the temples on to the cheek to almost, but not quite, touching the white lines of the first design. A series of thin, red tapering lines were drawn where the eye lashes should have been  connected at the inner ends with an upright red mark, and a white cross placed between.

Kiwinik had apparently slept in his customary ear-studs made from the silver white shell of a river bivalve. To the back of these, he now tied a tassel of some dozen strings of white beads which reached down to his shoulders, each string ending in a tuft of brilliantly coloured feathers. In the hole bored in the lower lip, he inserted another tassel of bead strings, all adorned with feathers also. These bead lip strings all met in one common string to form a minute neck with a small piece of stick which was placed at right angles, once it was inside the mouth to keep it secure - 

He next stuck two highly decorated red Macaw feathers through the septum inside the nose. These were some 9 inches to 1 foot long, along the midrib of which were stuck with some gum a line of tiny metallic coloured feathers, blue, white and blood red in regular succession. The ends of each feather carried a white feather tuft, and at equal distances apart there hung three bead ornaments, each tufted with feathers. The whole thing hung gracefully  like an exaggerated old world moustache.

He now attached garters of beads adorned with jingling seeds to both ankles and again below the knees. Then he thrust his arms into bark ornaments all picked out in black figures of various animals. These, about 3 ins in depth, were pushed on up to the biceps, and all round were fixed a thick array of long strings of feathers of all colours which reached down to, and when he stood up, almost completely hid his arms and hands. Wristlets of beads and feathers were now attached, as also a gaudy belt woven with beads and hanging feathers. Then he hauled out a magnificent feather crown which he placed on his head, and his toilet was complete!

It takes much longer to describe Kiwinik's toilet than he took to effect it. I don't suppose he was any more than 15 minutes on the whole affair, but a greater transformation you could scarcely imagine. From a rather drab, light hued Indian, he was transformed into a dignified Chief, glittering in the now rising sun with paint and powder and his body almost hidden in the fluttering feathers that hung everywhere around him. Sitting around listening or actually conversing with some of my men were quite a number of other Waiwais, all busily engaged in a rather special toilet, for in honour of Distinguished Visitors, a general holiday had been declared. Few, if any, of these Indians I have ever met could approach Kiwinik in decoration and dress. He was the Beau Brummell of the tribe and wore his feathers and paints with a grace and dignity that could only be imitated.

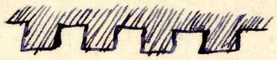
Food was brought us, first a sort of porridge peculiar to the Waiwais and made from the poisonous juice of the bitter cassava. This on being boiled loses its poison and mixed with some meal, pulped fruit, or meat pounded to a powder in a mortar, makes quite an appetising porridge. A more substantial meal of cassava bread and various game either in boiled form, or roasted over the open fire, was also served. Beer in fair quantity was handed round fairly frequently and conversation became pretty general. There was the business of getting acquainted on hand and once we had been accepted, the Waiwai had an eye open to see any and every thing that every member of my party possessed, so as to pick out any article they fancied when the serious business of bartering actually began. Saik Tau was busy privately in deep conversation, and as I could not make any headway without him, except by way of the usual litany in Wapichan used on arrival, I slipped out of doors and took the chance to inspect the village.

No ... 215

Round the Village.

By far the most striking object in the village was the communal house occupied by Kiwinik, his father, his "old uncle", some 10 or 12 other men and their respective womenfolk, children and various dependants.

This house was close on 60 ft diameter, perfectly circular, and with a fairly steep roof, was a considerable height also. There were only two doors, both not more than 4 ft high and just wide enough for a single person to enter with ease. One door faced East to the morning sun and prevailing breeze, and was exclusively used by the men unless a woman was called out to bring drink or food for the visitors. The other door, facing west, was used by the women, through which no man passed except for some exceptional reason.

The next largest house was that for visitors, also a round thatched circular hut, but with open sides all round. The thatch of these huts, of which there was one in every village I have seen, ended some 5 ft from the ground, and was almost invariably cut to a straight line or in a sort of Key pattern as  All round, on one side, were a number of small huts and shelters, erected for the use of the Taruma Tribe who would, on their arrival in a day or two, fill the guest house to overflowing. There was no question of being permitted to enter the communal house; it simply wasn't done. I asked permission, but was refused with rather apparent alarm. Saik Tau himself had never been inside any such house, nor had Kushar, the Taruma Chief, nor any of the tribe. I kept strict watch later on when the Tarumas arrived and grew friendly, even brotherly, under the influence of much beer, but no one ever approached the door, let alone enter it.

On subsequent visits, this strict rule was relaxed, and Saik Tau and myself were allowed to enter. It gradually dawned on Kiwinik's mind, I suppose, that we would not do anything alarming, although our first entry was the signal for much commotion. Every dog inside was barking its hardest and loudest, and the women were obviously all set to race for the forest, if we had so much as sneezed, I believe. I have often wondered since if my mild and very innocuous innovations to their tribal customs did any good, except to satisfy my curiosity, and begin the downward trend from dignity and self esteem of age long custom, to what civilization generally sees as Indian life, a hodge podge of lazy, cunning, thriftless, lying groups, ashamed of whatever culture they have had.

Later on, I saw a communal house being erected. After the site had been selected and carefully cleared of all roots and tree stumps, a point was chosen as the centre. Round this point, by means of a liano, three separate rings were scratched in the ground:- the greatest distance (several ~~feet~~ yards), being between the outer two. A ring of holes, about six feet apart, was dug all round the outer circle, in which poles about 5 ft above the ground level were placed perpendicularly. Long supple saplings were now tied to each pole head to form a ring right round. Holes were dug in the second circle, and poles planted but instead of being placed perpendicularly, they were more at right angles to the pitch of the roof. Their height above ground was decided by resting a rafter on the first and outer ring, when after the correct pitch had been decided, they were all cut the same length, and again a ring of saplings was bound around the pole heads. These poles were much stouter than those of the outer ring, roughly 3 times so. The poles of the third ring, correspondingly taller and stouter, were placed in a leaning position also, and a ring of stout saplings lashed round. Looking from one side these poles looked like this - See drawing No: 1.

Long tapering saplings were now selected and laid up the three rings formed at the head of each circle of uprights. As none were long enough to reach the apex of the roof they were joined where necessary. They must project above the last sapling circle far enough to meet in a common cone or apex. Four poles having been lashed at right angles across the top of the inner circle of uprights - Fig. No. 2 - a particularly long tapering small tree of roughly 6" diameter at the bottom was selected and stripped of all bark to serve as the centre pole. Cabalistic and geometrical signs of good luck were painted along one third of its lower end with various paints, generally black and red.

A large, shallow, earthenware pot, 18" or 2' diameter, has either been specially made with a 6" diameter hole in the bottom or one in ordinary use is selected and a hole chipped in the bottom - Fig. no. 3. A man climbs up the rafters to the apex, the pot is hoisted, and an empty Brazil nut pad sent up to him also. The centre pole is now hoisted gently, the man on the apex guiding its ascending and through the hole in the inverted pot, and ~~placing~~ jamming the empty Brazil nut (which has a hole cut to fit) securely on the extreme point of the pole. The centre pole is then hoisted until its lower end rests on the cross poles on top of the inner circle of supports. The rafters are securely tied at the apex around the centre pole and everything made secure. Thatching now goes on right up to, but just underneath, the inverted pot, leaving a fair number of open spaces between the rafters to allow the smoke of the fires below to escape. The pot itself is covered with thatch, lashed to the centre pole, and very much resembles an old fashioned thatch skip for bees - Fig. No. 4.

The staging on which the centre pole rests is generally removed and the pole may be cut off some distance higher. In no case, have I ever seen the centre pole of a communal house resting on the ground, but I have generally seen them high up and unsupported at their lower end. I have developed a nasty crick in my neck trying to make out the picture writing by the aid of a torch.

Various palm leaves are universally used in thatching, and preferably the young unrolled leaf, of which they can only get one at a time from each palm. These leaves are opened by hand and broken back to fall together when placed on the roof. The one side however is carefully pl~~ea~~aited in some easy design. The pl~~ea~~aited half is placed on the rafters; the unpl~~ea~~aited half outside to throw off the rain, and the inside of the communal house presents a very neat appearance with not a single piece of leaf untidy or hanging down.

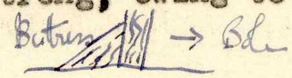
As the house nears completion a shelf is built about 15" from the ground, on which are tied the hunting dogs of the occupants. Above this are other shelves on which to place their various belongings. The chief allocates the various places to his followers, generally retaining a place close to the men's door for his own use to take advantage of quick exit in case of need, as also for more air, light and general comfort. Across the doorway, the next man in the social scale has his place, and the younger or less notable men farther in, according to their standing. The women have the back part of the hut and their own door. In this, they do their cooking and preparation of their different foods and drinks.

Inside these houses it is almost pitch dark, except for a few feet around each door, and much of their finer arts and crafts have to be done outside. The men work before their door, seated on stools repairing arrows, spinning cordage from silk grass, or making up the feather work for which the tribe is famous. They also use the guest house if the weather is wet, or the midday sun too hot. At the women's door, a bevy of women can generally be found sitting outside, busily engaged in making cassava graters. These graters comprise their highest unit in barter, and are in great demand everywhere, so that at all times you see some of the women busy working during every moment they can spare from cooking and other domestic duties. On her speed and ability depends the paying off of debts incurred with neighbouring tribes, and possibly the acquisition of a new axe, which is the highest unit in outside currency known to them.

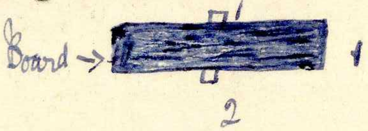
One peculiar thing in the clearing, was a large block of wood roughly six feet long and four feet across, carefully sunk to the level of the surrounding soil in the clearing. I noticed Kiwinik and most of the heads of families, had stepped on to this block of wood when they appeared in the morning. They would pause in their stride just a second or two, when they gave three fairly hard stamps with, usually, the left foot. This caused a hollow booming noise, and I sensed a cavity underneath.

I found this block of wood a feature in every Waiwai village that boasted a communal house, but where I found a village of ordinary huts, this block was not in evidence. Of these villages I have seen two, and in both cases the people had abandoned their previous home, and were living in temporary huts, prior to their beginning the usual communal house.

Investigation showed this block of wood was actually one huge board, cut out of a single Sapapima, or buttress of a forest tree. Many of these buttresses can be found beginning 12 or 15 feet up, and extending out a similar distance from the bole of the tree. They are generally only a few inches thick, but are very strong, owing to the twisted nature of the fibres of wood.



The one in question, after being cut out had been stripped of all bark, and was about one and a half inches thick. An oblong pit is dug some 3 to 4 feet in the ground, and the board fitted carefully over it, so as to be perfectly flat and just a trifle below the level of the surrounding earth. A small channel, about 6 inches wide, is dug on both sides of the board, sloping from nothing at its beginning some foot or more away, and disappearing under the board to communicate with the chamber underneath:-



1 + 2 Runnels dug to communicate with hole below.

This board was generally placed some 10 feet away from the men's door and more or less in line with the guest house. Every morning, the chief and all headmen as they came out to speak to guests stamped on the board, before continuing across to the guest house, to greet the strangers or guests of the tribe. If going out on their own private duties, hunting, or to the fields, the ceremony was never performed. At such times they carefully avoided all contact with it, nor have I ever seen anyone go over or near it when going to enter the house.

When strangers entered the clearing or arrived in the guest house, the Chief, or if he was absent, the headman next in authority would emerge from the house, stamp on the board, and say a few words. If the strangers were standing in front, the Chief would give them welcome, standing on it, but he would soon move off, and some other headman repeat the process. If the Chief had been absent for some hours for any reason, he would assert his presence by the usual stamping, and some verbal salutation.

Each stamp of the foot produced a booming, muffled sound and I thought the runnels had been cut on either side to allow the sound waves a better exit, but I found they had other uses also. When the Tarumas arrived, and a minor tribal drinking festival began, each Indian, as his stomach became overcharged, made a bee line for the board and vomited until relieved into these runnels, when it disappeared down the drain so to speak.

The board was also used as the stance for the challenger at their whipping tests and wrestling matches, although it was not until my fourth visit that I saw it used for this purpose.

My stroll around the clearing was accompanied by a very noisy chorus of barking dogs, most of which were apparently secured inside the house. A few nondescripts were sneaking around outside, looking mangy and lean, and seemed to have no desire to be either heard or seen. These were animals which had no aptitude for hunting, but since they were domesticated, and somebody's pet at some time or other, could not be deliberately destroyed, and were allowed to run around uncared for, unfed, and a fair target for anybody's foot if they got into the way.

Very few of the Indians untouched by contact with civilization will kill or eat anything they have ever domesticated. This may have its amusing side at times. When I entered the Wapichanna tribe although there were some hundreds of cattle on their savannahs, many of the tribe refused to eat beef. A very prominent Indian came into my camp one day saying, "I am hungry and want food". Some beef and the usual bread was set out for him, at which he looked in disdain, as he snorted, "Am I tiger?" "What do you want then?" I asked. "I eat deer, or fish, or birds, or even antbear", was his reply, the latter being considered unfit for food except under the most pressing and desperate circumstances.

A friend had been crossing country, and tired and weary after some hundreds of miles of trekking, with his supplies almost exhausted, he came out to a large Indian village, where to his delight he saw a nice lot of common barnyard fowls strutting around. Through his interpreter he began to try to buy some. They were reluctant to sell the chickens but, "would he like to buy eggs?" On his assenting, he was soon surrounded with baskets and baskets of eggs, which the interpreter paid for as quickly as they came. This boy boiled a potful, but when they were ready, my friend found that the whole lot were bad, and closer inspection showed there was scarcely a single good egg in the hundreds which he had bought. He called up everybody for an explanation, and was told that a padre had come amongst them and introduced hens. The padre never ate the chickens but used up all the eggs as they were laid, thus the chickens really were the padre's property and could not be sold, but they thought it would be all right if they let him have the eggs. The padre's last word to them was, "Look after my chickens well, till I come back." "And how long is it since this padre went away?" inquired my friend, to which he got the rather disconcerting reply, "The season of rain has come and gone three times" (three years).

The hunting dogs of the Waiwais were very different animals however. They were large powerful brutes, surly at the approach of a stranger, but well trained and in great demand for hundreds of miles around. They were never allowed to roam around the village, but were kept chained up on the lower shelf inside the house, unless when left out to relieve themselves or to go hunting in the forests. A dog would start barking and making a noise on the leach until someone attended to him. Undoing his collar, the dog would dash out of the house and into the forest at top speed. After an absence of some 10 minutes, he would dash back again straight to his proper place on the shelf to be tied up again. The dog leashes were made of a piece of thin tough sapling, maybe some 18 inches long. At one end was attached a piece of skin from some deer or other game, which served as a collar. The other end was tied, with a piece of skin also, to some convenient pole or one of the wooden runners that formed the shelf. The stick in the middle served as the chain, and being wood, could not be cut through with the dog's teeth, should he desire to free himself.

These hunting dogs are well fed and cared for. At nearly every meal some food is given them, and at least once or twice per day when someone goes for a bath, they are taken down on the leash to the creek and given a good washing. They are never fat but always in hard, firm condition with silky, shining coats of hair. They all had a special dislike of me, especially if they passed me to windward, when they would race past me with the hair of their backs erect, emitting deep blasphenous growls. When out in the forest on the loose and after game, they were not so openly hostile, although none ever came near to try to be friendly.

One other thing in the clearing drew attention - a rather small beautifully plumaged rooster or cock. He strode around, monarch of all he surveyed, taking toll of food when and where he pleased. I subsequently found one in every Waiwai village, but only a cock. There was not a single hen in the whole country, and these birds were all brought in as barter - generally to buy a dog or grater - by the various tribes, usually the Tarumas, who came down to do business. A couple of days later, the Tarumas, who were behind us, brought in a couple cocks to exchange for something. Most of the Aboriginals, although they are ignorant as to how to breed chickens, love to have a cock. The attraction is the crowing during the night. The constant, periodic crowing of the bird from midnight till dawn is useful, as it wakes them up just in time to replenish the fire and keep it from going out. The cock's crow serves as a sort of clock also. If an early start has to be made in the morning, the time can be known approximately. When the cock has crowed a certain number of times, it is high time to get up, if some father wishes to show the stars and give his son instruction, as it leaves only the space of a lecture before the stars pale before the rising sun. Cocks rarely crow before midnight, but on bright moonlight nights, it is quite common for them to crow by ten o'clock or even earlier. This change is received with shrieks of laughter by the whole village, closely followed by remarks shouted to the bird such as, "Are you lost?", "Are you drunk?", "Were you having a very nasty dream?", or "Was your wife tickling you?". Each remark produces a new burst of laughter as each man tries to outdo his neighbour in sarcasm. Sometimes the women chip in with remarks or questions, generally intended to raise a laugh at the men folks, particularly if some sexual points have been introduced, as not infrequently happens.

Kiwinik's Father.

Most Aboriginals adopt a tribal name by which they are known privately, and later on another name by which they are known to outsiders and white people. Certain parents of either sex carry so much personality as to overshadow any of their children, in which case they retain their names for life. Generally the children are ~~so~~ as noisy and assertive as those of any other race. There is always change in some degree in their outlook and attitude towards life, and parents become "has beens" in the forests as elsewhere. It is the general rule that the parents become known as so and so's father or mother. With the next generation those now carrying a name are deposed in their turn in a like manner.

Kiwinik's father presumably carried considerable personality to become chief at some time or other, but what such name may have been I failed to learn. Inquiries only produced evasion, and I did not pursue them farther. He was a man of indefinite age; he might have been sixty, but again he might have been much older or even younger, according to how the hardships of life had left their mark upon him. He was a man of average height, of a light but definite copper hue of the forest aboriginal. He was in full control of his body and senses, active in camp or at the hunt, and an excellent conversationalist according to tribal rules and etiquette. His body showed none of the dry crinkly appearance of old age, nor had he a grey hair on his head. He was nearly always covered with red paint of the Bixa Orellano variety with only a few face marks on special occasions. He wore few ornaments on his body, and his head-dress was much more subdued than that of his son or indeed of most of the heads of families anywhere in his tribe. He was very gentle in his movements and speech, and did not impress one as being the sort of person to rule any tribe of natives.

In the afternoon, he expressed a wish to have a long conversation with me, so Saik Tau was called up and we sat some hours smoking and drinking, while step by step he told me what he wanted to about himself and his troubles. He said he was getting old, and some of the younger men were disposed to be hostile to his orders, and as Kiwinik, now the father of one boy and one girl, was a fully grown man, he had decided to resign the chieftainship of the tribe, and allow Kiwinik to assume full control while he was still able to advise him in any difficulties that might arise. Unfortunately, Kiwinik's promotion to the position as chief had not met with complete assent. A number of families had objected, and these had now settled down in a new village some distance away under a chief of their own selecting, and there was danger of the Waiwai tribe being divided, as already feeling ran high between the different factions. Although the division had only come about during the last year, development had been very active in the last six months.

Would I, as a Chief in my own right, use my influence during my visit to reconcile the malcontents and bring them to unity under Kiwinik's authority as they had been in his time? During this recitation of their tribal troubles, practically all the headmen and most of their wives had formed a circle around us, sitting absolutely silent, but following open-mouthed every question I asked or any suggestion I had to put forward through the medium of Saik Tau.

I found the new village was not far away, so I promised to go over on a visit and see what I could do. I had no idea of how I would succeed, or even on what lines to take action, but I felt a visit could do no harm. Meanwhile I studied Kiwinik a bit more carefully. He was a fine, tall specimen with fine physique and a particularly pleasing face and expression. His smile and laughter came readily and he had great charm in conversation, as most of his followers would drop their own conversations if he were discussing anything with myself or my men. In some ways, he was rather shy and quiet - very much like his father - but I sensed in him a gentleness and absense of ruthlessness and force, to make him a successful leader in the face of steady determined opposition. Kiwinik certainly was a past master in fancy dress. The feather crowns and ornaments he wore, all his own manufacture, were more numerous and of better design and workmanship than any I have ever seen. When he was fully decked out in all his regalia and gawgaws, very little of his body could be seen, except his legs below the knees. Nor have I ever seen any Indian who wore his many ornaments with such charm and grace!

When fully dressed, he was most dignified and commanded royal respect, as he had only to raise his voice, and silence fell on everyone.

He had a very protruding abdomen which began at the ribs and curved out and round to its lower extremity. Over the stomach was a round rupture almost as large as an egg caused by excessive drinking at some festival as a youth. Round his middle were a number of latitudinal scars in front, some of them 2 or 3 inches in length, which had been caused in the whipping tests of his earlier years and on assuming the chieftainship. Personally, I liked Kiwinik very much and always found him one of the most open and helpful Indians I ever met.

A message was sent off to the village in question, saying we would arrive on a certain day at a given time, with a quantity of goods for bartering in whatever they had to exchange. Kiwinik's father went with some four or five of his most influential men, but the young Chief stayed at home. Saik Tau, Henry and myself completed the number. We arrived without any trouble about 9 a.m. on the day fixed. When we emerged from the forest we found ourselves in the largest clearing or field I have ever seen Indians make. Whatever the upstart chief might be, he certainly was making full and proper preparation for feeding his people. The site chosen was the top of a long flat ridge. The forest had been completely cleared off the top and some distance down either side, right to the end of the ridge and beyond. We were standing practically on a level with the tree tops of the adjacent forests, and had a magnificent view. Much of this huge clearing had been planted already, but in parts, the smoke of wood fires showed operations in further clearing, were also afoot.

The village proper stood some 100 yds inside the clearing from where we entered, and consisted of some half dozen roughly built huts, erected as temporary shelters until the usual communal house could be built. As we came to a standstill, the new chief and two or three of his head men came out from these huts to meet us. None of them was very elaborately dressed, but all were well armed with clubs, bows and arrows. The heads and faces of numerous men, women and children could be seen in every doorway, where we knew there was quite a scuffle to get the choicest view of our party.

The chief and his men seemed very embarrassed, probably due to fear of us; myself as the first white man, and my men as the first Indians wearing clothes, that any of them had ever seen. The welcome given to Kiwinik's father was the shortest, just half a dozen words, and then the chief spoke to me, passed on and addressed each man in turn. No drink or food was offered us, and things didn't seem to be progressing much, so I opened out the articles of barter I had brought with me. The chief was impressed and unbent a little, so I took the chance of having a talk with him on the subject that had really brought me over. I told him he ought to be ashamed of himself in having broken away from the recognised chief of hereditary descent, and that the Waiwais were too few and feeble to divide in in parts as he was doing. At once he grew restive and demanded that we commenced bartering. I kept on telling him off, and now he demanded that we fire off our guns as he had never heard a shot. He grew quite hectoring and domineering in his manner, walking around between myself and my men and ordering what he wanted in a loud blustering voice. Saik Tau got frightened and wanted to fire off one gun to placate the fellow, but I refused.

Then I took a different line. I had told him what I wanted, and now switched off on to barter, getting him interested in what I had brought, and for an hour we admired various things on either side, but when he started to demand an axe for something, I said it could not be done. It was my tribal rule to do business where I had my camp, and that what I had brought were only samples. He and his men must come to Kiwinik's camp if they wanted to do any trade. This started the argument all over again, but as he wanted my goods a great deal more than I wanted his, he had no alternative but to give in. After another hour's wrangling he submitted, and said he would send some of his men over in a day or two, but on one condition, and that was that I must fire off a gun to let him hear the sound, which I promised to do.

I told my men we could all fire our guns - four shots - but not until I gave the signal, as I felt that the guns fired at an unexpected moment would give a better and more impressive effect. I said goodbye, and we formed in line to return, Kiwinik's father in the lead, myself next, then Saik Tau, Henry and the others. A dozen yards away, directly across our path, lay a fallen log which we had to climb over, as it was fully 3 ft in diameter. I had lined it out to fire just as we got to this log when I could take shelter, and reload if the villagers wished to turn nasty. Just as our ex-chief was touching this log, I gave the signal and we all fired, when I got the shock and surprise of my young life! I had not calculated on the effect of shots fired immediately behind the ears of our venerable leader. He also had never seen a gun before, nor had he heard a shot fired. It was just behind his head, and had been wholly unexpected as I had given my orders and signal in Wapichan which he did not understand. At one bound he cleared the three foot log in front like an antelope, then he whipped round to face me with his teeth chattering in abject terror, whilst he was running his hands over his arms, his legs and his whole body to find out if he were intact and uninjured. In a second we were over the log, but we forgot all about reloading in our excitement of rendering help to our leader. He seemed on the point of fainting and it took quite five minutes before we got the old boy assured he had not been killed entirely. Gradually he realised he was safe and that our intentions were not criminal, and he grew calm again.

Meanwhile the reports had caused equal alarm in the village. Dogs barked, parrots shrieked and people yelled. Men, women and children were pouring from the huts and racing through the growing cassava in every direction in a mad effort to reach some point in the forest for shelter and safety. Feather crowns of the men and the black heads of women were bobbing above the crops in a mad endeavour to escape, each for him or herself, and the devil take the hindmost.

Physical fear, or even acute surprise is something you very seldom meet in Indian life. They will face up to admitted definite danger as calmly as you please. I have seen an Indian's favourite dog caught by a jaguar, and the owner rush up with only a dead and half rotten branch picked up hastily as he ran and drove the brute off. While doing some line cutting in the bush, a deadly snake dropped off the branches they were hacking away and landed on the neck and shoulders of an Indian beside me. The impact caused instant immobility and the man stood quite calmly as the snake wound around till he got a chance of seizing the creature by the neck immediately behind the head with his hand and dashing its body against an adjacent tree, when it dropped writhing but helpless.

The Indians have an acute dread and fear of the supernatural such as Kenaima - the Evil Eye of other races - but fear of natural phenomena is almost unknown, however rarely it may occur. Surprise is equally rare amongst them as they are daily in touch with all kinds of happenings in the flora and fauna of their surroundings and must meet much which, whilst it is novel and surprising, appeals to them in a very different manner to what civilization calls surprise. There is no outward demonstration, and the mind and senses analyse and note the new and surprising with perfect calm as a new experience. It is when newcomers go amongst these untutored people that we expect them to show fear and surprise on lines of our own preconceived ideas. Efforts may be made to produce both so as to impress the natives with the newcomer's ability and marvellous powers, and the results generally lead to the stranger regarding the Indians as stupid, animal like and deficient ~~of~~ in both brains and imagination.

One newcomer friend of mine was riding on horseback on some of the campos in Brazil, in a part where horses were almost unknown. Approaching unseen to an Indian hut, which had an open side on that opposite to him, thus enabling him to whip round the corner and ride into the house, he ejaculated in a gruff voice, "Kenaima" (Evil Spirit). Every Indian quietly and calmly rolled his hammock around him and lay still, quite assured in his own mind that he had seen the dread Kenaima and that his last hour of day had come. It took the horseman some hours to persudde them differently, and to provide him with a guide to the next village.

Another friend was going out to civilization and took as his escort a number of crude Indians, who had never been beyond the confines of their native forest in their lives. After weeks of travel they arrived at a little wayside station on a railway. When the first train was due to pass, he assembled his boys in a long line on the platform within a foot or so of its edge, where the iron monster would pass. Presently the train rolled in, whistling, with steam blowing off and making much noise as it slowed down. My friend expected that every man would rush off to hide or show some other visible expression of fear and surprise, whereas he, himself, was never more surprised in his life, when not a single Indian even batted an eye, or moved an inch. As he afterwards expressed it, "They all stood like so many cows chewing their cud".

This friend who happened to be as bald as a billiard ball entered a village where white people were seldom, if ever, seen. He was welcomed and given a hut with mud walls in which to hang his hammock and rest. From the muttering and noises around, he knew every crack of any size had an eye behind, watching his every movement. He carefully kept his hat on his head. After an hour or so the mutterings died away and he knew everybody had gone to the other huts to compare notes on the sights seen. He pulled off his hat now and lay still with his bald head well displayed. After quite a time there was a frantic yell, "Come look! look!!", and every crack was manned again to greatly increased chattering, and expressions of surprise.

Another friend took some unsophisticated Indians out to one of the big cities in South America. They saw trains, steamers and countless new sights without a single expression being registered. On leaving the train it was only a step to his house, so giving his baggage to his boys they started to walk. As they turned a corner, a belated cab drawn by a miserable old lean horse rattled round at the gallop, in a hurry to secure a fare. Every boy promptly hissed, "Kenaima", flung down what he was carrying and took to his heels in all directions. It took the united services of the entire police and detective force of that city for over a day to collect these men again; they had crawled up culverts, under houses and into all kinds of corners for safety. Were they frightened, surprised, or both?

When our old chief had recovered his equanimity we continued on our way back to where we had left out hammocks and supplies. As we went into camp, the Indians began laughing about the whole episode. They love anything of the ridiculous nature happening to one of themselves. Some one slips up and falls down on the ground and everybody goes into peals of laughter. At first they were comparing notes as to how each had felt as the guns were fired, but soon they were imitating the old chief's jump and subsequent actions, leaping in the air like bucks and feeling themselves all over to see where the shot had hit them. Each motion, exaggerated as much as possible, meant peal after peal of laughter from all, the old chief laughing as heartily as any, and he would raise further laughs by describing his mental reaction. The joke kept everyone in great good humour till we fell asleep.

Not infrequently, when one enters an Indian village some one, after the reserve of meeting strangers has worn off, will attach himself to the visitor and imitate his every action as far as possible. Such a boy walks just behind you wherever you go, carefully putting each foot in turn in your footsteps. If you scratch (and who doesn't in the bush?) he scratches himself; if you yawn or sneeze, he tries to do the same if only in pantomime. He follows as your shadow and being rude or handing out a scolding does little good beyond increasing the distance between you. Sometimes this mimicry of action may end after a few hours, or it may last a day or two, until his curiosity is satisfied, when you will probably see him giving an exaggerated display of such actions as he thinks ridiculous or out of the common to such kiddies as are younger than himself. By his companions he is regarded as quite a hero. Did he not beard the lion in his den?, something they dare not attempt themselves.

Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery I have been told, but there are limits, and the habit can be darned annoying and embarrassing. On the present occasion a Waiwai lout, a clumsy overgrown puppy not yet eligible for manhood rights but beyond the childhood stage, had been trailing me whenever he could get near me. The length of my pace is longer than the average Indian's and he looked a fool stalking along and losing his balance as he stretched out his shorter pace to follow my steps. I felt a bath was indicated and my own men and I went down to a lovely clear pool in the creek a few yards from our camp. Probably nothing excites the curiosity and draws the same close attention as when a white man completely undresses amongst Indians who have seen few or none. You won't see a single Indian actually watching you. You look from face to face but all eyes are averted; they are busy staring at anything on earth but you, yet you can feel every eye is on you except those of the person you are actually looking at for the moment, and it is a safe bet that each Indian has got a perfect photographic vision of your milky white skin, every curve of your body, and every scar and pimple. I have had a boy whose eyes appeared to be fixed on the South Pole, suddenly stretch out his hand and say, "Boss, you've got a tick between your shoulders" as he picked it off.

My shadow of course must bathe also. When I dived, he did the same; when I swam, he swam. I had dived down and brought up a handful of gravel to have a look at; the next moment he was doing the same. Then I picked out a piece of quartz which I noticed had a very definite flaw through the middle. Putting this between my teeth I gave it a pinch when it readily broke into fragments. My shadow must do the same, but unfortunately he picked a rather solid pebble. It didn't break first go, so he put all the force he had into a good hefty bite. Something snapped, rather painfully judging by his expression. He spat out his pebble, something suspiciously like a broken tooth and a fair quantity of blood. He scrambled ashore, and that was the end of him. The episode had been seen by everybody in camp and was rewarded with roars of laughter.

The Waiwais had now another pantomime to exhibit which they certainly did repeatedly and with an exaggerated wealth of detail, when we got back to the village. It was not myself for a wonder that this time was the butt of their raillery, and my unfortunate shadow instead of being a hero, crept around as if he wished the earth would swallow him.

No ... 241

Nogocio - Business.

Back in the village I had a look at the Waiwai calendar corresponding to that sent to invite the Tarumas to pay a visit. I found only one knot remaining to be untied (one night more to sleep) and I felt I had better begin doing some trade or barter at once, as I was sure the advent of some 140 to 160 Tarumas next day would mean a busy time for the Waiwais in reception ceremonies and various duties, which would leave them little or no time to devote to me and my wants in that line.

I had previously drawn a mark in the sand completely round my hammock space and my belongings, and had issued orders that no one was to cross this line on any account, with the exception of Kiwinik or his father. This had been faithfully observed by all. I now invited the two chiefs to bring their stools inside this mark, when I opened up my locked case and spread out a few articles of barter.

Immediately there was a race by all the men of the village to place their stools just outside my mark so as to get box seats to view the play. The children were of course well to the front, but had to act as messengers to fathers who wanted a cigarette, a burning brand from the fire to light up with, and other requirements. The women soon arrived also, leaning over husbands' shoulders or standing at the back of the men. I reckoned this interest augured well for quick business, and already had in view a number of lovely feather crowns and quantities of novel ornaments, which I wished to possess. I had a good idea of values of these various articles from Saik Tau, so I picked out a nice knife, handed it to my interpreter, also sitting inside my marks, and said I wanted a feather crown for it. He, in turn, handed it to the ex-chief and began a conversation. After a tremendously long yarn the chief took the knife and spoke at equal length to those in front of him. It was more than an hour before I had the satisfaction of seeing a crown removed from a glossy head and handed to the chief.

I now found I had something to learn in the art, and especially in the speed of bartering. While the old man was talking to his men, I took the chance to ask Saik Tau what all the pow-wow was about. I learned that he had to show off the advantages of my knife. He had to draw attention to its sharp and perfect edge, its glittering surface, the complete freedom from rust or finger marks on its blade and the absence of scratches and blemishes on the handle. Truly it was a royal knife, such as would be passed only between a chief of the White Men and the famous Chief of the Waiwais. He told how it was made far, far away, the many moons of its journey by sea and land, and how it had lain in its oily paper in a canister that had chafed huge blisters on his poor back, as, hungry and dog tired, he had climbed the mountains to bring it safely to its prospective owner.

All this was child's play by comparison with what I was now subjected, namely the history of the hat itself! These crowns are made of feathers from a number of birds - powis, toucan, green parrots, macaws, eagles and others. I was taken on a verbal hunt after each bird, just who was at the hunt, how and where it was shot and countless long-winded details of no earthly importance or interest. The old chief would run off half a dozen sentences in Waiwai which Saik Tau would repeat to me in Wapichan. Beer and cigarettes were passed round at frequent intervals, but it was a slow, tiresome job.

By noon, after some five hours' work, I had successfully purchased two crowns. By this hour, the two middlemen were getting hoarse and every one else was fairly hungry, so we called a halt. A good meal was served and then we all retired to our hammocks for a rest, which gave me time to realise that at our present speed, it would be many moons, if ever, before I could buy up all the things in sight that I fancied. About mid afternoon we began trading again. I made a little better speed by being rude, and telling the interpreter to cut short his glowing descriptions and to insist that the old chief reduce his information to a minimum. Even so, we had done a ridiculously small amount of barter, when the sinking sun showed it was high time we had a bath, preparatory to the dinner before dark fell on a land, where the standard of artificial illumination is the camp fire, or, on very great occasions, such as cor onations or national festivals, a chunk of dried gum or resin burning on the bottom of a turned-over earthenware pot of kinds. The old chief even came along after dark for an hour or two, to recount some more hunts and feather history which he had had to omit previously owing to my insistence, and I dropped asleep to the steady drone of their voices.

Next morning, the Tarumas began dropping in and I, for the time being, became a back number. I made a few notes on their proceedings and learned that after the long ceremonial litany of welcome had been gone through, they had gradually led up to a point where some article of barter was handed over to the chief, either to pay for articles purchased on a previous meeting, or to secure something for some customer away in the Wapichanna country. The chief then distribyted these at his leisure as he thought best. Each head man of the Tarumas had had dealings with heads of the Waiwais, and trade was more general and speedier than in my case. They engaged each other in trade and did not need an interpreter.

When I started this little trick, I found it wouldn't work however. The men would take a knife from me, and then go to the chief with it, when we had to go over all the ground again. Everything had to pass through the chief whether it was my article or their's in payment. I did manage to speed up matters a bit, even through the chief, and also by putting the Tarumas on to doing business for me.

The Tarumas were principally interested in cassava graters as the unit of trade, with a few purchases in crowns and sundries. I was not interested in graters beyond one or two for orders outside, and the Tarumas had little use for the ornaments, so just as soon as a Taruma got anything of that nature, either as payment of an old debt or a spot cash deal, I was after it, and a couple of moments' conversation effected the purchase. The Tarumas were acquainted with the more speedy methods of barter amongst the Wapichanna. In this way I was able to deplete the village almost completely of all the best articles made by themselves for ~~domestic~~ personal use, many of which I had never seen before.

It might seem almost sacrilege to bespoil a simple people of nearly all the examples of their arts and crafts, but these ~~were~~, however, beautifully made ~~and~~, after all, were subject to serious depreciation or even total loss, in daily use. In a few more moons they would be worn out and new ones made, equally as beautiful or maybe even more so. The Waiwai were getting in return, goods of much more durable manufacture, articles of iron and steel, beads, and glass, of which the tribe stood in such dire need. There was no article which they sold me that caused them any suffering or privation, and which could not be replaced by a few days' steady work, as they generally had stocks of necessary material always on hand. I have had a man ask me to stay over a day or two, when he would make me a feather crown as he was in need of some article I had with me.

The majority of the Waiwai men have one particular box, woven from palm leaves and long enough to hold the longest tail feathers of the various Macaws, in which they store all the coloured feathers they fancy from the birds they shoot from time to time. This box is generally bulging, so they can soon replace their different feather ornaments when they lose them either through barter or wear and tear of everyday use. There is nothing intricate in making most of these, even young lads can tie a few feathers at the end of a string but in their best examples, such as the crown, neatness of finish and workmanship come into play, as also better taste in arrangement and colour scheme. One crown may be a thing of beauty: another so badly made as not to be worth buying, yet both men will demand exactly the same price on the theory that the amount of work in collecting feathers and in the subsequent manufacture is exactly the same.

This principle is very general among the tribes and can be most annoying at times, especially if you are entering a tribe who has had practically no contact with the outside world and it is necessary to win their confidence and good graces. When you become better known you can discriminate somewhat but even then you are liable to cause discontent as they have the idea of equal work equal payment, very deeply ingrained. The best way out is to find a greater range of feathers in the good crown or some other feature to pay a slightly different price. Even then there are difficulties however, as on one of my visits a notoriously poor workman had made a special crown in which he had stuck every recognised feather and a lot more but its workmanship was the very poorest. He kept strutting around with this monstrosity on his head to the accompaniment of considerable banter and good natural laughter, but eventually he handed it to my interpreter as being for sale and demanded an outside price. I picked it up; began praising it sky high and enumerating all the different feathers I knew. I noticed every Waiwai down to knee high children had unostentatiously formed a ring round us and I sensed they expected something unusual somewhere. My unexpected praise was received with sniggers, but presently I said: "Now, don't any of you tell me who made this crown as I know it could have only been made by the - (there was a silence which almost shrieked) - the "Nail Monkey". Immediately there were yells of long uproarious laughter on all sides and further trade had to be abandoned for the day. The "Nail Monkey" is the clown and smart alec among animals in aboriginal mythology, hence the amusement. That crown was eventually purchased by my interpreter for himself and he took it to pieces at home and managed to make two out of it.

The most intricate part of the feather crown is the broad white band of woven hand spun cotton at the base of the featherwork but as the principle is the same in the manufacture of all their belts, garters and bracelets practically every person from their earliest teens at least, know some of the patterns, although practice, craftmanship and a sense of beauty is necessary to produce their more intricate and lovely designs. This work is really crochet work of a kind done on a number of pieces of wood with a side split instead of a hook. Slivers of the mid-rib of various palm leaves will do, but are liable to split completely and wood is preferred as needles. A number of small pencil-stout straight twigs are cut from the branches of a shrub of known toughness and about three to four inches in length. These are debarked and all tapered at one end to about the sharpness of an ordinary pencil. Close to the blunt end or head, a shallow piece of wood is scooped out on one side in the shape of a half U to a depth of about a fourth of the wood. At the lower shoulder of this cut, a split is made downwards in the wood. This split piece of wood rather resembles a spring reed in some musical instruments and is to hold the yarn securely when the work is being done. Any Waiwai can make one of these needles in less than five minutes using a hog tooth scraper as his only implement.

This implement is in daily use among the Waiwai in their handicrafts as a scraper. They prefer it to a knife as no mistake can be made by its use. A knife may slip or get out of control by lifting some fibres and entering too deeply, ruins some piece of woodwork during the more advanced stage of manufacture. With this tool they can scrape concave, convex, or straight surfaces; it is used to trim off inequalities in graters: to shape and taper their bows; to draw a straight line up their bamboo flutes: to pierce circular holes and dozens of various other odd jobs.

The handle of this tool is a piece of wood about six inches in length and about an inch diameter and has a tusk of the wild hog fastened into a groove cut in one or both ends. It is set solid by some of their strong gums or resins which may set to almost stone hardness and finally secured by a lashing of silk grass string. The handle is generally painted black with geometrical markings in colour or a design in coloured beads may be worked on to it. Each end is generally decorated with a ruff of gaudy feathers. Most of the men possess at least one of these tools, and it is surprising how fast a man can scrape down some particular piece of work. There is no difficulty in its use. A trial scrape or two is sufficient for any white man to find the correct angle which gives the maximum result. I have often used them easily and efficiently and I consider it far the best tool that has been evolved by any tribe.

In making his crochet band the workman takes the correct number of free needles in his left hand held fanwise in a straight line with the heads projecting abo~~ut~~ve his fingers and kept in position by the thumb and first finger. A ball of cotton yarn spun by his womenfolk is taken: the loose end of the yarn secured between the fingers. Then they wind the yarn or thread in and out, back and front between the needles and doubling back at each end of the row until the necessary number of loop or stitches have been made at the back and front of each needle when the pattern is begun. This is done for the first stitch by slipping the thread in behind the split reed of the correct needle, where the tension of the spring holds it tightly. The point of this needle is now seized and drawn down until the head is just clear of the loops or stitches carrying with it the cotton thread. The thread is now disengaged and the loop so formed left dangling free. The needle is now returned from the top to its original position inside the loops or stitches until the last of which is reached. This loop is dropped by pushing behind the needle and the point is inserted inside the dangling loop instead. The thread is now drawn tight and the loop now takes its place as the first stitch proper in place of the loop discarded.

The number of needles are generally uneven and may range from three to such as gives the width of the required design. The thread is generally 3 ply and the finer the spinning the more lovely the finished article. The principle in working varies little, but a good variety of patterns can be made by altering the rotation of needles pulled down.

Different tribes, as also different individuals, have their own designs and patterns.

The Waiwai make numbers of belts for use round the waist, arms or legs, which are woven on two or four pencil sized pieces of wood. These appear to be four-sided but with stretching and use soon become circular. The Waiwai are adepts at plaiting and quite a few of these belts are made by this method or a complicated system of looping. Some of these were made from bark or even bushrope. One or two of the old men wore a few strings of badly frayed plaited bark, or merely a flat string of such bark probably because they had no women to spin the yarn or as a concession to the practice of childhood's days. Most boys in their younger years run around in their birthday suits or wore a belt made from bushrope, but these keep stretching and are not very practical. These bushrope or wooden belts are known and made by most tribes, even the Wapichanna in savannah country, but their use was generally confined to ceremonial and state occasions.

On my first visit, I found the most difficult article to purchase was their cotton lap or breech cloth, carefully woven by themselves from cotton of their own growing and spinning. This cloth is some 6 to 8 inches wide and about 6 ft long. The Waiwais had not progressed beyond a stone or clay weight fixed at the bottom of a spindle in their spinning of thread. The raw cotton is held in the left hand when spinning, the right hand rotating the spindle up the outside of the right thigh. The spindle always rotates in a calabash resting on the ground, and the sweep of the hand along the thigh is only a few inches, in place of the long sweep up the entire thigh of such as use spindles weighted at the middle and whose lower end is clear of the ground. The first single strand thread of the Waiwai is exceptionally fine, something akin to our linen sewing thread. Three of these threads spun together down the leg form the yarn which they use in weaving cloth.

A wooden frame is now made, and the yarn wound backwards and forwards as in hammock making. The necessary woof and warp arrangement is fixed, and weaving proper begins. For the first 6 inches or so at the end, a complicated ornamental design is woven, after which the general design is the common style of under one and over one as the shuttle is passed from side to side. Exceptions are met with when a half inch border runs parallel to form the selvedge at both sides. When the weaving is completed, long fancy dyed tassels are attached at each end, according to the vanity of the owner. Oftem, feathers are included in these tassels, and tufts arranged along the selvedge as ornaments. Coloured beads and seeds of various kinds are also used. Finally the whole affair is well stained with red pigment, although it is pretty red already through contact with the painted arms and body of the weaver. A good lap should hang behind to knee level. It passes over some sort of a belt round the waist through between the legs and up in front to pass over the belt again to hang over. This hang over must be sufficiently long to allow the cloth to be doubled up just above the knee, and the extreme end must just meet the waist belt, with the short fancily woven diagram showing in front. The tassels are drawn through the belt to keep the lap in position and to hang down conspicuously in front. Most young Waiwai dandies are as finicky in adjusting their lap as the modern young woman with a new frock.

Practically every Waiwai headman possessed two such laps; a new one for ceremonial and festival dress, the other without tassel or ornament worn constantly when at work or out on a hunt. No one was prepared to sell a lap however at any price. I had carried up a number of yards of Turkey red cloth, which I knew was extremely popular with all the tribes, but this made no appeal to them, as they had never seen it before, except a lap or two of it worn by the Tarumas, and they decided it was vastly inferior to their own cloth, which actually was true.

Kiwinik, although the actual business was being done through his father, had taken a great interest and had been a great help in the bartering. He had taken a great liking to me and my slightest request was law with him. After some discussion with his father, he, one day, offered me his own personal lap on condition that I allowed him to wear it until such time as I was returning. The payment he left to my own discretion. This lap was a beauty, practically new and one of the finest I had seen, so I was delighted. In payment I gave him enough Turkey red cloth to make half a dozen laps, a brand new axe and some other trifles, an unheard of high price for any one article, and I think we were mutually pleased over the deal.

After several days, Kiwinik began to take a hand in the bartering as his father could not cope with my demands, and those of the Tarumas at one and the same time. Trade speeded up now and in one day Kiwinik sold me practically every ornament he possessed. In this way he became the wealthiest man in the history of his tribe, and the envy of all the others. He was robbed of his magnificent appearance for the moment, but as for that matter, so were most of his followers. This loss was far from permanent, however, for two years later, when I gave the correct "Is your skin there?" tribal salutation as I strode across the clearing on my next visit, Kiwinik stepped on the sounding board in welcome just as much a Bird of Paradise as I had ever seen him.

Considerable anxiety had been caused to the two chiefs through the non-appearance of the villagers we had visited. Messengers had twice been sent across, but returned to report they had found the village completely deserted, nor were there any signs of tracks made on the place since we had left.

Several nights later, Saik Tau woke me in great excitement, as Kiwinik had been called out by the signal of a bird and was now talking to one of these runaways. Each day, one or two people drifted in from the rival village except the self made chief, who probably was shy in showing up and admitting allegiance to Kiwinik as hereditary chieftain. As these people came in, I made a point of doing some trade with them through Kiwinik, using this as the means of forgetting old scores and fostering a new friendship. When I left, about a fortnight later, the division in the tribe had been completely closed, although up to the morning of my departure, the now deposed chief had not appeared in camp.

In subsequent visits the procedure of barter became much easier. I was permitted to do this with each member of the tribe and on my last visit, after both Kiwinik and his father had gone to their last long home and Yufuno reigned in their stead, each man conducted his own trade just as he liked and the chief took neither part nor interest in the negocio.

I knew then, and still think this was wrong, but what could I do? I would arrive with a few orders for the little they had to seål, and I could not stay on indefinitely, doing business at the rate of four articles per day. My time was of some value, and it would be long enough at the best before my corial floated out to civilization, so hurry I must. I knew I was taking control from the Chief, and spreading independence amongst his tribe, perhaps laying the seeds of probable trouble, and at least loosening the bonds of authority amongst a primitive people so few in numbers that only complete co-operation will keep them in existence.

No ... 257

Dogs

The hunting dogs of the Waiwai are almost always males, fine upstanding animals of around eighteen inches at the shoulder. As a rule they are black in colour with white paws and markings, but they are invariably foxy red with anatto as often as not rubbed on to ensure good luck and success in the chase. Most everything in a Waiwai village is a decided red, from the human form to all they possess. Many of these dogs when unleashed for a scamper in the forest have to be picked up with one arm round the dog's waist and its body resting across the master or mistress's hip to be carried outside to the edge of the clearing before being let loose on its own. This is to prevent fighting as some were so savage they would have pounced on some neighbour along the shelf. On his return, in a better mood, the dog would dash into the house and jump to his proper place quite peacefully, to be promptly secured again by his owner. Carried in this manner all dogs get smeared with red from their owner's body.

It is a general rule in the Waiwai tribe - as in fact in most tribes - that every hunting dog that is worth his salt must have his wife, and consequently there were plenty of females around either as selected breeders or nondescripts. Those special females were carefully kept apart from the males; tied up in a different part of the house, and fed, and tended by the women. Nearly every married woman owned at least one such bitch, which went everywhere with her, out to the field, or the morning and evening bath. These picked females were every bit as good and as keen hunters as the males, not infrequently putting up game along the road to the field which they would bring to buy, or force into a hole for shelter, until the women arrived to despatch them with some weapon - club, cutlass or spear.

During one of my visits the women met a large herd of wild hogs near their field and on the "View Halloo" coming faintly through the forest from a mile away, the men seized their bows and arrows to race to the chase, but not a single male dog was unleashed. We found two hogs run to earth in hollow trees and had barracaded in with pieces of dead timber. The women were melodiously yodelling for help as they had no cutlasses to make the necessary traps in which to secure them. Every dog was however away chasing the rest of the herd of hogs and the fleetest footed men raced along the spoor, but the hogs were racing in a straight line down the valley for safety and could not be overtaken. After bagging the two imprisoned hogs our party returned home, but it was not till some hours later, that the last of the bitches out after the hogs got home.

In this way some of these females acquire a reputation as a good hunter equal to that of the males and generally those with the highest reputations were permitted to mate and breed. Inside the tribe the puppies would be given to neighbours or relations, but they were averse to parting with them to strangers. Whenever I visited the tribe I was accompanied by several members of different tribes, but only on one occasion did one of my party secure a pup and that was not from the best hunting strain.

One peculiar feature was noticed among the Waiwai that I never met in any other tribe. Certain of the young maids would have a pet dog which was invariably a castrated male. These dogs were never put on the leash as they were perfectly harmless and followed their young mistresses everywhere. These dogs were useless as hunters as is generally the case when.unsexed, and were as a rule repulsively fat, but would toddle, puffing and panting, away to the field, the bath or the forest, or just around the clearing, very much like Mary's pet lamb in the Nursery Rhyme. Yet I never saw these girls fondle or pet these dogs. There was generally one such dog in each village and at one place there were two. I never was able to get a satisfactory explanation of this custom, except in the case of one, where, according to my interpreter, a girl had adopted a puppy about the period when she entered womanhood and had it altered rather than see it enter the lists as a hunting dog. The women of all tribes adore helpless little puppies, which seem to appeal to their sense of motherhood, but as it grows older and more independent the woman's interest in her pet fades and disappears completely. From being Somebody's Darling and fed like a fighting cock, the poor dog wanders round the village ownerless and unfed and of no use as a hunter, but it is quite possible that the explanation of the Waiwai custom has some foundation.

The Waiwai periodically purchase a dog with a good reputation as a hunter from some neighbouring tribe and thus unconsciously prevent deterioration in their own dogs. They preferred to get these from the Bone or Shelew Tribes, a long way to the South, while most of their sales go either North or ~~West.~~ EAST. A tribe isolated in the forest will rarely make contact more than once a year with some other tribe and the number of both purchases and sales must be very few. The Waiwai tribe are an amicable amalgamation of two tribes - the Waiwai and Parikuta - in much the same way as the Atarods and Wapichanna, but I could never determine which was the predominant or more numerous. Most villages were composed of members of both - Kiwinik claimed to be Parikuta; Yufona claimed to be Waiwai. The language, culture and customs seem the same in both sections.

Three main trails emanated from Waiwai territory: that from the North over which I made my visits; that down the valley of the Mapura Wau, connecting their various villages and that due South to contact the Bone and Shelew tribe. There was, of course, the river also on which they kept a few indifferent corials, down which they could visit their own villages, but these were generally a long way from the river: an overland journey of some hours to more than a day, so the overland route was preferred. The river was the only possible route however to the Mapidien tribe, who in turn had connections through on to the Trombitas and on behind the Guianas for an unknown distance, since there were branch roads connecting most of the rivers much farther East. The river was also used to connect various Waiwai villages located on the North bank of the Mapura - a distance of a hundred miles or so and one of which I visited. I also visited the Mapidion people and some half dozen tribes on the branches of the higher Trombitas but I never got through to the Shelews or Bones. I had hoped to see these latter although Kiwinik was afraid of them but something always arose to prevent me. I imagine the small trade done with these last two tribes was through some intermediary such as was common between most tribes at the beginning of the present century.

These surrounding tribes, as far as I had seen, had very little of foreign manufacture. Their arts and crafts were poor, their culture low and distances between the various tribes enormous with their limited means of movement and transport. A journey through a couple of hundred miles carrying a seventy or eighty pound bundle of graters is no joke and undertaken only when necessity or the devil drives. I once visited a Diau village where they only had a few well worn articles of iron (all carrying French names as the country of origin) and a few of the women had some beads. It was a mystery how they kept up their culture, which was comparatively high in feat-herwork and decorations. After getting better acquainted, the Chief climbed up into the dim, smoky apex of the communal house to bring down a considerable parcel. He unwound half a dozen layers of palm leaf covering to expose to my great surprise some two dozen cheap 5" x 8" mirrors of French manufacture which must have come hundreds of miles through the forests from French Guiana. They could not have been originally worth more than a sixpence apiece, yet each mirror represented one dog to be purchased from the Waiwai tribe somehow some day. That was why they were so carefully wrapped up and stowed away, but he had not the faintest idea as to how and when he would ever be able to do the necessary trade.

This goes to show the range of the reputation of the Waiwai hunting dogs. They were definitely a fine breed and more carefully looked after and tended than is usual, which meant increased stamina and staying power in the chase, but I owned one or two of these dogs and found them rather disappointing. Of course I took them from the forest and brought them to savannah country where the game and conditions of hunting are completely different. They were probably all right in their own country which, from its topographical features - a long tapering valley between two ranges of high mountains - carried an unduly high proportion of game. Dog or no dog, the Waiwais were never long away hunting before they returned with a good bag of game even with their primitive arms. I've been in their villages for a week or ten days accompanied by as many as a hundred and fifty strangers which is a big strain on any establishment which is hundreds of miles from a shop or concentrated source of supply. Yet we never missed a meal and generally there would be a quantity of meat (but no fish) on the barbecue.

Only once did I catch the Waiwai out of step regarding food, and that was because everyone was engrossed with the business of barter when it was discovered about mid-afternoon that we were all hungry after our trading and there wasn't a bite in the village. We all turned out to hunt and inside an hour I was back with sufficient game which I had shot myself for the full requirements of my little party. I have been ravenous with hunger both in coming to and going from the Waiwai country, but was always well supplied with meat once I gained the valley of the Mapura. Maybe this accounted to some extent to the fame of the Waiwai hunting dogs as much as their real prowess.

It was over one of these confounded dogs (and a lady one at that) that I met my Waterloo in barter. On the morning after my arrival on one of my subsequent visits I was sitting with the old ex-chief intoning the morning litany in the growing dawn when a lovely lady dog rushed up from the forest and slumped down at the old man's feet. This was most unusual and equally so, the fact that she neither bared her teeth nor growled at me although I was almost touching her. I am fond of dogs; speak a mutual language with most of the species; so I spoke to her and finally leaned across to scratch her behind an ear at which she showed no resentment. This performance was performed later in the day and evening and we were becoming more and more matey until finally one day she rolled over on her side to rest her head on my bare foot and I decided to buy her. She was a very unusual colour: a light chocolate with white lingerie and body markings. She was, I learned, a topping hunter and the particular pet of the old Chief. I never saw him caress or even touch the dog, but somehow she seemed happiest in his company, if only lying quietly on the floor by his feet - an association rarely ever seen in any tribe.

When I told Saik Tau my intention, I fancied he gave me rather a peculiar look but what I said generally went without argument. When he conveyed my wish to the old boy, the collective tribe, squatting on its heels to watch the cinema, nearly fell over backwards in sheer surprise. At no time in history had any one offered to buy a lady dog: it simply wasn't done. I could buy a whole shelfful of male dogs but ---------. I insisted however, and my interpreter and the old man went into the usual huddle that presaged a dog deal and remained so all day. I had already been some days in the villages and by this time the entire tribe were nudists, so to speak, ~~so~~ as every feather and ornament they possessed was being packed for transport over the mountains to my corial, but twenty-four hours later the purchase of the dog was reported as "not half complete". I simply had to go but persuaded Kiwinik and his father to accompany us to our landing in the hope of finishing negotiations. To facilitate the trade we did the journey in half stages and the dog fanciers talked incessantly whenever we halted and far into the night at our various camps.

Oh! Yes!! the Chief was most willing to sell his dog, but Saik Tau had to be conducted on a personal tour over the country in a minute description of all the incidents in connection with every animal the dog had ever chased or helped to kill since puppy-hood. I was beginning to sense the old Chief didn't want to part with his dog at all as I'd seen half a dozen male dogs sold with a tenth of the fuss and palaver around this one. The Chief was most anxious to possess a brand new axe (the customary price and that now demanded) and the lovely machette I also offered while his wife was dying to own a mirror and some half dozen strings of gaudy beads which I had added in the hope of oiling up the cumbrous revolutions of custom but for once there seemed no method of short circuiting age-long procedure. If he didn't want to part with his dog the old man could have asked some exorbitant (to him) price which I would probably have paid or he could exhaust my patience in long drawn out negotiations such as were doubtless the custom when he was a young man. I gave them a final eighteen hours at the landing to conclude the deal with a fair warning that I would sail at noon the next day and which I did minus my dog.

The memory of my last glimpse of the venerable ex-chief and his beautiful dog as they stood side by side on the river bank and watched us slowly disappear, still remains with me. I was never to see either of them again. On my next visit I learned that my dog had run into a large herd of wild hog on their return within a mile or so of their own village and that a lightning swipe of the enormous tushes of an old boar had completely disembowelled her. Within the year the old man took ill and passed over to those happy hunting grounds of which they dream. His communal house - a very fine specimen - had been abandoned and a new one - several miles away - was being erected.

It may sound rather callous packing up my trade goods and carrying them back with me. I had plenty more at home and here amongst the Waiwai their distribution would have enormously increased the amenities of life and been of great assistance in their primitive methods of agriculture. The get-rich-quick methods or the bargain hunting idea of the white man is just as demoralising to his brown skinned brother of the forest. What we or they get for nothing is neither treasured nor valued, so I had long ago decided to pay spot cash (or barter) for whatever I wanted or for services rendered and definitely refused to open a credit account with any Indian as far afield as the Taruma or Waiwai. It was a fifty-fifty chance that I might not return and equal chances that if I did I might not find them or my payment wouldn't be ready. I invariably paid better prices than the inter-tribal rates and was probably looked on as a bit of a "softie", but I had no intention of augmenting their own system of long deferred payment. They were perfectly honest, but the sense of obligation or distant responsibility fades rapidly with all of us unless the memory is frequently - and maybe a trifle rudely - called to order. A good deal of harm can be done to primitive peoples by the promiscuous giving of presents or the payment of fancy prices. We put it down to kindness of heart or philanthropy whereas it is just as often expression of our own personal vanity. I found, in more than twenty years of trading with and the employment of hundreds of Indians, that fair and prompt dealings to the last cent was appreciated by all. It is difficult to hold the sole entree to any tribe for long and competition would appear on more "generous" terms, to draw the custom of everyone for a time, but a reckoning had to be called someday, generally with rather painful feelings to both parties. After having left the district for some seven years I returned to find every one most emphatic on the question of the tribes' deterioration, laziness and rascality, but I found no difficulty in commanding their obedience and hard honest service for six months on my old terms of employment.

No .. 268

Nothing to do

The Tarumas began to trickle in on the very morning arranged by the Waiwais so long before. The first to arrive were old Bushdeer, the chief, and one of his head men with their respective families. The men and boys each carried only arms (bows and arrows), and a small basket slung from one shoulder. The women were bowed down under their loads. They had large baskets on their backs, in which were packed the whole worldly possessions of that family - pots, pans, articles of barter, and everything they would ever need for personal or domestic use. Festooned around their bodies were empty water gourds, baskets of cotton, barks, and leaves of trees picked up in the forests for the manufacture of some useful article when idle during their visit.

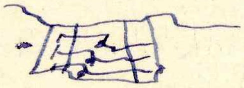
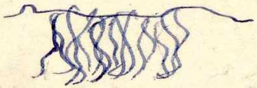
Perched on top of this load, as often as not, was a toddling child, too young for much walking or travel, its legs on either side of its steed's neck, its hands burrowed in the hair of the head. One woman led a dog, whose pups, struggling and whining, reposed in a basket on top of her load. Nearly every woman had a baby slung in front of her also, its head on a level with the fount of nourishment, from which it helped itself at will.

The babies were carried in a sling hung round the shoulder. This sling, made of bark, is slipped over the head with one arm through before the loads are picked up. The baskets and load are then adjusted, the baby picked up from the ground by one arm, and then seated facing the mother in the sling.

These baby slings amongst the Wapichanna and Macussi are woven from cotton into an endless belt of numerous intricate designs. Actually, they are made of one long unbroken strand of yarn, and are plaited rather than woven. They are made long enough to go over the head and one arm, to reach down when weighted to about the middle of the abdomen. This belt is about one foot wide, but is so loosely plaited that any part can easily be stretched to almost double that width. In this way it can be made to fit and accommodate any size of child, and I have seen a tiny baby of only some weeks old or a tired toddler of three years carried quite easily. The child is placed facing the mother, well up on one shoulder; the belt is stretched between the two hands, and the child now allowed to slide down until the buttocks rest in the stretched part, with its feet lying inside and down the mother's abdomen.

Neither the Taruma nor Waiwai have been able to evolve or imitate this article, which is one of the most intricate and difficult of the Indian arts and crafts. They use the bark of some tree, that in general use being that of the Brazil Nut tree of commerce. A somewhat young tree is selected, as its bark is thinner and more easily handled. A strip of not more than one foot wide and seven or eight feet long is torn from the tree. The bark is well pounded with a club, and repeatedly washed in water, then dried in the sun until a soft fibrous net is obtained, when the whole is adjusted to the size of the wearer and the two ends sewn with string made from silk grass. The sides are trimmed, and it is ready for use. The bark baby carrier will not yield in any way and must be much more uncomfortable than the cotton variety.

The bark of the Brazil nut tree enters quite a lot into the domestic economy of the Waiwais. In practically all tribes, when a young girl arrives at definite symptoms of puberty she must not wear any of her usual ornaments and coverings. For at least for one month she must not be seen by any male member of the tribe. Generally, a thatched corner is prepared for her, either in the home itself or in a tiny hut erected outside. She retires to this in complete seclusion; special food can only be eaten and her wants attended to by some old lady of the village. She may sneak out in the day to relieve nature if no male is around, but generally has to wait till after dark, when she may be seen creeping off into the forest. There are certain ceremonies and rites performed by the older women but these are not known to the men, and remain a secret. At the end of a month the girl may be seen, but not too openly, and she may have to remain in complete or partial seclusion up to three months, according to the rules of the tribe, and more particularly her own family. Once these rules of etiquette are over, she dons her customary beads and dress to take her place in the family and tribal circles. As often as not, she has been asked in marriage either while an infant or during her seclusion, and I have known these girls go straight from the seclusion of budding womanhood to the marital bed, to be a mother within the year.

Amongst the Wapichanna the dress worn during the period of seclusion is made of cotton. The customary dress of beads  woven in geometric figures with various coloured beads, is laid aside, and a substitute is used:-  which is merely a string belt, to which for some 6 to 7 inches in front, are attached a number of stoutish cotton cords about 6 inches long, which hang down in front, and often just barely cover the lower abdomen. Round her neck, she must wear certain charms, some to give her ease in childbirth, others to ensure productivity, success in keeping her husband, or some other point in her future sexual life. These charms are bulbs, pieces of roots and wood, or certain parts of animals. Every thing she wears must be deeply dyed with Anatto seed juice, and she herself must be smeared with it from head to foot. All utensils used by her must also be dyed. When her period of seclusion is over, everything she has worn or used must either be buried, burned, or destroyed in some other way.

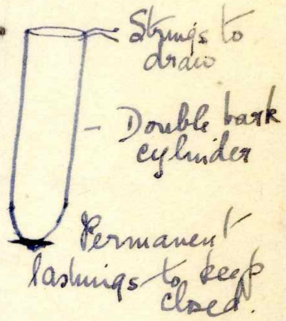
The rules of any tribe do not appear to be rigid, and the period and procedure of seclusion may vary considerably even in the same village. Among the Wapichanna most girls have the hair of the head cropped close, yet others may be allowed to keep it intact. One family insists on one month's seclusion, another two, and others three months. These various periods of life all have special names applied to them. As the child's breasts form up, she is referred to as "the one who is to give milk". Most girls of that age have been little seen, as they are of less use than the boys and have had no name given them, and at once this word becomes her name to be openly referred to or called by and for, if required. The moment symptoms of puberty arrive she is known as "the one who sheds blood", to be changed to the past tense after the end of the month. When she takes her proper place in society again, she is given another name, "She who is a very young maid". If she marries right away, she loses all identity and becomes So and So's wife, and later on So and So's mother, when her boy grows old enough to be awarded a name. If, however, she remains single, then as she develops better physical proportions, she is called "The Maid". It is only in exceptional cases, when great personality is developed, that she gets a name of her own, and generally as "The Maid" grows older she becomes So and So's sister or aunt, or some other relative.

The Waiwai girls use the bark of the Brazil nut during the period of seclusion at puberty; and as far as I could learn, the methods and proceedings, are very similar. I glimpsed one once when on a visit to the tribe. Curiosity I suppose made her forget the awful penalties or danger of being seen and she stepped clear of her segregation mat in the corner of a house, but she fled like a wild animal as she caught my eyes. She wore a lap of bark, had her hair cut, and had her thighs smeared with mud.

The bark is beaten and cut to the required shape of a lap, just as inmthe case of the baby carrier. At one time the Waiwai young man also wore a bark lap during initiation manhood ceremonies, and the old chief spoke to me in favour of all men wearing this form of lap now and again, although I never learned the reason why. I have seen one or two of these bark laps in actual use on the Trombetas river much further East, amongst a tribe who had a very much lower culture than the Waiwais, and little or no communication with other tribes.

All the Waiwai men have large, woven, palm-leaf vanity boxes, in which to carry their multitudinous crowns and feather ornaments, many of which would otherwise get crushed, especially when for any reason they were on the trek. The women are much more sedately dressed than the men. They are hung around with a profusion of beads when obtainable, and various seeds of trees. They do affect a few feathers at festivals, but they have nothing crushable, and their vanity box is a bag made from bark of the Brazil hut tree. A few men also I have seen with such bags for storing things they may seldom use, or those less proficient in the arts and crafts of the tribe.

In making a bag of this bark, a young tree of some 6 inches diameter is felled and junked into 6 ft lengths. The bark is carefully beaten all round with the heel of an axe or a wooden club until quite free from the wood, then it is slipped off. It is then pounded, and washed, and repounded until the right texture is obtained. It now forms a thin fibrous mat in the shape of a tube, somewhat resembling a very coarse, carelessly woven bag. One end of this tube is now doubled over with the outside turned over on itself and is drawn down till the two ends meet. The required length is decided on, generally 18" to 2', when it is cut and the ends tightly and permanently tied. A string is run round the double at the other end, which is the mouth of the bag. By pulling this string, the mouth can be closed when required. The bag is thus a cylinder of bark doubled over itself, one end closed permanently, the doubled end fitted with a draw string. The cambium runs up the inside, over the drawstring and down the outside.



The Tarumas did not arrive en masse but kept dribbling in, each party a few hours before the next, and it was close on 48 hours before they were all assembled. Naturally, each party was dressed in Sunday best! They were all well painted, and sported a few feather crowns of a rather ragged character. A good many wore the feather bandeau that is the Taruma favourite, and probably their national headwear. The poor women, laden to almost invisibility, were too anxious to get to their appointed places in the guest house, to bother much about ornaments or decorations, for the Indian woman is only the beast of burden, and the slave of some male, always to be on hand to satisfy his various appetites!

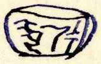
The Tarumas certainly looked tame and drab in comparison with the Waiwai men, who wore every inch of paint their bodies had room for, and who had pressed every feather and ornament they possessed into service. My men and I became quite a secondary consideration for the time being. We swung idly in our hammocks, busy watching the show, and myself keeping up a rapid fire of questions at my interpreter as to the why and wherefore of everything.

Here I had a splendid chance to note the meeting of two tribes on their own ground and in their own manner. The general procedure was the same, but the Reception Litany was very much longer. The two old chiefs talked solidly for about two hours and then I guess stopped only because they were suffering from acute laryngitis. A few hours' rest and again they met, the Waiwai chief giving the peculiar flirt in the direction of Kushar to attract his attention, to hold another session. The other men had all paired off and everywhere, during the next two days, you could see two men, sitting or heel-squatting (since there were not enough stools to go around), engaged in serious conversation. The younger men however, cut the tale much shorter; probably their experiences were more limited or their imagination less vivid, and the two old chiefs were easily the Marathon Champions.

Food was soon served in quantity, and native beer was going round in even greater quantity. It was then that I saw the Waiwai Ceremonial Drinking Cups for the first time. Actually these were large bowls of about a two quart capacity, and never left the hands of Kiwinik.

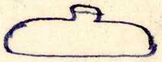
The Waiwais are good pottery makers, both in quality, size and variation of form. Their drinking bowls are made very thinly, about the thickness of ordinary dinner plates of specially selected clay. They are burned in fires made from special woods. Only certain woods give the requisite heat to ensure successful, uncracked bowls. While still hot, they are quenched out with either hot cassava juice or some other selected fluid. They are then carefully painted red, both inside and out. So far, this has been work done exclusively by the women, but now they are handed to the men for decoration. This is done in the form of lines and dots in circles close to the rim and bottom of the bowls. Right round the centre, between these lines are now drawn or painted a number of figures of animals and men. The pigment used is invariably black, and the favourite animals are the jaguar, monkey, dog, or deer. Figures of frogs are also much in use, and occasionally a few birds. Other bowls may be painted with only geometrical figures, of which they know many forms, some of most intricate designs.

While piloting a scientific expedition through the Waiwai country, one Indian was greatly intrigued with the note-books and pencils in use. On being asked if he could write, he said he thought he could, and was handed the materials to try with. He was a pure Waiwai of some 20 years of age. He had not been beyond the boundaries of his tribe, nor had he ever seen white men previous to this occasion. You may judge our surprise, when he began drawing figures of animals which we could clearly recognise. It was done slowly and very awkwardly, but the lines were good and bold, and carried the idea they were meant to represent. At first he only drew geometrical figures in imitation of those placed before him, but in a few hours he had progressed sufficiently to be able to sketch numbers of very complicated patterns, either evolved from his own mind, or in use in his particular village quite a long distance away. True enough, his best work resembled the drawing of a boy at sbhool after some practise and tuition, but certainly marvellous for a savage of the forest, who until a few hours ago had neither seen paper nor pencil. We left his village with quite half a dozen treasured pages of his ability with the pencil.

The drinking bowls are shaped somewhat like  with a flat bottom to rest on when placed on the ground or their own shelf, Only the outsides are decorated, the inside and bottom being left a plain red. When the decoration is c ompleted, a quantity of gum (generally that of some variety of Locust tree) is placed in another pot and rendered fluid by heat. This gum is now spread evenly and thinly over the entire bowl, outside, inside and base, after which it is set aside to dry. The bowl now has a highly glazed appearance; the gum being quite transparent and every figure easily seen. When dry it is ready for use.

These bowls are very fragile, however, even picking one up a little carelessly may mean the piece coming away in the fingers. I have bought them repeatedly only to have them broken to bits on the journey out. The carrier might slip and fall on the mountains, he might bump into something or even set them down a little carelessly, and very few have ever reached the outside world intact.

These bowls are generally kept packed away on a shelf when not in actual use. When required, the Chief picks one up carefully in both hands. He then approaches the large pots of beer accompanied by his beer-brewing or favourite wife, who carefully fills his bowl with the help of a gourd or calabash bowl. The Chief walks over to the guest house and approaches in turn each of his guests, beginning with the visiting chief. The bowl is held out and such guest is invited to have a drink. The guest cannot refuse without giving offence but must take a sip at least, or a good quart if he is so inclined. He is not supposed to touch the bowl, except just to tip it over a little if the beer is not quite up to drinking level. At first the liquid has to be drunk with the mouth wholly inside the bowl, but as the beer level is lowered, the under-lip is pressed against the outside of the bowl which the guest tilts till the beer runs into his mouth. On no account does the Chief relinquish his bowl, and when it is empty, he returns to the beer pots to have it replenished, when he serves those who have not yet had a drink. I have seen the second man of the village serving beer in the bowls, but generally it was the chief himself, and Kiwinik had practically a whole-time job serving drinks.

Their beer pots can be, and often are of huge size and various shapes. I have seen one of urn shape quite three or four feet high and a full yard in diameter; others again are low circular affairs of about a foot in height  somewhat like a modern balloon motor tyre. Each variety has a mouth some 8 - 10 inches wide for inserting the necessary ingredients or for withdrawing beer when brewed. These beer pots are often decorated like the drinking bowls. A very ornate one of peculiar form and size was a real beauty and was purchased to be sent out to a certain museum. It was quite six feet in diameter and only about one foot high. I arranged for one carrier at special wages to carry this pot out carefully to my main station. Everything went according to schedule over some hundreds of miles of country, but as the carrier left the corial on the last 80 mile stage of his journey, he slipped in going up the river bank, and the pot was in one thousand and one small pieces.

No ... 280

Ceremony.

Amongst the more unsophisticated children of the forest, there are few ceremonies in which strangers share, or play a part. As contact with civilization increased, ceremony increased, the first being the handshake, which can be carried to annoying proportions when every one you meet, even after only a few hours' absence, wants to do it over again - from the grey haired grandfather right down the line to the baby in the customary carrier over the shoulder.

Further sophistication brings "Good mornin", or maybe "Good night", and it isn't a far cry to the time when you hear of the tourist being blooded and admitted to the membership of the tribes. This is generally done by a minute puncture or cut on a finger, just sufficient to draw blood. The Indian does the same and the two fingers must meet, so that the blood can mingle. A hot "hell-fire" pepper seed, carefully concealed beneath the Indian's finger nail, gives a sting to the operation, which adds considerably to the mental assurance of the tourist that there is "something" in the rite after all.

I have been very friendly with various tribes who would gladly have done everything possible to have me take up residence amongst them. Their reasons were that in this way they could get work or at least have a supply of barter on tap whenever they had something to sell, but amongst the various inducements or bribes offered, I have never been offered initiation into any tribe. It simply is not done, even amongst themselves.

A member of an outside tribe can enter another, generally by way of marriage, as in the case of my Taruma interpreter - Saik Tau - who entered the Wapichanna tribe. Even then he was only allowed to reside in the outlying districts of the tribe for years, and it was only after he came into my regular employment that he was able to build a house in one of the principal villages, and mingle freely with everybody.

On the other hand, if a male member of any tribe marries a woman from outside, he can take her straight to his own village. She is given only a partial freedom and welcome, largely due to her ignorance of her husband's language. In numerous cases of this kind, I have found a decided reserve towards the stranger wife exhibited by the women of the village, which it would take years to remove. Often the woman frets under this; she grows homesick and not infrequently she returns after a few years to her own tribe again. It is but rarely the husband goes with her. The novelty has worn off, and he soon finds solace elsewhere.

Most of these tribes have certain peculiar rites or ceremonies amongst themselves, most of which centre around the arrival at puberty of the various boys and girls. These vary not only from tribe to tribe, but even amongst the different villages, and often between the different inhabitants of one village. Amongst the boys of the Wapichanna there were numerous rites at such a time, but only conducted by the more conservative fathers, - elderly men who resisted the approach of civilization, and clung to their old tribal customs.

Many of these rites were kept secret and only handed down from higher authority to a father, whose boy was ready for initiation, as also in the case of the girls. Such a boy of the Wapichanna tribe had to be awake every morning about 3 a.m. when, taking his drum in hand, he would go outside and parade up and down, violently beating out a regular rhythm. Many such boys, I could cheerfully have almost murdered, when, having arrived late and weary the previous evening, I would be rudely awakened in the middle of the night with this vile thumping. The drumming is varied with flute playing, as a boy must become proficient in playing the tune on the tiger (or deer) femural bone flute, given invariably on approaching any house or village he might visit. He also has to learn to play certain other - so called - tunes on flutes made from various sizes of bamboo, each size giving a different note. As daylight begins to appear the youth has to go down to the water hole and have a good bath. Returning to the village he takes up a rope of raffia soaked in pepper, which he passes up his nose, over to the throat and out through the mouth.

At the earliest stage of initiation, this raffia rope is a mere string, but has to increase daily in size until about the diameter or size of one's thumb. It is made from the fine outer skin (raffia) of each frond of the green unopened leaf or tongue of the Ita Palm. The rope is spun on the leg, sometimes two strands, but often three. It is begun with as fine a point as possible, and increases in size in a beautiful taper till the maximum size required is attained, when a single strand is bound round, to keep the rope from untwisting. The balance of the raffia, after this tying, is left to hang loose, forming a tassel effect of some 6 to 10 inches long. To the fine point is now securely attached a single, fine, strong strand of raffia. The tassel and most of the rope is now steeped in a mixture of water and pounded pepper, the latter - the hotter and more virulent, the better.

The youth then seats himself on a stool made either of wood or the carapace of a turtle. He inserts the fine raffia strand of the small end up one nostril and begins violently snuffing it up, twisting and pushing at the same time with one hand. The strand keeps moving upwards and can be felt going down the throat. When it has gone far enough down, it is coughed up into the mouth, and a finger and thumb are inserted to catch the end. It is then pulled gently, the string or rope disappearing up the nose to come back through the mouth. These strings or ropes are roughly some three feet long. Once the twisted end comes completely free of the mouth, the father or headman of the village takes one end in each hand, and begins a see-saw motion backwards and forwards, the rope disappearing up the nose until the tassel only projects, when it is pulled back till the fine end is just in front of the mouth. Half a dozen of these motions are quickly done, then the tassel end is released and pulled completely up the nose and out via the mouth.

The pain of this operation must be very great. There is often considerable bleeding, and the irritation of the pepper juice on the ruptured parts and the tender passage, must be excruciating, yet I have never seen a youth wince or give a single squeak in pain, although I have often thought they were on the point of collapse, but any symptom of weakness delays the award of manhood, and must be fought against.

There are always some who cannot pass these tests of endurance for manhood, either some physical weakling or such as are born mentally deficient. Such as fail in the physical or mental standard are handed over to the women, amongst whom they live, and have to learn and perform the duties allocated to women as far as they are capable. In 1900 - 1902 I knew several of these unfortunates, completely ostracised by the men, bullied by the women, and doing all the lowest chores of the village. Therefore the passing of initiation tests meant almost life and death to the candidates, and small wonder that they would stand up to any pain to get their diploma.

Initiation tests were already going out of fashion when I arrived amongst the Wapichanna. The introduction of steady work and remuneration, at this time, hastened its end, and in later years I doubt if a single Wapichanna boy has to undergo any initiation.

These strings are never used twice. After having been passed through the nose, the fine end is tied to a sliver of wood, someone climbs up on the inside of the roof, and the sliver is stuck in the thatch in a position where it hangs immediately above the youth's hammock. On entering a Wapichanna house, you could tell at once if a youth was undergoing initiation as one could scarcely fail to notice the forest of pendant strings hanging above his hammock. I have seen these strings hanging in houses of most of the forest tribes, as well as those who live almost entirely in the open savannahs, as the Ita Palm grows in large reefs in both types of country. This rite may be performed again in later life for various reasons. The youth or men may have a succession of bad luck in hunting; he may be weak after an illness, his wife may have had a miscarriage; a child may have died, or various other misfortunes, and he must undergo the rite to give him new success, fuller strength and courage, or as an antidote to bad luck,

Temporary lapses in hunting ability are fairly frequent for no apparent reason when day after day a recognised expert will roam the forests for hours at a time without success. It is certain that the man physically below par, or with mental worry is less careful of what he is doing and may make more noise than usual or be less receptive of the various slight sights and sounds of game that otherwise would be noted. Very soon either his pride in his prowess, or the yapping of his women folks demand a remedy and he voluntarily undergoes such painful antidotes as the nose string: pepper juice in his eyes; the sting of a scorpion dug into his flesh or the standing up in the nest of the fire ant for a few moments. At the same time he may perform some of the "old time" initiation ceremonies until confidence returns which apart from actual physical weakness has probably been the main handicap.

I was away in the forest and my huntsman - a young untried youth but "nephew" of my headman - had a streak of bad luck for several days in succession, which the camp didn't forget to bring to the latter's notice, who at once ordered a series of the usual painful remedies. A couple of days later, the uncle drew the huntsman's attention to the crowing of a covey of Bush Quail in the very early morning, and the following morning an hour or so before dawn broke ordered him to go out and kill the birds. The youth was naked except for his loin cloth and was handed a round piece of wood as he stepped into the forest and disappeared. Half an hour afterwards we heard the quail crowing and within a quarter of one hour later, the man returned to camp carrying four dead quail in one hand and his club in the other.

These forest quail are found in coveys only on the forest floor by day, but they invariably roost on some liano or low branch of a tree only a few feet above ground and will return night after night for weeks to the same roosting place. The entire covey sleep on the same perch; all nestling up close to each other. Once the huntsman had located the quail all he had to do was to strike along the branch with his club when he would certainly knock out several birds. These quail are small and no huntsman thinks they are worth a charge of powder and shot as a rule. I was rather fond of them and in one permanent balata camp I had one old man who would go out occasionally and bring me in some half a dozen birds killed by this method.

I have never actually gone out to see this done, but I did accompany one of my boys when he went out to do a very similar performance - the killing of the large Maam in the dark by fire, which I have been told was another of the manhood tests. The maam - by far the finest game bird of the forest - unless at the breeding season is solitary; found invariably on the ground and also flies up to sleep on some branch but at heights varying from six to twenty feet in the air. The bird gives a few of its well known calls as it has selected its perch in the growing dusk and again a few more calls just before and during the very early dawn prior to its flitting down to earth to begin its search for food.

Some four Indians and myself were in a remote part of the forest and heard a maam crowing in the late evening when one of my boys remarked, "That maam is roosting very low. I am going out in the morning to catch it by the "old time" method". I asked if he would take me with him and after considerable argument regarding extra noise and the need for silence he consented. It was still pitch dark when he woke me, but it was dry weather and stars could be glimpsed in the opening among the branches high overhead, although they don't give much light to see by down on the forest floor. My boy was naked except for his lap and I, barefooted, was pretty near the same condition.

He carried nothing, not even a knife, but as he passed our fire, he selected a blazing piece of wood. A short distance into the forest we stopped while he secured a large handful of dead dry palm leaves. Laying down the burning wood he rubbed these between the palms of his hands breaking the leaves into fine shreds, as I'd often seen them do on fish lighting expeditions, in order to secure easy ignition lighting and rapid combustion. Picking up his blazing faggot he gave a few short puff, puff, puffs with his breath, that put out the flame and the wood was merely a glowing ember. (Short puffs of the breath at one second intervals will put out any burning stick).

It is no easy job making one's way through the dense forest in the dark; previously we had the burning stick which shed some light, but now the faint glow was of little use except to guide me in following along behind and I bumped into all kinds of obstructions. We'd been going for ages - probably a mere hundred yards - when he halted and we stood motionless and silent for another age. Suddenly the maam gave its first crow a matter of only some yards away. I saw the faggot go down quietly on the ground and he leaned over to me to whisper that I must wait a moment as he was going off to have a look at things. So silently did he move that I could'nt swear whether he had stirred or not, but in a few moments I saw the red ember picked up and he whispered "Alright". We crept carefully forward - maybe ten yards - and I sensed rather than saw him stick the hot ember inside the handful of crumpled leaves, blowing gently with his breath all the time. When he judged the leaves were hot enough he gave one long strong blow with the breath and in an instant the leaves were one mass of flame which lit up everything and I caught a glimpse of the maam about arm's reach above our heads. At the same second he pushed the burning leaves in the air as high as he could reach almost touching the sleeping bird. It woke instantly but too late, as its feathers were now ablaze and it must have drawn in a sickening breath of fumes. It rolled towards the earth to be deftly caught in mid air by the boy and despatched.

I have frequently gone out with my men carrying my gun to shoot these maams in the early morning before dawn because if they are roosting too high the Indian cannot reach them with his burning leaves and we generally got our bird, but only on that one occasion did I see one caught by fire. To locate a maam or any game in the dense forest on a pitch dark morning seems little short of miraculous but I've been in camps scores of times when it was done. I could not have done it unassisted: it required the trained deduction and vision of the Indian and he was not always successful. Failure is generally the subject of a variety of rude jokes and laughter, but I cannot remember any such bantering when the hunter returned unsuccessfully in trying to get a maam in the dark - a tacit admission that they knew how difficult it was.

Whilst ceremony does not play a high part in life, there is a considerable amount of etiquette amongst Indians, the omission of which by the stranger may cause serious offence, and deep ridicule. Scarcely any one can go direct from civilization into a village of a completely unsophisticated tribe. He must pass through intervening tribes and have guides and interpreters and so in a measure is prepared. He soon gets acquainted with the morning and evening ritual, as also the welcome litany on arrival, and so does not cause serious offence. The Indian also, with a keen desire to please is slow to take offence and it is more a question of manner and general behaviour in gaining the confidence of even the wildest tribe. Even when a stranger makes ridiculous mistakes, the Indians carefully refrain from laughter before the guest as that might arouse anger or antipathy on his part. Behind his back it may be a different matter, and I have heard the most side splitting laughter immediately my hosts disappeared inside their hut, which cast reflections on my correct behaviour.

Most of the tribes have certain words, and terminations of compound words, that are peculiarly for the use of the women and must not be used on any account by a man. One such term in general use amongst the Wapichanna is a compound word meaning "That is all right", a more intelligent assent than the usual grunt. Amongst the men this word is "Baisamasa", but amongst women it is "Baisamainya". An old Macussi Indian had married a Wapichanna woman and was living in the No Man's Land between the two tribes. I passed through his place with some of my boys and stopped to say, "How d'ye do", and ask the best road to our destination. I knew this man was a member of the hereditary enemy tribe of the Wapichanna, and my boys were unusually polite and serious. When we came to the next creek where we could rest, it was a different matter. Down went their loads, and they all rolled on the ground in convulsions of laughter. It transpired that the old man had repeatedly used the word Baisamainya, the women's word, and my boys were now imitating the scene in the camp, exaggerating as is usual, by imaginary silly questions and answers, most of which turned to sexual technicalities. The man had learned Wapichan from his wife, of course, and as he had not yet been admitted into full contact and confidence of the Wapichanna, made a very natural mistake. The joke against him was kept up for days, and at last was carried home, where, after a nine days' vogue, it was gradually forgotten.

Beyond appearing ridiculous, the stranger need not worry much about entering any tribe. It is well to remember, however, that offence can be given in refusing to accept food or drink when offered. Such a refusal is a distinct slur on your host's kindness and hospitality, and on the capabilities of his women folk. No active offence would be taken to all appearances at the moment, but later on, you would probably discover that what at first was a very helpful friendly Indian, had become more or less an idiot. He wouldn't be able to assist you to get guides; he would not help stock up your depleted food supplies; he wouldn't even know the road to the next village, and you would find yourself up against a blank wall of passive resistance, against which nothing would prevail.

Some years ago, an expedition had gone out to search for the famous lost aviator Redfern, who crashed somewhere behind in the Guianas. The expedition met up with a tribe of Indians who said the aviator had crashed near their village. They showed in spectacular manner how the plane had Zoo-o-o-omed round and round their village and had come down with a terrific BANG, somewhere "over there". They offered to guide the party to the scene next morning, as it was too far to go at that late hour. Next morning the Indians knew nothing; no plane had ever been seen; they didn't know where it fell, and had no guides. One by one they sneaked out of the village, and soon the expedition found themselves all alone and forced, through lack of food, to return to civilization without any success. Some of the strangers had committed an offence against Indian etiquette and that's all there was to it.

I have only known one case of actual revenge for some infringment on etiquette. A man whom I held in the greatest esteem and respect, on arriving from a long arducus journey, hungry as a wolf through poor luck in hunting, was met by some Indians who held a grudge against him. He was given a calabash of boiled poisonous bulbs of which he only took one mouthful, and handed the balance on to his attendant boy. This youth died the same evening, and his master suffered agony for months afterwards and had eventually to go home to England.

The acceptance of food and drink need only be very slight. Time and time again, I have merely tasted what they offered and passed the balance on to my men. After tasting the food, or making a mere pretence of eating, it can be returned to the owner without offence. Drinks of all kinds must be consumed somehow or other, at all costs but most Indians seem to have unlimited capacity, or even when that is taxed to the limit, they possess an easy facility for regurgitation that I have many a time envied. Indians are as a rule cleanly in their habits, and after many years of wandering amongst them, I have found that their food and drink, even if not agreeable to the palate at all times, is at least sustaining and nourishing. One could always nibble at a tiny piece of cassava bread, even if one only pretended to dip it in the soup of a pot, from which protruded the repulsive hand of a boiled monkey.

Any infringement of their moral code or etiquette may bring reprisals on the spot, and I have known quite a few murders committed through this cause. On the whole, however, the European who follows the code of civilization in meeting even the wilder or more backward Indians, has little to fear beyond being the butt of a certain amount of good-natured criticism and laughter, through silly amusing mistakes caused by differences in the Indian outlook and habits.